



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

HOUSE BILL 257 – SUPPORT

**House Bill 257 – Property Tax – Credit for Disabled Veterans
Ways and Means Committee
February 6, 2020**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Kaiser and Members of the Ways and Means Committee. My name is Brian Smith. I am a Veteran 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 House Bill 257.**

As you know this bill provides a partial, sliding scale property tax exemption for disabled Veterans rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs with a 50-99% service-connected 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 this 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. **House Bill 257** 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 home.

We respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 257.

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact me at
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Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition


Air Force Sergeants Association


American Military Society


Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service


Disabled American Veterans


Distinguished Flying Cross Association


Fleet Reserve Association

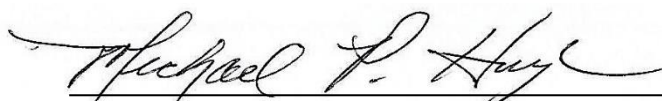

Jewish War Veterans of the USA


Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association

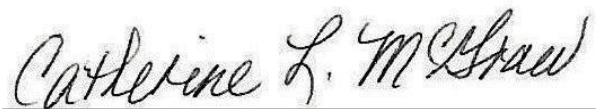

Military Officers Association of America


Military Order of the Purple Heart


National Association for Black Veterans


Naval Enlisted Reserve Association


NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers


Society of Military Widows


The Retired Enlisted Association


Veterans of Foreign Wars