

SB 246

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

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SECRETARY

**Senate Bill 246 - Maryland Veterans Trust - Assistance to Members of the Maryland National
Guard
SUPPORT**

January 21, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF) is committed to leading veterans, service members, 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 246, which seeks to expand the purposes of the Maryland Veterans Trust to include providing monetary and other assistance to members of the Maryland National Guard and their families. This vital legislation further authorizes the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund to provide grants for this deserving population, helping to meet critical needs and foster resiliency within Maryland's military community.

Established by the State Legislature in 2013, the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing temporary financial assistance and referral services to Maryland veterans and their families. Administered by DVMF, the Trust Fund is overseen by the Department Secretary and an eleven-member Board of Trustees.

The Trust Fund provides direct assistance to individuals for essential expenses such as rent or mortgage payments, utility bills, car payments, insurance, and phone or internet bills. Additionally, it awards

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grants to organizations addressing critical areas such as food and housing insecurity, employment, education, health and wellness, and suicide prevention. By supporting both individuals and organizations, the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund plays a pivotal role in improving the quality of life for Maryland's veteran community.

Members of the Maryland National Guard and their families play a crucial role in ensuring the safety and security of our state and nation. Their service often comes with unique challenges, including financial hardships and access to necessary resources. By broadening the scope of the Maryland Veterans Trust, SB 246 will address these challenges head-on, offering targeted assistance to those who make significant personal sacrifices in service to Maryland.

DVMF's mission is to serve Maryland's veterans, military families, and service members. Senate Bill 246 aligns with our commitment to ensuring no service member or family member is left without the support they need. This legislation acknowledges the profound contributions of Maryland National Guard members and affirms our collective responsibility to stand by them, as they have stood by us.

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, stylized initial "A".

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary