

**SB 491\_AFSCME3\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Denise Gilmore

Position: FAV



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Patrick Moran – President

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**SB 491 – Military Service Credit – Eligibility**  
**Budget and Tax Committee**  
**February 19, 2025**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

AFSCME Council 3 supports Senate Bill 491, which removes the prohibition against allowing military service credit for state employees who are active-duty retirees and are part of the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS). This legislation is vital for both fairness and addressing critical staffing shortages.

**Recruitment: Addressing Staffing Shortages**

The state has faced difficulties in recruiting enough Helicopter pilots in the Aviation Commend in the Maryland State Police. One of the most promising solutions to these staffing shortages is to recruit former military personnel. These individuals already possess the skills and experience necessary for success in highly structured, mission-critical environments. Military service instills discipline, adherence to protocols, and a strong sense of order, all of which are directly transferable to the demands of their work.

**Fairness: Ensuring Equal Benefits for Military Retirees**

This bill addresses a fairness issue in our retirement systems. Currently, individuals who retire from the National Guard or the Reserves can already receive service credit for their military service when they join state retirement systems like LEOPS. However, active-duty military retirees do not receive this same benefit. Senate Bill 491 would correct this disparity, ensuring that individuals who serve in different branches of the military are treated equitably. This is particularly important when two employees, one a National Guard or Reserves retiree, and the other a retired active-duty military service member, work side-by-side but receive different retirement benefits for comparable service. Equalizing these benefits will enhance fairness and morale among state employees.

**Skills and Experience: Enhancing the Workforce**

Beyond fairness, this legislation offers a clear incentive for military retirees to consider careers in state service.

Military veterans bring invaluable skills to the table that are urgently needed. These individuals often have extensive leadership experience, security training, crisis management expertise, and the resilience necessary to thrive in high-pressure environments. By offering military service credit, the state can attract skilled personnel who are ready to contribute immediately, helping to fill critical vacancies and improve the overall performance of our workforce.

## **Supporting Staffing Needs and Equity**

In conclusion, Senate Bill 491 not only ensures fairness by providing equity among military retirees but also serves as a strategic response to the ongoing staffing shortages in key state agencies. By incentivizing military veterans to join the workforce, this legislation will help address these critical shortages while bringing much-needed skills and experience to vital public safety roles.

We urge you to provide a favorable report on Senate Bill 491. This bill is a crucial step in building a stronger, more effective workforce and ensuring that those who have served our country are treated fairly in their pursuit of meaningful careers in state service.



# Testimony HB0747 4.pdf

Uploaded by: George Clark

Position: FAV

## Environment and Transportation Committee

02/17/2026

Good afternoon, Chairman Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, Delegate Patterson, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. My name is George Clark, and I am here as a life-long resident of Maryland, and for the record, I serve as the Transportation Director for the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. I am here today to testify in strong support of House Bill 0474, the 'Clear Before You Drive Act'.

In Southern Maryland, our commuters rely on high-speed regional arteries where “ice missiles” - large sheets of ice flying off uncleared vehicles - pose a severe and often unpredictable threat. HB 0474 addresses a critical gap in our vehicle laws by requiring drivers to remove snow and ice from exposed surfaces, including hoods, roofs, and trailers, before driving on the road.

We have had 3 serious crashes from the snow/ice storm this year: one in Anne Arundel County (involving a Police Officer), one in Harford County, and one in St Mary's County, and many more I am sure that go unreported. There is no information on the crash report database that clearly addresses serious injury/fatal/property damage due to ice/snow falling off one vehicle and hitting another, kept by MDOT/MVA Highway Safety Office.

This legislation is balanced and fair. It classifies the simple failure to clear a vehicle as a secondary offense. This ensures that the primary focus is on public education and voluntary compliance rather than unnecessary traffic stops. However, it rightly shifts to primary enforcement when negligence leads to real-world harm.

Critically, this bill establishes significant penalties when a failure to clear a vehicle contributes to accidents resulting in property damage, serious injury, or death:

Noncommercial Vehicles: Fines between \$200 and \$1,000.

Commercial Vehicles: Fines are between \$500 and \$1,500.

As a transportation official, I believe these tiered fines for commercial and noncommercial operators reflect the varying levels of risk these vehicles pose to the traveling public.

In closing, I would state that public safety on our highways should not be left to chance during winter weather. By enacting this standard, we protect Maryland drivers from preventable tragedies. On behalf of the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland, I urge a favorable report on HB 0474. Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of this important legislation.

George Clark  
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**SB491 WRITTEN TESTIMONY.pdf**

Uploaded by: johnny salling

Position: FAV

JOHNNY RAY SALLING  
Legislative District 6  
Baltimore County

Budget and Taxation Committee  
Public Safety, Transportation,  
and Environment Subcommittee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Chair Guy Guzzone  
Vice Chair Jim Rosapepe  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 19, 2026

To the Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bill 491 - Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Military Service Credit Eligibility.

This bill allows a member or vested former member of the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS) to earn military service credit toward their retirement pension, correcting a clear fairness issue in our retirement system.

Under current law, individuals who receive retirement benefits from the National Guard or the Reserves are already eligible for this service credit. However, other military retirees with comparable service are excluded. This inequity was first brought to my attention by State Police helicopter pilots who are members of LEOPS and work side-by-side with colleagues who have already received this benefit.

This legislation also has the added benefit of equalizing treatment for individuals we actively want to recruit and retain into state service—individuals who often bring critical, highly specialized skills and experience that are in short supply. It also addresses critical staffing shortages in key public safety roles and ensuring that our retirement system supports our ability to attract and retain qualified professionals.

As introduced, we have limited this military services credit to LEOPS, but when the budget improves in future years, we hope that we might be able to extend this benefit to even more employees in other retirement systems to address these same issues there.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would urge a favorable report on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Johnny Ray Salling".

Senator Johnny Ray Salling

# **DVMF SB0491 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**  
*ACTING SECRETARY*

**Senate Bill 491 - Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Military Service Credit Eligibility  
SUPPORT**

February 19, 2026

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Budget & Taxation Committee  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, 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 Senate Bill 491 - Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System - Military Service Credit Eligibility.

SB491 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  
Acting Secretary

# **SB491\_Veterans.pdf**

Uploaded by: Veterans Caucus Maryland

Position: FAV



MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
VETERANS CAUCUS

February 17, 2026

Senator Guzzone, Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB491, Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System – Military Service Credit Eligibility  
Hearing Date: February 19, 2026

Dear Chairman Guzzone,

Please let this letter serve as notice of the support of the Maryland General Assembly Senate Veterans Caucus for Senate Bill 491.

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Rogers".

Delegate Mike Rogers  
House Chair

cc: Senator Johnny Ray Salling