



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

Statement of CAPT Lynn Nash
Maryland Military Coalition

SB 368 – State Retirement and Pension System – Military Service Credit - Eligibility
February 8, 2024

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Military Coalition as its Communications Director, I come before you in support of SB 368 – State Retirement and Pension System – Military Service Credit – Eligibility. For the record, my name is CAPT (R) Lynn Nash. I am a retired U.S. Public Health Officer, who served for over 30 years on active duty in both the U.S. Army and Public Health Service.

Today, as a retired Public Health officer, I would get NO credit for my service time if I became a state employee, even though I have a DD214, 10 U.S. Code § 101 – Definitions, defines U.S. Public Health as a “Uniformed Service”; § 38 U.S. Code, 21 (21) considers members of USPHS and NOAA” as Active Duty. Further, the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 1, Section 28 “Rules of Interpretation” states:

With respect to **ANY STATE PROGRAM OF BENEFITS**, rights, or privileges **APPLICABLE TO A VETERAN** under this code, **the term “VETERAN” includes members of the Commissioned Corps of The Public Health Service and the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (OR ITS PREDECESSOR, THE COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY) IF ELIGIBLE UNDER § 101, TITLE 38 OF THE U.S. CODE.**

This code was passed in 1984, but today, the 1,700 retired public health service officers who live in Maryland, would be denied service credit. SB 368 expands the definition of “military service” as it relates to service credit in the State Retirement and Pension System (SRPS). Unfortunately, this is just another example of “tangled terms” where military, armed services, uniformed services and veteran are used interchangeably, when actually the definitions are very different. And, as a result, you have to take legislation up, to untangle the mess.

I’m here to tell you that today, I’m being left behind. Passage of this bill has the potential to attract more retirees from USPHS and NOAA to your 10,000 or so state vacancies—people who

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have advanced degrees, experience in managing people and programs and who have leadership capabilities that have been tested time and time again. The cost of this bill is minimal but the potential benefits are great. Passage of this bill would enhance the Moore Administration's Year of the Military Families and is in keeping with the Governor's mantra: "Leave No One Behind".

The Maryland Military Coalition is a non-partisan organization of 21 Veteran organizations representing over 150,000 Maryland uniformed services men and women and their families -- almost half of the 355,000 veterans in the State. The Coalition wants to thank Senator Waldstreicher and Senator Gile for sponsoring this important legislation and their continued strong support of the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Thank you.