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Frederick and Carroll Counties

Judiciary Committee

Subcommittees

Civil Law and Procedure
Family and Juvenile Law

Task Force to Study Crime
Classification and Penalties



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 3, 2021

Favorable Testimony HB 874, Maryland Veterans Trust Fund – CAM for Veterans Grant Program
David Perez Military Heroes Act (End 22 a Day)

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk and committee members:

House Bill 874 establishes a grant program for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, or stress seeking relief through and needing financial assistance to obtain complementary and alternative medical treatments.

In 2013, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs released a report that from 1999 to 2010, tragically, 22 veterans a day in the United States were dying by suicide. This is a heartbreaking and tragic statistic about the brave men and women who have served our country.

This bill is named in honor of one of those veterans. David Perez was a Marylander, Veteran, and patriot with a big heart. He was also a friend of mine. He served in the United States Army for 11 years, he was a combat vet, and after he served his country he decided to dedicate his life to helping other veterans who served with their challenges from time served in the military. Sadly, in the fall of 2020 David's own challenges from his time served caught up with him, and we lost him way too soon. I am tired of hearing stories of so many of our veterans leaving us way too soon and it is past time to do more about this serious issue.

Our combat veterans in Maryland are struggling with stress, depression, and PTSD. A 2020 Baltimore Sun article reported that military suicides jumped by as much as 20% for 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. The increase is even greater for suicides among active duty soldiers. Those deaths were up 30% in 2020, rising from 88 last year to 114 this year as a result of COVID-19 restrictions in the US.

I wish to honor David Perez's service to his country and fellow Marylanders by continuing his work of helping our struggling veterans receive assistance for alternative forms of treatment for their time serving our country. We hope that these forms of treatment will provide a larger range of care than just taking a pill to address their needs. Our veterans in Maryland have made the ultimate sacrifice and have fought for our freedoms. Let's do all that we can in Maryland to fight for them!

I respectfully ask these committees for a favorable report for MD 2021 SB 656 / HB 874 Maryland Veterans Trust Fund – CAM for Veterans Grant Program – Established (David Perez Military Heroes Act (End 22 a Day))

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Cox', written in a cursive style.

Daniel L. Cox