

22FEB2024

To: Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
From: LCDR Joseph Dolan, USN IRR  
Subj: SB 584 Written Testimony

Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Joseph Dolan, and I am a resident of Anne Arundel County. I am writing to seek support for Senate Bill 584. I am in favor of this bill as it will have a positive and meaningful impact on military families. This law would change the laws for parking in Maryland for combat-decorated veterans. As a specific example, I'd like to reference the State of Texas. Current legislation in Texas allows veterans with specific military decorations to get specialty license plates which allow them to park in public for free anywhere in Texas. I have included that legislation in my other written submissions.

For example, Texas' legislation passed with much greater scope where waiving parking fees would apply across the state for all types of metered parking. While I support that type of legislation, I realize the Senator and the Department want to start with a smaller scope, provide benefits to combat military personnel and gather data on how many of us use this benefit before considering a greater scope. Other states have stood up and thanked their decorated veterans with parking legislation, and I think Maryland can and should too.

Clearly, Maryland is home to multiple bases and military stations such as Fort Meade, Andrews AFB, the U.S. Naval Academy, Pax River NAS, Aberdeen Proving Ground, etc. Service members and veterans who have served and continue to serve at these locations are important members of our economy and our community. Many of them have made significant sacrifices, and I think it would be right for Maryland to support them with this simple but important benefit.

I went to the U.S. Naval Academy and was on active duty for 10 years as a pilot and have been in the Navy Reserves for 7 more years. As a member of the Reserves, I work with the admissions department at the U.S. Naval Academy. For my full-time job, I am an airline pilot and work out of BWI. Like many of my co-workers, I flew combat missions in OIF and OEF during my tenure and I have been awarded an Air Medal for that service.

My plea is that when combat-decorated veterans were asked to accomplish a task, they didn't balk! I don't think Maryland should either.

The Maryland MVA already offers the ability to purchase plates with the relevant military awards and decorations but the tags are not associated with a corresponding benefit of free parking.

I have worked closely with Delegate Munoz's and Sen. Simonaire's offices to forward this initiative, and I thank them for their continued efforts.

Please see the submitted documents with the Transportation Code of Texas for comparison. Additionally, I have also included a letter of support from people that I know and/or work with who have also expressed support for this legislation.

In conclusion, I strongly support this legislation in order to thank and support Maryland's combat veterans. I appreciate your time and consideration and I look forward to moving forward with this issue.

Thank you very much,

Joseph K. Dolan  
LCDR USN, IRR