

Maryland Military Coalition HB0178 Written Testimo

Uploaded by: DAVID Dragics

Position: FAV



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report** – HB0178 – Vehicle Laws – Disabled Veteran Registration Plates – Issuance

Dear Chair Korman and distinguished members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) and as its Legislative Director, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **HB0178 – Vehicle Laws – Disabled Veteran Registration Plates – Issuance**, sponsored by Delegate Mike Griffith. This legislation authorizes the Motor Vehicle Administration to issue certain special registration plates to those disabled veterans with a service-connected disability rating between 50 percent and 99 percent, inclusive, as designated or classified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The MMC strongly supports the expansion of the availability of Disabled Veteran Registration Plates to those eligible individuals as proposed by this legislation. In its latest report, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs indicates there are 42,005 veterans in Maryland with a service-connected disability rating between 50 percent and 99 percent.¹ The adoption of this bill will create an added benefit for those veterans in this category.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports** HB0178 and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Environment and Transportation Committee. This bill builds on the Moore Administration's Year of the Military Families, providing another benefit that assists and helps the veterans and their families who have bravely served, fought, and sacrificed for our state and country.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 21 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over

¹ https://www.data.va.gov/dataset/FY-2021-Disability-Compensation-Recipients-by-Coun/k9i5-f2ec/about_data, FY 2021 Disability Compensation Recipients by County, November 30, 2022

**Subject: Request for FAVORABLE Report – HB0178 – Vehicle Laws – Disabled Veteran
Registration Plates – Issuance**

150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

We want to thank Delegate Mike Griffith for sponsoring this legislation and his continued strong support of the veterans community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David L. Dragics".

David L. Dragics
COL USA (Ret)
Legislative Director

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. Allen
Association of the United States Navy

Lynda A. Gash
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. Pickett
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Robert F. Winton
Military Officers Association of America

Charles E. Galt
Military Order of the Purple Heart

E. J. ...
Montford Point Marines of America

M. L. Messer
National Association for Black Veterans

Michael P. Hays
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

Christian Andreason
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

HB178_DisabledVetPlatesKEaton-Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Ken Eaton

Position: FAV



ABATE OF MARYLAND, INC.

Dedicated to Freedom of the Road & Responsible Motorcycle Legislation

To: The Honorable Marc Korman, Chairman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Ken Eaton, Director, Executive Director, ABATE of Maryland, Inc.

Date: February 9, 2024

Re: **HB 178** - Vehicle Laws - Disabled Veteran Registration Plates - Issuance

Position: **FAVORABLE: SUPPORT**

ABATE of Maryland, Inc. represents the approximately 121,000 on road motorcycles that are registered in Maryland. We are a state motorcycle rights organization that brings together the voices of independent riders, clubs, riding organization, etc. We have chapters throughout the state and our members include a diverse cross-section of motorcycle riders in Maryland. A large portion of our membership includes military veterans and their families. We **SUPPORT HB 178**.

Our veterans have taken an oath that says they will support and defend this country. The very least we can do is recognize their service and this bill is a part of that.

ABATE of Maryland, Inc. **SUPPORT HB 178** - Vehicle Laws - Disabled Veteran Registration Plates - Issuance. We urge the committee to consider an **Favorable** vote, passing this legislation and moving it to the floor for a vote.

Thank you!

Kenneth B. Eaton, Executive Director
ABATE of Maryland, Inc.

HB 178 - Vehicle Laws - Disabled Veteran Registrat

Uploaded by: Morgan Murphy

Position: FAV



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

**WES MOORE
GOVERNOR**

**ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR**

**ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY**

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 178 - Vehicle Laws - Disabled Veteran Registration Plates - Issuance

Dear Chairman Korman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (“MDVA”) supports House Bill 178 - Vehicle Laws - Disabled Veteran Registration Plates - Issuance.

The MDVA believes it is important to recognize and honor the service of all veterans - including those who may have become disabled while serving in uniform. We acknowledge that veterans might have been awarded a disability compensation rating of less than 100%, but continue to feel a significant impact from their service-connected disabilities.

Providing an opportunity for more veterans to be eligible for, and display, disabled veteran plates increases awareness of the unique experience and outcomes of service. When a veteran displays these plates, it improves understanding of their experience and serves as a reminder to the larger community of their sacrifice.

I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report on HB 178 to honor and acknowledge Maryland’s disabled veterans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "A" and "W".

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary

HB0178 - MVA - Disabled Veteran Registration Plate

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 178 – Vehicle Laws - Disabled Veteran Registration
Plates – Issuance***

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 178 as an opportunity to expand specialty plates to deserving customers in recognition of their service and providing helpful indications of potential negative health effects incurred by their service.

As introduced, House Bill 178 will allow veterans with service-connected disabilities between 50% and 90% as identified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to obtain a “Disabled Veterans” plate without the international symbol of access. While customers who are otherwise eligible for the symbol that would provide for handicap parking spaces, for example, can still obtain such a plate with relevant documentation, the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) already has the ability to issue a second set of these plates without that symbol to 100% disabled veterans under existing law and can expand the number of eligible applicants for such plates under House Bill 178.

The MVA worked with the Maryland General Assembly during the 2023 legislative session to ensure that parking access was not granted under the expansion of eligibility for disabled veterans tags under House Bill 178. House Bill 178 offers disabled veterans who do not qualify for the handicap placard with the opportunity to be recognized and distinguished for their service and sacrifice.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant House Bill 178 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
410-787-7830

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090