

VeteransCaucusLegislationSupportLetter_SB48.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV



MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
VETERANS CAUCUS

January 28, 2025

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
2W Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB48, Department of General Services – Identification Cards – Veteran Status Notation
Hearing Date: January 30, 2025

Dear Chairman Feldman,

Please let this letter serve as notice of the support of the Maryland General Assembly Senate Veterans Caucus for Senate Bill 48.

After review by our respective legislative committee, the Senate Veterans Caucus believes that the above-mentioned legislation would provide a valuable benefit to the veterans of the State of Maryland and requests a favorable report.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin F. Brooks".

Senator Benjamin Brooks
Senate Chair

cc: Senator Bryan Simonaire

Maryland Military Coalition SB0048 Written Testimo

Uploaded by: DAVID Dragics

Position: FAV



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

January 28, 2025

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

Subject: Request for **FAVORABLE Report** – SB0048 – Department of General Services – Identification Cards – Veteran Status Notation

Dear Chair Feldman and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC), I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB0048 – Department of General Services – Identification Cards – Veteran Status Notation**, sponsored by Senator Bryan Simonaire. This bill encourages the Department to include a notation of veteran status on an identification card issued to a State employee or other individual authorized by the Department's Secretary, indicating that the holder is a veteran if the individual issued that identification card presents certification of veteran status. If the veteran agrees to have that notation applied, that individual also agrees to be contacted by appropriate Executive agencies regarding their eligibility for State or federal veteran benefits.

The MMC supports the intent and processes of this bill. It **recognizes veteran status and reduces the burden on individuals to prove their eligibility for State or federal veteran benefits**, saving them personal time and effort to do so. We applaud this step in making it easier for those who have served other than dishonorably.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports SB0048** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 22 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups. It represents over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers and survivors. Visit our website at <https://mdmilcoalition.org/>.

We want to thank Senator Simonaire for sponsoring this legislation and supporting the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

David L. Dragics
COL (Ret), U.S. Army
Legislative Director



Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Platoon 22

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars

SB 48

Uploaded by: David Heredia Jr

Position: FAV



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland, Inc.

The War Memorial Building, Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-752-1405

January 29, 2025

David Heredia, Jr.
Commander, Department of Maryland
The American Legion
101 N. Gay Street, Suite E
Baltimore, MD, 21202

The Honorable Bryan W. Simonaire
Maryland State Senate
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
Maryland State Senate
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

cc: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Subject: Support for Maryland SB 48 – Veteran Identification on State-Issued ID Cards

Dear Senators Simonaire and Jackson,

On behalf of The American Legion Department of Maryland and our over 42,000 members, I would like to express our full support for Senate Bill 48 (SB 48). This legislation represents a meaningful and practical step toward honoring Maryland's nearly 350,000 veterans by providing them with the opportunity to have their veteran status officially recognized on state-issued identification cards.

This measure is not simply about convenience; it is about respect, recognition, and ensuring veterans can access the resources and benefits they have earned through their service to this country. A designation of veteran status on state identification cards offers numerous benefits, including:

1. **Easier Access to Benefits:** Many veterans need to provide proof of their service to access programs, benefits, and services designed to support them. A state-issued ID with a veteran designation eliminates unnecessary barriers by serving as immediate and reliable proof of their status.
2. **Acknowledging Sacrifice:** Displaying veteran status on an ID is a visible and everyday reminder of the gratitude and respect Maryland has for those who served. It is a small but impactful way to honor their sacrifices.
3. **Enhancing Veteran Services:** By formalizing the identification of veterans, Maryland will be better equipped to connect them with local, state, and federal resources. This initiative also helps facilitate data collection to better understand and meet the needs of our veteran community.

As State Commander of The American Legion Department of Maryland, I have witnessed the challenges many veterans face in accessing their benefits and navigating available resources. While this bill addresses a practical need, its significance extends beyond functionality. It is a symbol of Maryland's commitment to honoring and supporting its veterans—not just in words but in action.

