

HB508

Property Tax Credit - Disabled Law Enforcement Officers and Rescue Workers - Definition and Eligibility

Testimony of Mark Cicero - In Support

February 14, 2023

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee,

For the record, my name is Mark Cicero and I am a disabled Federal Agent living in Maryland. I was injured on 02/02/2010 and required 3 back surgeries over a period of 2 years to try and eliminate the pain from my injury. While these surgeries were mildly successful, I still had pain and was labeled “disabled” and unable to work.

While hearing of other states having laws on the books that allow disabled law enforcement to be exempt from county property taxes, I was surprised that while MD does allow local/county law enforcement to be exempt from county property taxes via Public Law 3-101(e), it does not allow this for Federal Agents. It makes no sense the police forces of county community colleges, Ocean Pines, police force of the MD Dept of Health all receive this benefit, but DEA agents who are raiding drug labs and getting exposure to fentanyl, US Capitol Police that were injured in the riots on Jan 6, and other federal agents are not included in this provision of the law that allows exemption of county property taxes if disabled while performing the functions of their job. While military retirees with disability (even 100%) are able to start a new career and their new salary just supplements their retirement/disability retirement, Federal Agents are the complete opposite.

Once a Federal Agent is labeled as disabled, we are given a portion of our salary from when we were working. If we are able to get clearance from a doctor to start working (in any field) we would then get that amount deducted from our salary for the rest of our lives regardless if we continued working or not.

Due to our geographic location, Maryland is home to many federal agents who have been injured in the line of duty, like myself. This tax benefit would provide financial relief for those that have been injured while serving our country.

For these reasons, and the fact that these men and women have put their lives at risk just like local law enforcement, I believe we should receive the same benefits/tax breaks they are entitled to in MD.

Thank you,

Mark Cicero

