

**STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**



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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of Governor Moore, I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report on Senate Bill 554 - Maryland National Guard - Tricare Premium Reimbursement Program - Establishment (Health Care for Heroes Act of 2023). Bolstering Maryland's culture of service is a guiding mission for the Moore-Miller Administration, whether that means establishing new opportunities for service or providing support to those who serve. This proposal seeks to accomplish both goals by creating an avenue to free healthcare and dental care for the brave men and women who serve in the Maryland National Guard.

This Health Care for Heroes Act seeks to establish a program within the Maryland Military Department to reimburse members of the Maryland National Guard for healthcare and dental care premiums paid through Tricare Premium Select. This proposal will create a powerful recruitment and retention tool for the Guard while helping both the health and finances of those who serve our state and nation.

If passed, Maryland would be the first state in the nation to establish an avenue to free health and dental care for National Guard members. This would place Maryland firmly as a leader in supporting those who serve us. A dollar invested under this program is a dollar invested in our troops' well-being, combat readiness, and security.

In order to give back to those who serve us, I respectfully ask the committee for a favorable report on Senate Bill 554.

Sincerely,

Brad Fallon
Deputy Legislative Officer