



# MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

January 18, 2024

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

Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report** – SB 0088 – Maryland Commission on Veterans and Families

Dear Chair Feldman and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) and as its President, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on ***SB 0088, Maryland Commission on Veterans and Families***, sponsored by Senator Dawn Gile. This bill will establish a Commission on Veterans and Military Families which will develop a strategic plan to make Maryland the best state for veterans and military families.

Although many notable legislative and administrative proposals have been identified to improve the lives of Maryland veterans and military families, these ideas are considered in isolation without a comprehensive analysis. The Commission will be able to develop a statewide strategic plan to guide legislative and budgetary decisions. Maryland is in competition with other states for military retirees. Other states – including Virginia – have established similar commissions to advise the legislature and Governor on actions that can improve the lives of veterans and military families.

The strategic plan to be developed by the Commission will guide legislative and budget decisions. The Commission will identify key performance indicators and quantifiable metrics to assess the effectiveness of initiatives and determine whether what other states are doing should be adopted in Maryland.

We are impressed by and fully endorse the diversity of voices and representation required in the Commission's membership by SB 0088. We are also gratified to see the inclusion of a

representative of the Federal Reserve, a significant part of the military that all too often lacks a seat at the table.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports SB 0088** and asks for a ***FAVORABLE*** report from the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. Establishing this Commission directly supports and enhances the Moore Administration's Year of the Military Families.

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.

We want to thank Senator Gile for sponsoring this legislation and her strong support of the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J Spiegel".

Jayson Spiegel  
LTC USAR (Ret)  
President

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition

James P. Monahan  
Air Force Sergeants Association

John P. May  
American Military Society

Elwood R. Raphael Gray  
American Minority Veterans Research Project

W. W. W.  
Association of the United States Navy

Lynn A. Gask  
Commissioned Officers Association of the  
US Public Health Service

Wilbur B. Fisher  
Disabled American Veterans

Seldon H. Freedy  
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

Phyllis J. Collins  
Fleet Reserve Association

Seldon H. Freedy  
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Steve L. Brooker  
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'  
Association

Emmett R. Robert  
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Robert J. Winton  
Military Officers Association of America

Charles E. Spahr  
Military Order of the Purple Heart

E. J.  
Montford Point Marines of America

M. L. Meese  
National Association for Black Veterans

Michael P. Hays  
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

Christian Andreasen  
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

John S.  
Reserve Organization of America

Catherine L. McGraw  
Society of Military Widows

E. J.  
National Active and Retired Federal Employees  
Veterans Affairs Directorate, NARFE MD

M. Blackwell  
Veterans of Foreign Wars