



**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of the Secretary**

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**ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY**

February 7, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 448 - Commission to Study African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs supports SB 448 - Commission to Study African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland.

The MDVA believes it is crucial to understand the history and acknowledge the tremendous contribution and sacrifice of African American soldiers who fought for the Union Army during the Civil War.

Telling comprehensive and inclusive stories of service across our nation's military history has an impact on veterans today. When individuals from underrepresented communities who have served in uniform see themselves represented, they are more likely to view themselves as veterans and take advantage of benefits that can help them thrive here in the state.

This commission is a necessary first step in the process of creating a memorial dedicated to the brave soldiers who fought to end slavery and preserve the Union.

This is our history, it is Maryland's history, and it is American history.

We respectfully request a favorable report on SB 448. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary

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