



## MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

March 14, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk  
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee  
240 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Request for **FAVORABLE Report** – SB0085 – Braille Flag Memorial Act of 2025

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and distinguished members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC), I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB0085 – Braille Flag Memorial Act of 2025**, sponsored by Senator Bryan Simonaire. This bill will authorize the Department of Veterans and Military Families to designate a Braille American flag to be placed in one or more State veterans' cemeteries.

In 2008, the United States Congress recognized the importance of providing the visually impaired and the blind with an opportunity to understand the sense of pride they feel when looking at our nation's flag by authorizing a tactile placard representing the American flag in braille at Arlington National Cemetery. Veterans have had the opportunity to see the American flag and feel an individual sense of pride that comes with their service and sacrifice to our nation. Family members and the public who are blind from birth, however, have no concept of what the red, white, and blue of the stars and stripes mean for the sighted. The Braille American flag provides the visually impaired and blind the means of understanding the pride that comes with "seeing" the American flag. According to the American Braille Flag Project, over 100 of these flags have been installed at veterans' hospitals and public places across the country.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports SB0085** and asks for a **FAVORABLE report just as we did for HB0455**. If these flags can be placed at Arlington National Cemetery and across our country, Maryland can do the same at all five of the State's veterans' cemeteries.

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

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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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David L. Dragics". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "L".

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