

HB 789_AFSCME3_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Denise Gilmore

Position: FAV



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Patrick Moran – President

HB 789 – Military Service Credit – Eligibility
Appropriations Committee
March 18, 2025

Position: FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 supports House Bill 789, which is a narrowly tailored bill that extends the Military Service Credit to a small number of AFSCME-represented veterans who served our nation for more than twenty years before bringing their skills and experience into the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS). The scope of this bill is limited. It primarily affects highly experienced pilots who retired from active-duty U.S. military service and who now serve the people of Maryland in the Maryland State Police Aviation Command.

The Value of Experience

Maryland's State Police Aviation Command is a national gold standard. Our crews execute high-stakes, multi-mission flights, transitioning seamlessly from medevac and trauma transport to technical aerial hoists and law enforcement search missions in a single sortie. This level of operational flexibility is rare, mirrored only by specialized units like the U.S. Coast Guard.

For over twenty years, Maryland has shifted away from training internal Troopers as pilots. Instead, the State strategically hires highly experienced, career professional aviators, primarily from the U.S. Armed Forces. By doing so, **Maryland inherits millions of dollars in specialized training and flight hours** at no cost to the taxpayer.

HB 789 Corrects a Policy Disparity

Despite the value these veterans bring, our current retirement system contains a glaring inequity that hampers recruitment:

- **The Inequity:** Currently, veterans who retire from the **National Guard or Reserves** can receive service credit within the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS). However, those who retired from **Active Duty** are excluded from the same benefit.
- **The Impact:** We frequently see two pilots working side-by-side, performing the exact same dangerous missions, yet one receives retirement credit for their military service while the other does not—simply because of the specific status of their prior service.

A Critical Recruitment Tool

The State Police Aviation Command currently faces significant staffing challenges.

We are competing in a fierce regional and national market for helicopter pilots. House Bill 789 is a narrowly tailored solution that offers a powerful incentive for elite military aviators to choose a second career in Maryland public service.

This bill does not just address fairness; it ensures that the skills honed over twenty years of military service are recognized and rewarded when it is put to work for the citizens of Maryland.

Conclusion

By equalizing these benefits, we improve morale, honor the full spectrum of military service, and ensure our helicopters remain staffed by the most experienced pilots in the world.

We urge a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 789.



DVMF HB789 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
ED ROTHSTEIN
SECRETARY

**House Bill 789 - Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Military Service Credit Eligibility
SUPPORT**

March 18, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, 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. Our department supports House Bill 789 - Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Military Service Credit Eligibility.

HB789 is a technical bill that simply updates statutory language to clarify that one military service credit is available to members of the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System. DVMF supports the General Assembly's continued effort to expand eligibility, align with federal language, and modernize the veteran and military-connected definitions across the Code. This bill has no fiscal impact.

Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully ask the committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward C. Rothstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed Rothstein
Secretary

Delegate Forbes Testimony HB789.pdf

Uploaded by: Susan Parts

Position: FAV

CATHI FORBES
Legislative District 43B
Baltimore County

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Education and Economic Development

Chair, Oversight Committee on Pensions



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The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 789

Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System – Military Service Credit Eligibility

Testimony of Delegate Cathi Forbes

Appropriations

March 18, 2026

What this bill does

This bill allows a member or vested member of the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS) to earn military service credit toward their retirement pension.

Why this bill is necessary

Under current law, individuals who receive retirement benefits from the National Guard or Reserves are already eligible for this service credit. However, other military retirees with comparable service are excluded. There are Maryland State Police helicopter pilots who are members of LEOPS, and work side-by-side with colleagues who already receive this benefit. This is about creating parity among our military retirees.

Why you should vote for this bill

This legislation will equalize treatment for individuals who served our country. These veterans often bring critical and highly specialized skills and experience that are coveted in our public safety system. These are professionals we want to recruit and retain in state service.

I ask for a favorable report. It seems like the right thing to do. Thank you.

MTA FAVtestimonyHB789.pdf

Uploaded by: Manuel Geraldo

Position: FWA



M a r y l a n d Troopers Association



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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT, WITH AMENDMENTS, OF HOUSE BILL 789:

Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System- Military Service Credit Eligibility

TO: Chair Barnes & Members of the House Appropriations Committee

FROM: The Maryland Trooper's Association

DATE: March 18th, 2026

The Maryland Troopers Association (MTA) represents men and women whose lives are defined by a singular commitment to public safety. For many MTA members, that commitment began in the United States Armed Forces.

The MTA supports House Bill 789 with amendments, which changes how military service credit works for members of the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS). HB 789 allows LEOPS members to receive up to 5 years of military service credit even if they already receive credit for that same service from another retirement system, such as a military pension.

Under current law, this "double credit" is mostly prohibited, and this bill creates a needed exception. Many of MTA's active members come from a military background or carry a military pension.

Our amendment would simply add "(IV) A member or former member of the State Police Retirement System." House Bill 789 is more than a technical adjustment to the pension code; it is a validation of the continuum of service. We urge this committee to recognize the unique value our veterans bring to the Department and to the people of Maryland.

In an era where law enforcement recruiting is a challenge, Maryland must remain a competitive destination for retiring military personnel.

The Maryland Troopers Association strongly supports House Bill 789 and respectfully urges a Favorable Report with our amendment.

Mike Sekscinski
President, Maryland Troopers Association

Member of National Troopers Coalition

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