

February 18th, 2020

In support of HB 766 – Property Tax Credit – Disabled Military Personnel and Surviving Spouses

Good afternoon Chairwoman Kaiser and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I am pleased to offer testimony in support of **HB 766: Property Tax Credit – Disabled Military Personnel and Surviving Spouses**, which would authorize local jurisdictions to grant property tax credits to eligible active duty and retired military personnel with service-connected disabilities and their surviving spouses who have not remarried.

As the law in Maryland currently stands, armed service veterans with a permanent and total service-connected disability rated at 100% by the VA may receive a property tax exemption. Further, veterans aged 65 and over and their surviving unremarried spouses are eligible to receive property tax credits as determined by local jurisdictions.

This bill alters the eligibility criteria for who may receive property tax credits from their local jurisdictions to include other deserving populations. Under this bill, local governments would have the choice to allow veterans who are younger than 65 and living with a service-connected disability rated below 100% and their unremarried surviving spouses to receive property tax credits. Local governments would also have the choice to allow active duty military personnel with any level of a service-connected disability and their unremarried surviving spouses to receive such credits. The bill leaves it to local governments to decide how to define “service-connected disability” for purposes of the credit in their respective jurisdictions.

Regardless of their age or status as active duty or retired, military personnel who have suffered a disabling injury during active duty and their surviving spouses are deserving of support and assistance. By continuing to improve the level of support available to military members, veterans, and surviving spouses living in Maryland, we encourage military families to remain in Maryland, improve our communities, economy and reputation as a state who gives back to those who risked their lives for our freedom.

To demonstrate Maryland’s continued support for military members and their families, we must extend necessary benefits to those with service-connected disabilities and their surviving spouses. Therefore, I respectfully urge the committee to provide a favorable report for HB 766.