



## MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

March 4, 2022

Honorable Shane Pendergrass  
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee  
241 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis MD 21401-1912

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass and Distinguished Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

House Bill 1251 before your committee on March 8, 2022, is a valuable measure. Under current state law, eligible spouses and dependents of veterans must provide the cost of burial with their sponsor in one of the five Maryland State Veterans Cemeteries. HB 1251 would authorize and direct our state to cover the cost (\$828) for opening and closing of a gravesite.

The State Department of Veterans Affairs' (MDVA) [Annual Report](#) (2021) shows that 3,929 veterans and dependents were interred in our state veterans' cemeteries in 2020. Over the past five (5) years, on average, 3,405 veterans and dependents were buried in a state cemetery. The number of eligible dependents interred in 2021 was 1,407 or 60% of the total number of burials (3,736) according to the MDVA. For the current year to date, 1,230 dependents, or 64% of the total, have been interred with their veteran sponsor.

Therefore, based on a rate of 62% of the average number of veterans interred in state cemeteries per year (3,405) -- the annual cost of dependent burials would be approximately \$1.747 million per year (3,405 x .62 x \$828). Accordingly, the Maryland Military Coalition **recommends an AMENDMENT to HB 1251 to cover the cost of the proposed legislative change.**

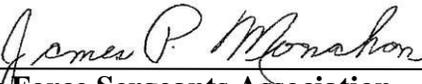
Finally, the MMC notes that the language in the bill conforms to existing state and Federal law governing eligibility for the burial of veterans in Maryland state veterans' cemeteries.

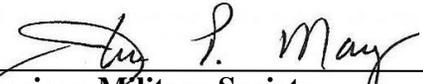
The Maryland Military Coalition is a voluntary, non-partisan organization representing 19 veteran service organizations who serve over 150,000 Maryland uniformed services men and women and their families. The Coalition strongly supports House Bill 1251 and asks for your **favorable** report. Thank you to Delegate Branch (D45) for sponsoring this important legislation.

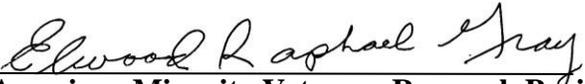
Yours, respectfully

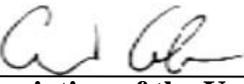
Lynn A. Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN  
CAPTAIN, U.S. Public Health Service (Ret)  
Communications Director

## Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition

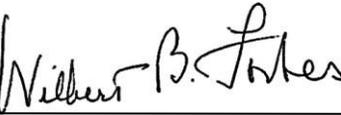
  
Air Force Sergeants Association

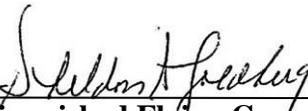
  
American Military Society

  
American Minority Veterans Research Project

  
Association of the United States Navy

  
Commissioned Officers Association of the  
US Public Health Service

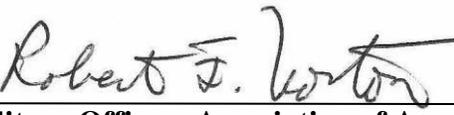
  
Disabled American Veterans

  
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

  
Fleet Reserve Association

  
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

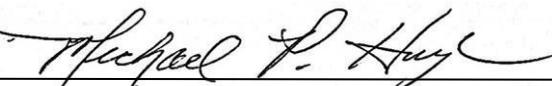
  
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'  
Association

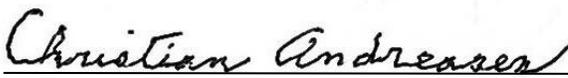
  
Military Officers Association of America

  
Military Order of the Purple Heart

  
Montford Point Marines of America

  
National Association for Black Veterans

  
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

  
Reserve Organization of America

  
Reserve Organization of America

  
Society of Military Widows

  
Veterans of Foreign Wars