



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

SENATE BILL 128 – SUPPORT

Senate Bill 128 – Pets for Vets Act of 2020
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
January 29, 2020

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 128.**

As you know, this bill directs county or municipality animal control facilities to waive dog or cat adoption fees for Veterans with their "Veteran" status denoted on their motor vehicle administration identification card. While this will slightly impact revenues for these facilities, it **can directly and dramatically assist in saving the lives of both our Veterans and the animals!**

Simply put, Vets save Pets, and Pets save Vets! This legislation is a win-win-win, it helps save animals from shelters, it helps our disabled Veterans cope with life's challenges, and it helps free up space in our shelters to allow them to rescue more animals.

As the wonderful nonprofit, "Pets For Vets" notes:

Many brave troops return home with scars – both seen and unseen – that make it difficult to transition back to civilian life. At the same time, millions of wonderful companion animals wait in shelters for a forever home.

When a Veteran is matched with the right pet, both lives change for the better. The Veteran saves and welcomes the pet into a loving home. The pet provides the Veteran with unconditional love and support, easing stress, depression, loneliness and anxiety. **Together, they share a bond that provides them both with a whole new "leash" on life.**

As a disabled, combat Veteran, I can attest to the incalculable value that Tommy, my rescue Beagle, has added to my life, as I faced the mental and physical challenges resulting from my service.

The Maryland Military Coalition believes that our Veterans are living testaments to the ideals of honor, service, and sacrifice. They deserve to enjoy the freedoms that they purchased for all of us through their selfless sacrifice on behalf of our nation.

Consequently, we must support measures that help our Veterans live their lives with dignity and fulfillment. It is important to have programs and services that support their ability to lead productive, independent lives. **The "Pets for Vets Act of 2020" provides just such a program!**

We respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 128.

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact me at
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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