

SB 554_MDCC_Health Care for Heroes Act of 2023_FAV

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Position: FAV



LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Favorable

Senate Bill 554 – Health Care for Heroes Act of 2023

Senate Finance Committee

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Griffith and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 6,400 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic health and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

Senate Bill 554 establishes the Tricare Premium Reimbursement Program (the Program) in the Maryland Military Department (the Department) for the purpose of awarding grants to reimburse members of the Maryland National Guard for dental and health care premiums that they pay for themselves and their families. This legislation also requires the Department to adopt regulations to implement and administer the Program. This program we believe is essential to both the retention of our veterans and the promotion of a next generation approach to transformative health care solutions.

As health care costs continue to rise, driven by inflation and the cost of medical services and products, along with an aging U.S. population, it is more important than ever that Maryland supports our servicemen and women. This legislation provides an incentive for our National Guard members to stay in Maryland, thus allowing them to continue to provide sales tax revenue, volunteer, make charitable contributions and contribute to the State's economy.

National Guard Soldiers serve both our community and country. Jobs are a large part of the economic impact of military spending, which Maryland benefits greatly from. The Maryland Chamber supports legislation that will support and incentivize our military members to stay in the State. SB 554 provides our state with a golden opportunity to properly honor those who serve in the National Guard.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **Favorable Report** on **SB 554**.

Senate Bill 554 Sponsor Testimony.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Brad Fallon

Position: FAV

**STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**



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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, Distinguished Members of the Finance 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 clearly showing appreciation 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 and their families.

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 for themselves and their families. 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

2023-03-01 SB 554 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Hannibal Kemerer

Position: FAV

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March 1, 2023

TO: The Honorable Melony Griffith
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: SB0554 – Maryland National Guard - Tricare Premium Reimbursement
Program - Establishment (Health Care for Heroes Act of 2023) (**Support**)

The Office of the Attorney General requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 554. SB 554 establishes a program within the Maryland Military Department to reimburse members of the Maryland National Guard for healthcare and dental premiums paid for themselves and their families. The program will cover employee premium costs for the federally subsidized Tricare Reserve Select program, creating an avenue to free healthcare for Maryland National Guard members and their families. In addition to expanding access to coverage for those who serve our communities and nation, this program will serve as a powerful recruitment and retention tool for the Guard.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 554.

cc: Committee Members

This bill letter is a statement of the Office of Attorney General's policy position on the referenced pending legislation. For a legal or constitutional analysis of the bill, Members of the House and Senate should consult with the Counsel to the General Assembly, Sandy Brantley. She can be reached at 410-946-5600 or sbrantley@oag.state.md.us.