



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 16, 2023

Chairwoman Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SUBJECT: Request for Favorable Report – HB 291, Health Occupations – Clinical and Graduate Alcohol and Drug Counselors – Licensure

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

As the Communications Director, for the Maryland Military Coalition, I am writing in support of HB 196. For the record, my name is Lynn Nash and I am a PhD-prepared nurse, who has had significant experience in healthcare credentialling—the process of reviewing and evaluating education and training.

HB 196 alters the Maryland qualifications to become licensed to practice as a clinical alcohol and drug counselor by modifying the educational pathway. The bill specifies that the qualifying degrees must be in a professional counselling field from an accredited educational institution that is approved by the State Board of Professional Counselors; and repeals a second pathway of a graduating from a regionally accredited deemed equivalent.

Currently, any applicant who holds a master's or doctoral degree in health and human services counseling from a regionally accredited educational institution qualifies. The purpose of this change is not only for a duty to protect Marylanders from harm, but also to make the credentialling process more consistent with requirements for similar professions that the Board regulates.

While this is a simple, procedural change, it does stand to reason that this change offers protection in that the qualifications cannot be manipulated at the whim of the Board. Therefore, the Maryland Military Coalition, a voluntary, non-partisan organization representing

Page 2, HB 291 - **Favorable**

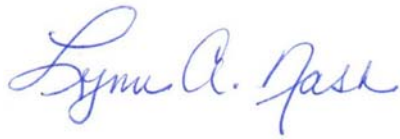
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Written Testimony, CAPT (R) Lynn Nash

19 veteran service organizations who, in turn, serve over 150,000 Maryland uniformed services men, women and their families, **supports** House Bill 196 and asks for your **favorable report**. Please do not take my absence in providing oral testimony on this issue as any indication of our degree of support for this issue; rather, I am committed to being present at another committee hearing, scheduled at the same time.

The Coalition would like to offer our thanks to Delegate Guzzone for sponsoring this legislation.

Respectfully,



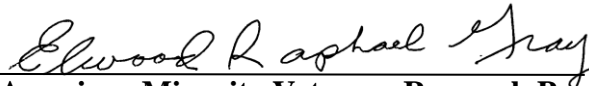
Lynn A. Nash

CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service
Communications Director


Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition


Air Force Sergeants Association


American Military Society

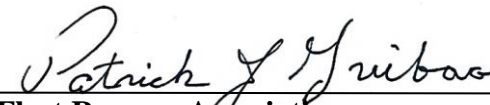

American Minority Veterans Research Project

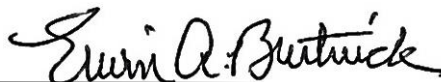

Association of the United States Navy



Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service

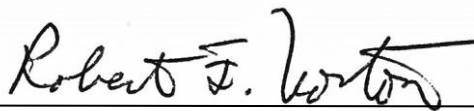

Disabled American Veterans

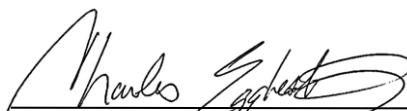

Distinguished Flying Cross Association



Fleet Reserve Association


Jewish War Veterans of the USA


Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association


Military Officers Association of America


Military Order of the Purple Heart


Montford Point Marines of America


National Association for Black Veterans


Naval Enlisted Reserve Association


NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers


Reserve Organization of America


Society of Military Widows


Veterans of Foreign Wars