

SB 215

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

First Reader

Senate Bill 215 (Senator Simonaire)

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Education, Energy, and the Environment and Judicial Proceedings

Veterans and Uniformed Services - Maryland Veterans Trust Fund and Application of Laws

This bill generally extends applicability of certain provisions related to local government personnel, trout stamps, and landlord remedies (under tenant holding over actions) to definitively include all members of the uniformed services. In addition to other clarifying and conforming changes, the bill also relocates the existing definition of a “military protection order” to the State Government Article.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues may decrease minimally (likely by less than \$5,000 annually) due to additional individuals qualifying for an exemption from trout stamps, as discussed below. The bill is otherwise not anticipated to materially impact State finances or operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: The bill alters several provisions of State law that generally reference military service. In some instances, the bill's changes are clarifying or conforming changes only; in other instances, provisions are expanded to apply more broadly.

Trout Stamps: For example, any person age 16 or older must generally secure an angler's license to fish in the nontidal waters of the State, as specified in statute. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must adopt regulations to establish fishing areas where a trout stamp is required in addition to an angler's license. However, certain individuals are exempt from requiring a trout stamp, including any resident serving in the *armed forces* of the United States while on leave in the State, during the resident's leave period, if, while angling, the resident possesses a copy of the resident's official leave order. The bill repeals the reference to *armed forces* and replaces it with *uniformed services*, thereby extending applicability to members of the Public Health Service (PHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Expedited Process in Tenant Holding Over Actions: Similarly, certain provisions in the Real Property Article establish specific requirements in tenant holding over actions if the landlord or the landlord's spouse (1) is on active duty with the United States military; (2) has relocated to the State as a direct result of being on active duty; (3) intends to occupy the property that is the subject of the complaint following the entry of the judgment; and (4) submits supporting documentation. In applicable actions, the District Court must order in the summons for the tenant (or assignee or subtenant) to appear before the court no later than 45 days after the landlord makes a complaint to repossess the property. If the sheriff does not serve the summons within 10 days after issuance, the summons may be served by a private process server. The bill generally repeals references to *military*, instead substituting *active service member*; accordingly, those in active service of PHS and NOAA are definitively included. Under the applicable definition, an active service member is an individual who is an active-duty member of the uniformed services or serving in a reserve component of the uniformed services on active-duty orders.

Eligibility for Credit Under Selection Test – Local Governments: If a county or municipality uses a selection test for the hiring or appointment of employees, the county or municipality may adopt a local law that allows for the application of a credit of 10 points, or its equivalent, on a selection test for an eligible spouse, an eligible veteran, the spouse of an eligible veteran who has a service-connected disability, or the surviving spouse of a deceased eligible veteran. However, an otherwise eligible veteran who is convicted of a crime after being discharged from or completing *military* service is ineligible for a credit. The bill replaces the reference to *military* with *uniformed services*.

Military Protection Order: A "military protection order" means a protection order issued in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 1567 by a commanding officer against a person in the officer's command in (1) any branch of the uniformed services; (2) the Maryland National Guard; or (3) the national guard of any other state. (The definition is unchanged under the bill.)

Other Provisions: In 2025, Maryland enacted several pieces of legislation establishing uniform definitions of various military-related terms and expanding certain benefits more broadly to additional individuals based on military service. The bill also alters additional provisions, which generally conform and clarify existing provisions to the changes made in 2025.

State Revenues: According to DNR, approximately 2,200 additional State residents may qualify for a trout stamp exemption under the bill. Based on an assumption that approximately 10% of those individuals may acquire an angler's license and fish for trout, special fund revenues may decrease from trout stamps by up to \$4,400 on an annual basis.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Municipal League; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Natural Resources; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Veterans and Military Families; Military Department; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 2026
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