

Statement of Jayson L. Spiegel
In Support of HB0571
Montgomery County – Disabled Active Duty Service Members, Disabled Veterans, and
Surviving Spouses – Property Tax Abatement MC 20-21
February 2, 2021

My name is Jayson Spiegel. I am a Gaithersburg resident and retired after 28 years commissioned service in the Army and Army Reserve. I am a former Executive Director of the Reserve Officers Association of America and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. I am responsible for social media activities of the Maryland Democratic Party Veterans Leadership Council. I am speaking in my personal capacity.

I urge the House of Delegates to pass HB0571, providing an abatement of overdue property tax assessments for 100% service-disabled veterans and surviving spouses.

This legislation will provide financial support to our disabled veterans and surviving spouses at a time of great economic uncertainty. Many potential beneficiaries of the legislation live on a fixed income and may have limited employment because of disability.

An exemption on property taxes or a refund will reduce the living expenses of disabled veterans and surviving spouses, which increases the likelihood of their remaining in their homes. This is particularly important because those homes may have been retrofitted or modified to accommodate disabilities, e.g., ramps, chair lifts for stairs, lower cabinets, bathrooms, etc.

During the midst of a pandemic, providing housing and economic stability to this population is necessary.

I also want to draw your attention to SB0591, a bill to change the definition of a disabled veteran entitled to property tax exemption from 100% to 80% disability. Since even an 80% disability rating can adversely affect the ability of a veteran to maintain stable employment, expanding the abatement to cover a larger pool of veterans may be appropriate.

I want to thank the Delegation for tacking this issue and urge the passage of HB0571.

Thank you.