



## MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

### SENATE BILL 417 – SUPPORT

#### Property Tax – Credit for Disabled Veterans Budget and Taxation Committee February 12, 2020

Good afternoon Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee. My name is Brian Smith. I am a Navy Veteran and a volunteer with the Maryland Military Coalition.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a **nonprofit, all volunteer, Veterans advocacy group** representing the interests of Maryland Veterans, Service members, and their Families. Our alliance consists of sixteen organizations, listed on the following page, with over 100,000 members. We represent about one-fourth of Maryland's Veterans, Service members, and their Families.

The Maryland Military Coalition **supports Senate Bill 417.**

As you know this bill provides a county-optional, partial, sliding scale property tax exemption for disabled Veterans rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs with a 50-99% service-connected, permanent disability.

Presently, service-disabled Veterans, rated 100% permanent and total, and their surviving spouses, are entitled to a full property tax exemption on their primary residence. There are approximately 10,500 severely disabled Veterans and surviving spouses entitled to that benefit.

**This new effort would potentially afford partial property tax relief to over 24,000 additional severely disabled Veterans!**

A 50% permanent disability rating reflects a severe condition, where the life and livelihood of the Veteran will be significantly impacted. Such a Veteran is far less likely to be able gain and maintain employment and is far more likely to require the assistance of a caregiver. Since the caregiver is often the Veteran's spouse, the spouse is challenged in maintaining meaningful employment. The cumulative effect exacerbates the challenge of owning and remaining in a home.

In one of my final Navy assignments, I had the honor of leading a medical holding unit, assisting over 180 wounded, ill, and injured Sailors through the Military-Veterans Affairs disability rating process and their transition back to civilian life. I noted a distinct demarcation in the overall health and well-being of Sailors that were rated at a 50% disability rating or higher.

Their cumulative, permanent medical conditions would dramatically, often devastatingly, impact the rest of their lives. They are amongst our most deserving, yet most vulnerable citizens.

The Maryland Military Coalition believes we must honor the service and acknowledge the sacrifice of our severely disabled Veterans. **Senate Bill 417** does so, by providing greater economic viability for severely disabled Veterans and the Veterans' family caregivers by ensuring their ability to afford and remain in their homes.

**We respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 417.**

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact me at  
BTSmith1184@outlook.com or by calling 703.623.3678

**Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition**

*James P. Monahan*  
Air Force Sergeants Association

*Stacy P. May*  
American Military Society

*Lynn A. Nash*  
Commissioned Officers Association of the  
US Public Health Service

*Wilbert B. Forbes*  
Disabled American Veterans

*Sheldon Goldberg*  
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

*Pleasala J. Collins*  
Fleet Reserve Association

*Evan A. Buttrick*  
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

*Steve L. Bloodgood*  
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'  
Association

*Harvey Kaplan*  
Military Officers Association of America

*Charles Egbert*  
Military Order of the Purple Heart

*Mervyn Rice*  
National Association for Black Veterans

*Michael P. Hays*  
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

*Christian Andreasen*  
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

*Catherine L. McGraw*  
Society of Military Widows

*Arthur L. Cooper*  
The Retired Enlisted Association

*Thomas C. Williams*  
Veterans of Foreign Wars