



# MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

Oral Testimony  
**In Support of HB 597**  
**Recommend FAVORABLE Report**  
Robert Norton, President

Madam Chair Atterbeary and distinguished members of the Ways and Means Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **FAVOR** of Delegate Mangione's bill, "Income Tax – Subtraction Modification – Military and Public Safety Retirement Income," HB597.

My name is Bob Norton. I am the President of the 19 military and veterans groups of the Maryland Military Coalition. I am a retired Army officer and also the current President of the Military Officers Association of America Maryland Council of Chapters.

The Maryland Military Coalition supports HB 597. The bill would increase the 'income tax subtraction' from the current \$15,000 to \$30,000 for certain military and public safety retirement income and lower the eligibility age from 55 to 50.

As the Committee knows, there are more than a half-dozen bills in play this session that would partially or fully eliminate state tax on Uniformed Services' and certain public safety retired income depending on the measure. We believe there is broad-based support in Annapolis to do more on this issue. At the heart of the matter in our view is keeping top talent in our state. Ultimately, our goal remains the elimination of our state's tax on military retired pay as 35 states -- including Nebraska this year -- have done. Year over year, the challenge appears to be projected cost, not the offsetting benefit to our state's economy as outlined in Towson University's 2019 report on Maryland's defense industry.

The Coalition believes this issue should be seen through the lens of its enormous potential to benefit our state's economy by attracting and retaining highly qualified and experienced women and men who have successfully completed challenging and often dangerous careers in service to our nation.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan organization with approximately 150, 000 members including currently serving, National Guard and Reserves, veterans, retirees, their families, caretakers and survivors.

The Maryland Military Coalition recommends a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB 597** and we thank DEL Mangione for his leadership on this issue.

Thank you.

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