



Testimony before Senate/House Budget and Taxation Committee  
Senate Bill 709: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Alternative Therapies Fund- Establishment (David Perez  
Military Heroes Act (End 22 a Day))

**\*\*SUPPORT\*\***

March 1, 2022

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Legislative Committee, we would like to express our support for Senate Bill 709 – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Alternative Therapies Fund- Establishment.

NASW is the largest national organization of social workers representing over 120,000 social workers and over 16,000 of those are licensed here in the state of Maryland.

The Veteran’s Administration is the largest employer of Social Workers in the nation with more than 15,000 Master’s degree social workers on staff. Social workers are committed to supporting the health and well-being of our nation’s veterans and their families. Veterans have given so much, and in some case, their lives, in service of this country. Approximately 75% of veterans in the U.S. suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and veteran suicide rates are at an all-time high and rising.

This fund will support the study of the effectiveness of and improving access to alternative therapies. One of the therapies of focus is 2,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA). In Phase III MDMA trials, funded by the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), 67% of patients no longer met PTSD diagnostic criteria two months after treatment. In comparison, current therapies and medications for PTSD may be needed for a lifetime, diminishing the quality of life for veterans and their families. In addition, MAPS reports that the use of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for PTSD results in an estimated healthcare cost-savings of more than \$103,200 million per patient over a 30-year regular treatment horizon when compared to more traditional treatments.

My grandfather and father are veterans and my twin brother is an active-duty Marine. I have personally witnessed the debilitating effects of PTSD in the veteran population. I have suffered from PTSD most of my life and can personally speak to the life-changing impact alternative therapies have had on such a chronic mental health disorder. For our veterans living with PTSD, the establishment of the PTSD Alternative Therapies Fund would provide supportive research that may one day lead to fuller, healthy, and productive lives.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the benefits of alternative therapies that this program may provide to the men and women who have served this country and ask for a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Emma Earnest UMBC BSW Student, Psychedelic Coach, PTSD Survivor  
BSW Representative and CNLI Committee Chair, NASW-MD