



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

SB 88 Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families
FAVORABLE
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Thursday, January 18, 2024

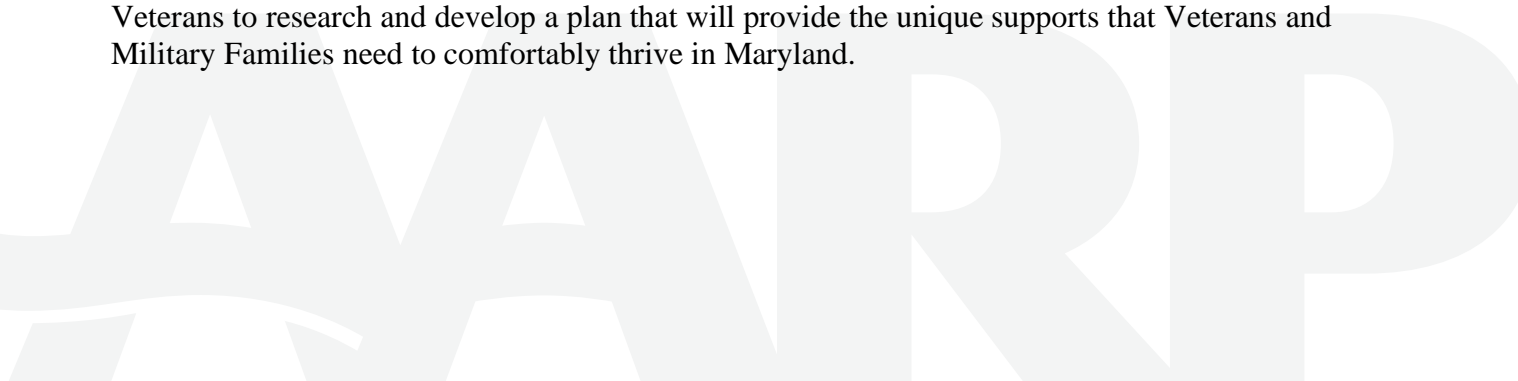
Good afternoon, Chairman Feldman and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. My name is Karen Kalla, volunteer AARP legislative aide, member of the AARP Executive Council, and resident of Montgomery County. AARP MD and its more than 850,000 members support SB 88 Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families. We thank Senators Gile, Beidle, Carozza, Klausmeier, Simonaire, and Smith for sponsoring this important legislation.

SB 88 would establish the Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families, comprised of veterans, legislators, policy makers, and others dedicated to enhancing the lives of veterans, to develop a plan to make Maryland a supportive and welcoming place for Veterans and their families.

AARP has nearly 6 million members who have served or are currently serving in the U.S. military, making AARP the largest Veteran's support organization in the market space. Approximately one quarter of all veterans in the U.S. are members of AARP.

AARP is dedicated to empowering Veterans, Military, and their Families (VMF) to navigate the complexities of life's transitions by addressing the unique needs and expectations of this audience. More specifically, we are focusing on 1) caregiving - to prepare family caregivers to meet the unique needs of Veterans, including their mental and emotional health, 2) fraud - to provide timely and topical information and resources on the top scams effecting Veterans, 3) work and jobs - to improve the job-hunting journey of Veterans and Military Families, including Veteran women and Military spouses, and 4) earned benefits - to empower VMF communities to maximize earned benefits in both the military and civilian worlds, including the navigation of health care options. We envision that the proposed commission would address these as well as other vital aspects of Veteran and Military Family life.

Veterans and Military Families dedicate their lives to protecting the wellbeing of their fellow Americans. This commitment does not end when they leave formal service but continues with them forever. AARP believes we must honor the service and acknowledge the sacrifice of our Veterans and Military Families. Senate Bill 88 does so, by establishing a commission of and for Veterans to research and develop a plan that will provide the unique supports that Veterans and Military Families need to comfortably thrive in Maryland.



AARP Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for SB 88. For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451. Thank You!