

In-Person Testimony by Patrick J. Guibao on Senate Bill 354  
Before the Budget and Taxation Committee  
February 15, 2023

---

Good afternoon members of the Budget and Taxation Committee. I am Patrick Guibao, representing The American Legion Department of Maryland and the Fleet Reserve Association's six Branches throughout the State.

Senate Bill 354 is a long overdue measure. The Maryland Veteran's Trust Fund managed by the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs brings fresh hope those who have served our nation and are down on their luck financially. Assistance from the fund means a one-time house or car payment or other critical financial needs paid directly to the creditor.

Funding for the Trust comes through individual donations with its biggest revenue source from the State's Casinos. While this is helpful it's also a problem. Existing regulations don't state where the donations box can be placed and its location is the choice of the establishments. When I visited the Maryland Live Casino in Hanover last year it was not in close proximity to the Cashier booth which would be advantageous but rather in a dimly lit area near the rest rooms.

Allowing the placement of the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund Contribution would not only allow for greater contributions but enable a public education on this valuable resource to the veterans, to the community.

In closing, our combined veteran organizations with a combined membership of over 142,000 throughout the State urge the Budget and Taxation Committee to render a favorable report on Senate Bill 354 and extend a helping hand to those veterans in need. We applaud Senator Gile and the bipartisan members for sponsoring this valuable proposal. Thank you.

