



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

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**Jimmy Anderson, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Veteran and Military Families  
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF House Bill 278 - Favorable with Amendments  
Health Committee  
February 5, 2026**

Good afternoon Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Committee,

My name is Jimmy Anderson, and I serve as the Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families. I also show up as a post 9/11 veteran that has served for over 16 years in the Air Force and continues that service today in the Air Force Reserve. I am also a proud Montgomery County District 20 resident. I am here today to offer our Department's strong support for HB 278, the Longevity Ready Maryland Act.

The Department of Aging's departmental bill represents a fundamental shift in how Maryland prepares for its future. For my Department, this isn't just an aging policy, it is a promise to our veterans that their final chapters will be written with the same dignity and support they earned in their first chapters of service.

Maryland is home to over 360,000 veterans, and our population is aging. At DVMF, we see this firsthand every day at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, where we provide a continuum of care for hundreds of residents who require skilled nursing and assisted living.

The data from VA's National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics is clear:

41% of Maryland veterans -- nearly 150,000 veterans -- are already age 65 or older.

By 2030, this segment will surge as our Vietnam-era veterans, who make up over 32% of our total population, continue to age.

DVMF looks forward to collaborating with the Department of Aging to integrate the needs of veterans into their multisector Longevity Ready Maryland Plan. Our veterans face unique challenges as they age, including service-connected disabilities and chronic conditions like toxic exposure or PTSD that require a specialized, trauma-informed healthcare infrastructure.

By integrating the needs of veterans into the plan, Maryland will build a more inclusive system. Furthermore, we strongly support updating the Commission on Aging membership to include a designated veteran, ensuring that the "lived experience" of Maryland's 360,000 veterans and their families is present at the highest levels of policy and advocacy.

The Longevity Ready Maryland Act ensures that those who served our country can age with purpose and financial security right here in the state they call home. DVMF stands ready to partner with the Department of Aging to build this longevity ecosystem.

Thank you for your time, and for your commitment to Maryland's military-connected communities. On behalf of the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families, I respectfully ask for a favorable report with amendments on House Bill 278.