

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 915 (Senator McFadden)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government
Operations

State Government - Maryland Veterans Commission - Membership

This bill increases the membership of the Maryland Veterans Commission from 27 to 28 by adding one member selected by the Governor from a list of individuals submitted by the Colonial Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Reimbursement for travel and miscellaneous expenses for an additional member could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Maryland Veterans Commission consists of 27 members. One member is appointed from each of the 8 Congressional districts, 1 is a veteran appointed from the State at large, 1 is a representative of a women veterans organization, 1 is a representative of a retired enlisted organization, and 16 are appointed from lists submitted by various veterans' organizations. This bill adds the Colonial Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America to the list of those organizations who may submit a list of candidates to the Governor for appointment. A member is not entitled to compensation, but may receive reimbursement from the Department of Veteran Affairs for travel and other expenses.

A new organization is not eligible for representation on the commission, by appointment of the Governor, unless it is congressionally chartered.

Background: The Maryland Veterans Commission advises the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on all matters pertaining to veterans' issues. Founded in 1924 as the Soldiers' Relief Fund Commission dedicated to helping disabled World War I veterans, it was renamed the Maryland Veterans Commission in 1935. Along with the Maryland Veterans Home Commission and the War Memorial Commission, the Maryland Veterans Commission became part of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in 1999. Among other things, Chapter 238 of 2006 reduced the commission's membership from 30 to 27.

Founded in 1946, the Paralyzed Veterans of America became a congressionally chartered veterans' organization in 1971. The organization's mission is to maximize the quality of life for its members and all people with spinal cord injuries or dysfunctions. It aims to use its expertise to advocate for • quality healthcare for its members; • research and education addressing spinal cord injury and dysfunction; • benefits available as a result of members' military service; and • civil rights and opportunities that maximize its members' independence.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1719 of 2006, a substantially similar bill, passed the House and was heard by the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Matters Committee no further action was taken.

Cross File: HB 1412 (Delegate Harrison, *et al.*) – Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Department of Legislative Services

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