



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for HB 257: Property Tax – Credit for Disabled Veterans

Ways and Means Committee

Good afternoon Madam Chairwoman, Vice Chair, and distinguished members of the committee. I am Del. Brian Crosby and it's an honor to present House Bill 257 entitled **Property Tax – Credit for Disabled Veterans**.

This bill would award veterans a property tax credit based on their service-related disability rating. Veterans with a disability rating between 50% and 74% would be eligible for a 25% property tax credit, while veterans with a 75% to 99% rating would receive a 50% property tax credit. Current state law only allows for veterans with a 100% service-related disability to be eligible for a property tax exemption. However, I know many veterans, including two that served in my own units, who have injuries or conditions severe enough to prevent them from performing significant levels of work, but who simultaneously do not have a 100% disability rating. This creates a gap for those disabled veterans which the current Maryland tax statute does not provide relief for. This legislation proposes to alleviate property taxes proportionally for those who have served us, and our country, at a great cost.

In FY2020, 12,386 property owners received a property tax exemption for being a disabled veteran, a surviving spouse, or a disabled active duty service member, for approximately \$4.1 billion. Currently, Maryland has the 19th largest veteran population with 380,000 veterans. Approximately 80,000 of those veterans are receiving disability compensation, with another ~20,000 suffering from 70% to 90% service related disability rating. This rating reflects a severe disability which makes the probability of gainful employment far less likely, while increasing the need for required caregiver assistance and other medical treatments. Additionally, some may need home repairs to accommodate their injuries. The financial burden and stress of owning and remaining in their own home should not be something that our most deserving citizens should struggle with.

As a former soldier in the United States Army, I want to propose legislation that provides substantial assistance to our veterans with significant service related injuries. Based on these reasons, I ask for a favorable ruling on HB 201.