Furthermore, The American Legion, along with other veteran service organizations (VSOs) such as the VFW and DAV, stands ready to assist veterans in utilizing this important designation. Our accredited Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) are committed to helping veterans identify and access the benefits they are entitled to at no cost. SB 48 will make this process more streamlined and efficient, protecting the dignity of our veterans while enhancing their access to support systems.

We deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this legislation and ensuring it moves forward. The American Legion Department of Maryland pledges its full support and urges the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to pass this bill swiftly.

Thank you for your continued advocacy for Maryland's veterans. Together, we can ensure that our state remains a leader in honoring and supporting those who have worn the uniform.

Sincerely,

David Heredia Jr.

David Heredia, Jr.
Commander, Department of Maryland
The American Legion

cc: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB48_AFSCME3_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Denise Gilmore

Position: FAV



1410 Bush Street (Suite A)
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410-547-1515
Email: info@afscmemd.org

Patrick Moran – President

**SB 48 – Department of General Services – Identification Cards –
Veteran Status Notation
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 30, 2025**

Position: FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 represents 45,000 state, county, and municipal employees and we are pleased to support Senate Bill 48. This legislation allows the Department of General Services (DGS) to include veteran status on DGS-issued identification cards. SB 48 provides an option for veterans applying for a DGS-issued ID cards to be contacted by the Department of Veterans and Military Families. This level of cross-agency coordination can help more veterans access the state and federal benefits they've earned and deserve.

SB 48 is a good a bill. We urge the committee to provide a favorable report.

The following states that have collective bargaining for state employees, AK, CA, CT, DC, DE, HI, IL, ME, MN, NE, NJ, NM, NV, OH, OR, PA, MT, RI, WA have a terminal point for negotiations, either binding interest arbitration, the right to strike, or a legislative process. These processes create a level playing field for both parties.

This legislation would create a mutual incentive to compel parties to reach an agreement around collective bargaining negotiations by instilling a binding interest arbitration process, whereby if the two sides cannot come to agreement through negotiations by a specified deadline the proposals.

From the two sides would be presented to a professional, neutral third- party arbitrator – hearing from witnesses and experts, with data and evidence – for consideration of all the facts involved with the purpose of determining which proposal is most appropriate to implement. The choice by the arbitrator would then be considered a binding resolution to be implemented by the Governor and exclusive bargaining representative for whatever appropriations are necessary to implement and fund the memorandum of understanding. The budgetary powers of the Maryland General Assembly remain unaltered.

SB 188 is a strong and positive step toward enhancing fairness, balance, and efficiency, and resolution. It follows a model that is well-established in other states and among Maryland counties. We urge a favorable report.



SB48_AARP_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: James Campbell

Position: FAV



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

**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.

SB 48.Testimony-SUPP.1-30-25 EEE.docx - Google Doc

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

SB 48 - Department of General Services - Identification Cards - Veteran Status Notation

Position: Support

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Date: January 30, 2025

From: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) supports Senate Bill 48.

DGS supports Senate Bill 48, a bill to authorize the issuance of State identification cards with an annotation indicating that the cardholder is a veteran. The legislation clearly specifies the standards for certification of veteran status, and provides for departmental discretion in implementing the bill in accordance with adopted regulations and procedures. In addition, DGS has identified no fiscal impact related to implementing the bill.

Importantly, the bill is also intended to facilitate connecting veterans with State and federal services for which they are eligible.

For these reasons, DGS requests a favorable report on SB 48.

Contact: John R. Woolums, Esq., Director of Government and Legislative Affairs,
(410) 260-2908 (O), (667) 434-0008 (M), john.woolums@maryland.gov

Written Testimony - SB 48 - Simonaire - Veteran De

Uploaded by: Joseph Pruden

Position: FAV

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of this committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you regarding Senate Bill 48.

My name is Joseph Pruden and I am addressing you behalf of the nearly 81,000 members of the American Legion Family in 157 posts throughout the State of Maryland.

As proud veterans and advocates for our military and veteran communities, we strongly believe this legislation is a critical step forward in assuring additional, deserved recognition all who have served in the uniformed services.

