



# Commissioned Officers Association of the United States Public Health Service

*Protecting the interests of the USPHS Commissioned Corps since 1951*

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk  
The Honorable Bonnie Cullison  
240 Tay House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report – SB 309 – Department of Veterans and Military Families – Online Registry (Amended to Communications, Outreach and Advocacy Program – Alterations)**

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

On behalf of the Commissioned Officers Association, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB 309 – Department of Veterans and Military Families – Online Registry (Amended to Communications, Outreach and Advocacy Program – Alterations)**. This amended bill would require that the Department use the existing Communications, Outreach and Advocacy Program to provide much needed information about benefits and assistance that is available at both the State and federal levels. Further, that the needs of those currently serving, as well as Veterans and their families be raised to the level of the Governor and Legislature for remediation. Through an “all-of-government approach” all agencies that provide services to service members and their families, as well as faith-based groups, veterans groups, senior centers, adult day care centers, institutions of higher education and other agencies will have access to needed information that is timely and consistent.

Maryland is home to the headquarters of both the U.S. Public Health Service AND the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Commissioned Corps. In addition to my headquarters, U.S. Public Health Service officers serve in the Department of Health and Human Services operating administrations including the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Health Resources and Services Administration, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, as well as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, among others. This includes the 1398 officers, 8 Ready Reservists and over 7,000 retirees living in Maryland.

Request for a FAVORABLE Report - **SB 309 – Department of Veterans and Military Families – Online Registry**

The Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service ***strongly supports SB 309 – Department of Veterans and Military Families – -Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy Program Alterations*** asks the Committee for a **FAVORABLE report**.

The mission of the Commissioned Officers Association (COA) is to protect and enhance the public health and safety of the United States by supporting and advancing the interests of the Commissioned Corps and its officers through advocacy, education, training and dissemination of professional information.

We want to thank Senator Simonaire for his continued commitment to our veterans and the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn A. Nash". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynn A. Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN  
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Commissioned Officers Association Director  
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