

TESTIMONY – HB1027, MIL SVC CREDIT, ELIGIBILITY – APPROPRIATIONS – FEB 27, 2020 - SUPPORT

Good day my name is David Aalders, I am a Navy retired veteran. I'm currently working in an exciting career within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. On the onset I would like to state that my opinions are not those of the Department and I'm not here representing the Department.

I support HB1027 and stand as an example of what the retired Veteran can bring to the Department. I've served in some of the most elite commands, held top secret clearances and worked under the most extreme conditions. In 2001 I fulfilled my duties to our great country and I chose to relocate my family back home to Maryland where I found a new career in Corrections.

As you can imagine working in a prison system is not the most glorified profession but nevertheless a very rewarding career. It's rare you'll hear about all the great work our Correctional Officers do on a daily basis but I can assure you that a lot of great work is getting done behind those secure fences and I'm proud to be part of it.

The correctional officer profession is a struggling! It's a struggle because it's hard to recruit quality people who can pass the security background checks. As most know progress is being in this area and I can't help to think if we look at changing this current law how it would afford a means to reach the best that the Military has to offer. I feel that HB1027 is a step in the right direction as it will provide a tool which creates a recruitment incentive to target those career military veterans looking for a job.

Some may say why...why should we allow the retired veteran to be eligible?

My question is why you wouldn't want to provide this. This person's work ethics and leadership qualities have been proven and tested throughout their military career and they are dedicated professionals who's been trained and groomed for stressful jobs in Public Safety. I serve alongside military veteran daily who are eligible for this service credit and I'm doing the same job but I'm not eligible it really does not help one's morale.

In closing, it was my honor to have served our Country and when I discuss this Bill with my fellow citizens they find it hard to believe that Maryland does not recognize all veterans equally.

I cannot think of anyone more deserving then our military veteran who has spent the better part of their life supporting and defending our country.

There could be a few individuals in this room unaware but the retired veteran pays State taxes on their pension and they also have VA Health Coverage. This is definitely a win for all citizens of Maryland.

Thank you for your time and let's make the right decision and make all Veterans eligible.