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**SB48 Department of General Services – Identification Cards – Veteran Status Notification
FAVORABLE
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 30, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. My name is Jim Campbell, President Emeritus for AARP Maryland, and a former Maryland State Delegate. AARP Maryland represents more than 850,000 members statewide and is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization advocating for Marylanders aged 50 and older, as well as their families. representing 850,000 members. AARP Maryland supports SB48 and thanks Senator Simonaire for sponsoring this legislation.

SB48 authorizes the Department of General Services to include a notation on a security card issued to members of the Executive Branch of State Government indicating that the holder is a veteran. This is part of a package of bills designed to recognize military service by state employees and to help insure they have access to earned benefits.

Why is this important?

Veterans serve our country and people, putting their lives and livelihoods in jeopardy to protect and preserve our democracy and quality of life. As they transition to civilian life, many will be unable to work due to injuries sustained in the line of duty. In 2023, Maryland had approximately 348,459 veterans living in the state. Of those, 83,978 or 23.8% had a service-connected disability.

Broader Context – Service-Connected Disability Status

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families 2022 Report states:

- According to the US Census, compared to civilian counterparts, veterans today are more likely to suffer from trauma-related injuries, substance abuse, and mental health disorders.
- Compared to veterans of other service eras, Post 9/11 veterans have a significantly higher chance (43%) of having a service-connected disability and to have a rating of 70% or higher (39%).
- Among all veterans, men are no more likely to have a disability than women, but women are more likely to have a rating of 70% or higher.
- According to the VA, in December 2022 Post 9/11 veteran claims made up 24% of the total inventory, Gulf War made up 36%, and combined Vietnam, peacetime, and other eras made up 44%.

In recognizing the sacrifices made by Veterans and their families for our country, AARP believes we must ensure that they receive the most efficient access to benefits of which they are entitled. SB48 will help achieve that goal and we urge a favorable report by the committee. Please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.