The addition of the “Veteran” designation on Maryland Drivers Licenses has afforded veterans unexpected access to resources, assistance, comradery, recognition and benefits.

This designation on additional licenses can only ensure that more veterans will become aware of benefits and services available to them.

We believe the additional knowledge and recognition this legislation will bring to veterans and to the community is immeasurable.

We thank Senator Bryan Simonaire for his efforts and for sponsoring this bill.

We urge your favorable consideration of this legislation.

Thank you.

SB 48 Senator Simonaire_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Kara Contino

Position: FAV

BRYAN W. SIMONAIRE
Legislative District 31
Anne Arundel County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 320
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3658 · 301-858-3658
800-492-7122 Ext. 3658
Fax 410-841-3586 · 301-858-3586
Bryan.Simonaire@senate.state.md.us

The Senate of Maryland ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 48 - State Card ID - Veteran Designation

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 48.

I worked with the Department of General Services and the military community on this consensus legislation. It basically allows a veteran to put a 'Veteran notation' on their State Identification Card.

First, let me say this is enabling legislation for the department, and setups the framework if the Department implements it.

I have worked with the Department and flexibility is key to success and this bill provides that flexibility.

This bill does two main things:

- 1) Enables the Department to issue state identification cards with the "Veteran" notation placed on it, and
- 2) If enabled, it establishes an outreach to the veteran if they want the Veteran notation and the applicant consents to being contacted by appropriate Executive Branch agencies regarding the applicant's eligibility for State or federal veterans' benefits.

This may sound familiar as this is what is done for the MVA driver licenses. Driver license applicants can have a veteran's notation placed on their driver license and be contacted by the Department of Veterans and Military Families regarding available veteran benefits.

The only difference is that this legislation is enabling.

The advantage to this approach is the Department knows when and how quickly to roll it out. They could even do a pilot on a subset of their ID cards. This bill gives the Department tremendous flexibility to achieve success.

While the MVA program has been hugely popular, Maryland has a long way to go to reach our veterans as less than 50% of our veteran population is taking advantage the MVA program.

That's why it is imperative we use as many methods as possible to reach out to our veterans. This legislation provides one more tool to reach out to veterans while also providing additional benefits to the veteran community.

Additionally, in Maryland, we are looking to do everything we can to help reduce veteran suicide. One of the key factors is avoiding isolation.

This legislation provides multiple benefits, including reducing isolation:

1. This will help with networking and reducing isolation as more people including other veterans will see these licensees are veterans and hopefully reach out more to them.
 - a. One of the many factors of veterans' suicide is isolation especially as it pertains to a veterans' own service and experiences. This will allow for public awareness of veterans through thanking them for their service, other veterans seeing it and talking with them and re-enforcing they are not alone.
2. It provides another tool to reach out to our veteran population with their consent through using their contact information to share eligible benefits with them,
3. It is another avenue for the public to show appreciation for their service, and
4. Lastly, it also provides potential financial benefits to our veteran as many customers are more likely to hire a veteran, repeat as a customer or just give a bigger tip for their service, where applicable.

If you think about it, you can't beat this is a low-cost investment with all its potential benefits.

For all these reasons, I ask for your favorable consideration.

DVMF SB48 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Morgan Murphy

Position: FAV



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

**WES MOORE
GOVERNOR**

**ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR**

**ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY**

**Senate Bill 48- Department of General Services - Identification Cards - Veteran Status Notation
SUPPORT**

January 27, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
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 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 48-Department of General Services - Identification Cards - Veteran Status Notation, which allows the Department of General Services (DGS) to include veteran status on identification cards issued to state employees and other authorized individuals..

DVMF believes Senate Bill 48 honors Maryland's veterans by providing visible recognition of their service and enhances their access to critical state and federal benefits. By allowing veterans to opt-in to share their status with executive agencies, SB 48 streamlines communication and improves outreach, ensuring veterans can connect with the programs and resources they have earned.

DVMF fully supports this initiative, which aligns with our mission to reduce barriers for veterans and foster greater collaboration across state agencies to serve them effectively.

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