



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report** – SB0477 – Time to Serve Act of 2024

Dear Chair Beidle and distinguished members of the Finance Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) and as its President, I recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB0477 – Time to Serve Act of 2024**, sponsored by the President at the request of the Administration. This legislation will increase the number of days of annual military leave from 15 to 30 for all Maryland state employees who serve in a Reserve Component of the uniformed services, and 15 days of disaster service leave for members of specified organizations who meet certain America Red Cross criteria.

During his December 2023 announcement of the Year of the Military Family in Maryland, Governor Moore explained that expanding the number of days of military leave benefits military families by providing that service members do not have to use personal leave or leave without pay to participate in Battle Assemblies (drill) or Annual Training. The Governor's initiative benefits military families because it ensures that service members use paid time off to be with their families, as opposed to performing military service. As Governor Moore said, "Our military families are sacrificing just as much as our people in uniform and they're sacrificing so their loved ones can serve. ... They are doing it both for the love of family and for the love of country." The MMC thanks the Governor and Senate President for extending the 30-day military leave benefit to all members of the **uniformed services** and for **treating all Reserve Components (National Guard and Federal Reserve) equally**.

The MMC encourages the Committee to consider adding enabling legislation that would authorize counties and municipalities to increase paid military leave to 30 days for their employees who also serve in a Reserve Component of the uniformed services. A no-cost, enabling provision would allow these jurisdictions, consistent with their budgets and provisions of any collective bargaining agreements, to provide the same benefit to their eligible employees that SB0477 does for state employees. Absent enabling legislation, there is the potential for a disparity in a National Guard or Reserve unit that could provide the state employees, who are members, with greater opportunities to perform military duty which will advantage them in promotion and schooling opportunities that their fellow members, who are employees at the county and local level, do not equally enjoy.

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The Maryland Military Coalition supports SB0477 and asks for a ***FAVORABLE*** report from the Finance Committee.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

We want to thank the Governor and Senate President for their leadership on this legislation and their continued strong support of the uniformed services in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JMS', written in a cursive style.

Jayson Spiegel
LTC USAR (Ret)
President

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition

James P. Monahan
Air Force Sergeants Association

Steve 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 Freedberg
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

Phyllis J. Collins
Fleet Reserve Association

Seldon Freedberg
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Steve L. Brooker
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association

Emmett R. Robert
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Robert F. Winton
Military Officers Association of America

Charles E. Spahr
Military Order of the Purple Heart

E. E.
Montford Point Marines of America

M. L. Messer
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. E.
National Active and Retired Federal Employees
Veterans Affairs Directorate, NARFE MD

M. Blackwell
Veterans of Foreign Wars