



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of SB354
Income Tax Checkoff - Maryland Veterans Trust Fund**

Madame Chair and Fellow Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Marylanders who have served our country should be honored and supported in every way possible. To live up to that commitment, the state established the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund (MVTF) in 2009. The MVTF provides grants or loans directly to veterans and their families as well as public and private programs that serve them. The MVTF is supported by individual, specified proceeds from the sale of tickets from instant ticket lottery machines by specified veterans' organizations, specified donations from video lottery facility players, designated fees from certain special registration license plates, and specified civil penalty revenues. According to the MVTF's FY2021 Annual Report, donations from individuals represented less than 5% of its revenue of nearly \$400,000 that year.¹

By offering Maryland taxpayers the option to contribute to the MVTF on their annual state tax returns, this bill provides taxpayers with an easy way to donate to a trusted organization that directly improves the lives of Maryland veterans. It will also provide the MVTF with additional funding to expand the important work it is already providing in the state. Some examples from its FY2021 Annual Report include:

- \$4,384.03 was used to cover past due rent for a veteran in Baltimore City who lost her job due to the pandemic.
- \$1,659.73 and \$1,024.69 was used to help the widow of a veteran from Charles County get caught up on her past due water bill and utilities bill.
- \$1,929.20 was used to pay a car repair bill for a veteran in Montgomery County who lost their job due to the pandemic. They were able to secure a new job but did not have the funds to get their car repaired before they were to start the job.
- \$2,278.83 was used to pay the past due utilities for a disabled veteran from Prince George's County.

This bill was introduced in 2020 and 2021 by former Senator Doug Peters. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 354.

¹ Report to the General Assembly MSAR #9631.

<https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5300/sc5339/000113/025300/025320/20220097e.pdf>