



**Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families
Office of the Secretary**

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GOVERNOR

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SECRETARY

**Senate Bill 85 - Braille Flag Memorial Act of 2025
SUPPORT**

February 3, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Room 241, Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF) is committed to leading veterans and their families through life's transitions, making Maryland the best state for the military-connected communities. DVMF fulfills its mission through five core programs: the Service and Benefits Program, which helps veterans access federal, state, and local earned benefits; Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, offering assisted living and skilled nursing care; the Cemetery and Memorial Program, providing dignified resting places and maintaining memorials honoring Maryland's veterans; the Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy Program, fostering connection and awareness; and the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund, offering financial assistance to veterans and their families in need. These programs reflect Maryland's commitment to honoring and empowering its military-connected community.

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families supports Senate Bill 85 - the Braille Flag Memorial Act of 2025. This demonstrates Maryland's commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and honoring the sacrifices of our nation's blind and visually impaired veterans.

This is particularly important as the Department estimates that more than 130,000 veterans in the United States are legally blind, with over a million experiencing low vision that affects daily living. Senate Bill 85 ensures that these veterans, along with other visually impaired individuals in our state, have a meaningful way to experience and connect with the American flag—a cherished symbol of service, sacrifice, and unity.

By requiring the Department of Veteran and Military Families to designate a location for an American braille tactile flag at one or more of Maryland's state veterans' cemeteries, this legislation achieves the following:

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1. **Enhances Accessibility and Inclusion** – The installation of a braille tactile flag ensures that blind and visually impaired veterans can physically experience the American flag, fostering a deeper sense of connection and belonging.
2. **Honors the Service of All Veterans** – Maryland is home to thousands of veterans, including those who are blind or visually impaired due to combat injuries, aging, or medical conditions. This initiative recognizes their contributions and ensures they are fully included in Maryland’s veteran memorials.
3. **Strengthens Maryland’s Commitment to Veterans** – As a state known for its dedication to military service members, veterans, and their families, Maryland continues to lead by example in supporting and recognizing the diverse needs of our veteran community.

The placement of a braille flag in state veterans’ cemeteries represents a powerful and lasting tribute, reinforcing the principle that every veteran deserves to be honored in a way that is meaningful and accessible to them.

Thank you for your attention to this important proposal and I ask the committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and "W".

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary