

SB478_Amazon_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Anya Malkov

Position: FAV



February 28, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
Maryland State Senate

Re: Support for Senate Bill 478 – Families Serve Act of 2024

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee:

On behalf of Amazon, I write to express support for SB 478 – Families Serve Act of 2024. Amazon has pledged to hire 100,000 veterans and military spouses by the end of 2024, and we know that military spouses bring distinct talents to the workforce.

We have been tapping into this diverse talent pool since 2018 through Amazon’s military spouse fellowship program in the U.S. The goal of this program is to bring military spouses into sustainable, meaningful career fields within Amazon. Through a 12-week fellowship, military spouses access professional training, networking, military spouse events, and hands-on job experience.

Amazon offers a variety of programs to assist transitioning service members and military spouses in finding rewarding careers. This includes access to company-funded skills training in high-demand areas through initiatives like the Amazon Technical Apprenticeship Program and AWS re/Start. Military spouses working at Amazon can also take advantage of the company’s free upskilling opportunities, which help participants gain new technical skills and advance their careers. For example, Career Choice is Amazon’s pre-paid tuition program for fulfillment center employees looking to move into high-demand occupations. Career Choice has already helped thousands of Amazon’s Maryland employees pursue their education at nearly a dozen of Maryland’s public colleges and universities.

The Families Serve Act of 2024 would create stronger pathways to employment for military spouses and help address the unique challenges military families face. We appreciate the Administration’s and the General Assembly’s commitment to military families and urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Anya Malkov
Head of Maryland Public Policy

HOH Testimony SB0478_draft-final.pdf

Uploaded by: Elizabeth OBrien

Position: FAV

Hiring Our Heroes

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Statement of Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

ON: "The Impact of Military Spouse Employment and Economic Opportunity"

TO: Maryland Senate Finance Committee

BY: Elizabeth O'Brien, Executive Director, Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

DATE: February 29, 2024

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE OF THE MARYLAND SENATE

“The Impact of Military Spouse Employment and Economic Opportunity.”

Testimony of Elizabeth O’Brien Executive Director, Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Good afternoon, Chairman Beidle, Vice Chairman Klausmeier, and members of the Committee. My name is Elizabeth O’Brien, and I am the executive director of Hiring Our Heroes. I am an active-duty Army military spouse of nearly two decades during our nation’s most prolonged conflicts and a proud mother of three military children.

Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) is a national, grassroots organization committed to serving veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses. Founded in 2011 as part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, we provide a full range of tools and resources to connect the military-connected community with meaningful careers.

Since 2011, we have served more than one million members of the military community. There is no “one size fits all” approach to meeting the unique needs of the military-connected community; we work to understand the unique needs and deliver best-in-class programs.

Employment Landscape for Veterans and Military Spouses

Veteran Employment Landscape

In 2011, the United States faced a crisis in veteran unemployment. As the nation started to wind down military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, there were hundreds of thousands of transitioning service members—most of whom were under the age of 25—returning home from war zones and finding a difficult job market. Young veterans especially struggled as their unemployment rate soared to 30%.

Hiring Our Heroes and the broader business community leapt into action. Leveraging our state and local chambers and the broad support of the business community. Other companies and organizations, such as Lockheed Martin, followed suit by creating veteran-focused hiring and training programs. Led by the White House and its Joining Forces campaign, federal agencies made veteran employment a top priority.

This joint private/public sector effort yielded significant dividends. Within a few short years, post-9/11 veteran unemployment was cut in half from 12.1% in 2011¹ to 5.8% by the end of 2015.² Veterans under the age of 25 saw a more dramatic decrease. Their

¹ U.S. Department of Labor (2012, March 20). Employment Situation of Veteran—2011. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved November 1, 2023, from https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/vet_03202012.pdf

² U.S. Department of Labor (2016, March 22). Employment Situation of Veteran—2015. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved November 1, 2023, from https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/vet_03222016.pdf

unemployment rate dropped from 30.2% in 2011¹ to 13.0% by the end of 2015.² These trends have continued as veteran unemployment remains at historic lows at 3.0% or below.

Military Spouse Employment Landscape

Unfortunately, our country has not witnessed the same improvement for military spouses. For too long, military spouses have faced double-digit unemployment rates. That trend continues today as military spouses face an unemployment rate of 21%, leaving too many military families with the economic realities caused by a single income. For many, it forces them to decide between continued military service or leaving service for two incomes.

This latter fact was evidenced by the recent Blue Star Families Military Family Lifestyle Survey.³ That survey indicated that military spouse employment was a top concern for military families at 48%. This point was further made by the 2023 Army engagement survey indicating that 27.4% of soldiers intend to leave because of the impact of Army life on their significant other's career plans and goals.⁴ That fact was also highlighted by a White House Executive Order in early 2023 that noted one in five military families cite challenges with spousal employment as a reason for considering leaving active-duty service.⁵

Evolution of HOH and Overview of Programs

HOH focused its early efforts on connecting unemployed veterans to employers in local communities. Leveraging our broad network of state and local chambers, as well as our network of employers, we hosted nearly 800 hiring events in three years. Our mission, at least in those early years, was focused on solving the widespread unemployment and underemployment.

As veteran unemployment eased, HOH shifted its strategic and programmatic focus in three important ways. First, we moved "left of transition" by providing more services to on-base military populations. That included both transitioning service members and military spouses. Second, we transformed our hiring events to provide much needed career advice and job search training from industry experts. Finally, we invested heavily in providing internships for both transitioning service members and military spouses.

While all our programs, events, and resources are open to military spouses, we know that military spouses face unique challenges and thus we offer unique programs to meet their needs. The transitory nature of military life often creates long periods of unemployment and/or underemployment. Work opportunities are further limited by issues associated with childcare, remote duty locations, state licensing requirements, and status of force agreements (SOFAs).

³ Blue Star Families (2023). *Military Family Lifestyle Survey 2023*. Retrieved November 1, 2023, from <https://bluestarfam.org/research/mfls-survey-release-2023/>

⁴ U.S. Department of the Army (2023). *Career Engagement Survey Third Annual Report*. Retrieved November 1, 2023, from https://talent.army.mil/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/DACES-Third-Annual-Report_Final.pdf

⁵ The White House (2023). Executive Order on Advancing Economic Security for Military and Veteran Spouses, Military Caregivers, and Survivors. Retrieved February 19, 2024, from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/06/09/executive-order-on-advancing-economic-security-for-military-and-veteran-spouses-military-caregivers-and-survivors>

Solving Military Spouse Unemployment and Underemployment

The challenges faced by military spouses as they search for meaningful careers must not only remain a national priority, but solutions must also be created at the state and local level. For too long, military spouses have faced high unemployment and underemployment rates. Not only does this create near-term economic challenges for military spouses and their families, but the impacts of unemployment are often cumulative, resulting in their inability to plan for, save for, and be ready for retirement.

To meet these challenges, HOH has created a suite of programs and training geared toward military spouses. In 2017, we launched Amplify—a career-intensive workshop for military spouses who are re-entering the workforce or looking for a career change. Amplify attendees spend two full days in career development workshops and interactive sessions. Amplify has become an incredibly important tool as more and more women, who make up 92% of the military spouse population, return to work after the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023, Amplify served 2,283 participants, with 79% of attendees reporting favorable job outcomes within 90 days of the event.

HOH also hosts dedicated virtual and in-person hiring events focused solely on connecting military spouses to American businesses. In 2023, we hosted over a dozen of these hiring events for nearly 2,000 military spouse job seekers, resulting in 83% being hired or referred to next steps—i.e., interviews, placement in a talent pipeline, or next-level candidate screening.

HOH also manages the nation's largest network of career-focused military spouses as part of our Military Spouse Professional Network. That network—tens of thousands strong—provides vital peer-to-peer support to military spouses in more than 60 locations. It not only provides professional connections around the world but also brings employment leads and ongoing professional development at the installation level to these communities.

In early 2017, Maryland proved itself a solution-oriented innovator by collaborating with HOH through Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC) to launch a pilot program to facilitate fellowships for military spouses and veterans. With tremendous success in just over two years, more than 175 fellows—147 military spouses—matched with more than 50 Maryland host companies to participate in fellowship opportunities. That program, unfortunately, ended in early 2020.

Recently the Department of Defense (DoD) created an internship pilot for active-duty military spouses. Launched in December 2022 with support from Hiring Our Heroes and Deloitte, the program, known as the Military Spouse Career Accelerator Pilot (MSCAP), provides military spouses with a 12-week internship to gain current work experience and grow their local professional network. While the national program is still a pilot, nearly 500 active-duty spouses have been placed into internships to date. While MSCAP has made tremendous strides in supporting active-duty military spouses, it's important to recognize that it doesn't address the needs of those who have transitioned into 'veteran' status. There's an urgent need for our local communities to step up and create economic opportunities for non-active-duty military spouses who no longer fall under the DoD.

Today, Maryland is poised to once again model that leadership and innovation, bolstering collaboration between the public and private sectors to improve the employment landscape for military spouses and, ultimately, improving the socioeconomic realities of Maryland's military families. By rectifying disparities in access to economic opportunities for active-duty military spouses, Maryland can advance principles of fairness and harness the potential of an underutilized pool of talent. Through proactive steps to support military families, Maryland can continue to distinguish itself as a state of support and innovation, committed to upholding national security imperatives and mitigating the pervasive national crisis stemming from economic inequities among military spouses.

Conclusion

Over the last twelve years, Hiring Our Heroes has been proud to serve our veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses in local communities throughout the United States and abroad and to do so with a wide array of private and public sector partners. And with more than 200,000 service members making the transition off active duty annually and 700,000 active-duty military spouses, more work always needs to be done. Hiring Our Heroes remains wholly committed to the mission of connecting veterans and military spouses with meaningful career opportunities and is honored to serve on the front line of this movement.

Chairman Beidle, Vice Chairman Klausmeier, and members of the Committee, I thank you again for the opportunity to testify and look forward to answering your questions.

Families Serve SB 478 Written Testimony - Google D

Uploaded by: June Chung

Position: FAV

**STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**



WES MOORE,
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925
(410) 974-3901
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

February 28, 2024

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

RE: Senate Bill 478- Families Serve Act of 2024 - Letter of Support

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Governor, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 478, The Families Serve Act of 2024. As part of the Governor's declaration of 2024 as the Year for Military Families, this legislation acknowledges the sacrifices and support of military spouses by providing extra support in finding employment.

Due to the need to relocate, active-duty military spouses are faced with extra difficulties in maintaining a career and often experience higher rates of unemployment. The national unemployment rate for military spouses is 21%, and Maryland is home to nearly 15,000 active-duty military spouses. The first part of Senate Bill 478 expands hiring preferences in the private sector to spouses of full-time active military service members. Under current law, private employers are permitted to show preferences for active duty service members, veterans, spouses of veterans with a service-connected disability, and surviving spouses of deceased veterans. The expansion incentivizes private employers to hire active-duty military spouses.

The legislation also allows the Department of Budget and Management to add ten additional points to selection tests for spouses of active duty service members who apply for State jobs. Existing law allows veterans and spouses of eligible veterans or who are deceased to receive ten

additional points to selection tests when applying for jobs. The bill extends the benefit to spouses of active duty service members who seek State jobs.

Military spouses and family members play critical roles behind the scenes in supporting service members. The result of their commitment to service members affects their own ability to pursue employment and careers of their own. Senate Bill 478 serves to help military spouses find employment, supports Maryland businesses in recruiting a talented workforce, and recognizes the sacrifice and service made to their active service member spouses.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions, please contact June Chung, Deputy Legislative Officer at june.chung@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

June Chung
Deputy Legislative Officer

SB 478_Commerce_Families Serve Act_Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Anderson

Position: FAV



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Kevin A. Anderson | Secretary of Commerce
Signe Pringle | Deputy Secretary of Commerce

DATE: February 29, 2024
BILL NO: Senate Bill 478
BILL TITLE: Families Serve Act of 2024
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 478 – Families Serve Act of 2024.

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 478 authorizes private employers in Maryland to offer preference in hiring to spouses of service members. It also requires an appointing authority of an executive branch agency to award a credit of ten points on any selection test to an eligible military spouse.

Background:

Maryland law currently authorizes employers to offer hiring preference for eligible veterans, the spouse of a service-disabled eligible veteran, or the surviving spouse of a deceased eligible veteran. Additionally, the State Personnel and Pensions Article currently requires an appointing authority of an executive branch agency to award a credit of ten points on any selection test to eligible veterans, the spouse of a service-disabled eligible veteran, or the surviving spouse of a deceased eligible veteran. This legislation will make eligible military spouses eligible for those same preferences. The intent is to address employment challenges associated with service members and their families that must relocate every 2-3 years due to the Department of Defense (DoD) Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders.

Rationale:

Due to frequent moves and to the sometimes lengthy timelines associated with obtaining an occupational license or certificate, military spouses often go through long periods of unemployment. This causes undue financial stress on the family and disrupts military readiness for that service member. The unemployment rate of active-duty military spouses is 21% - a rate which is higher than any other category. According to a Blue Star Families survey, nearly two-thirds of working military spouses are unable to keep their jobs, forcing them back into an unemployment cycle every 2-3 years. Occupations offering remote work and flexible time schedules have been found to alleviate these challenges. For example, military spouses in the state of Washington who work in state government can work remotely when they PCS. This provides for greater stability within the household, therefore enhancing military readiness within the force.

Senate Bill 478 will expand the availability of work for military spouses and place Maryland in a better light with military families nationally. Not only is the DoD increasingly placing greater emphasis on uniformed military quality of life to better serve the families and help with their

declining recruitment numbers, but quality of life also increasingly factors into future DoD basing decisions. Passage of this bill will improve Maryland's position to successfully sustain and attract new DoD missions, which equates to job creation and an increased tax base.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 478.

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Uploaded by: Lindsay Livingston

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 478, Families Serve Act of 2024

Favorable: Written Testimony

Lindsay Livingston

Military Spouse

My name is Lindsay Livingston, and I fully support Senate Bill 478, the Families Serve Act of 2024. I am a native Marylander who grew up in Bowie, attended high school in Annapolis, college in Lanham, and held my first teaching job in Glenn Dale. I am a mother to three energetic boys and have been a military spouse for over 15 years. My husband is currently on active duty and has faithfully served in the Navy for over 20 years. Like many military families, multiple moves led us away from our familial support systems. Our family also endured 13 years of continuous sea duty, including several deployments, which came at a cost for our family. My husband has missed countless birthdays, anniversaries, the birth of our son, many first days of school, holidays, and other milestones. I consistently hold down the fort and put my dreams on hold so my husband can serve our country. My children and I are incredibly proud of my husband and his service to our country. We are proud to serve alongside him as a military family. Still, like so many other service members, my husband is able to best serve his country because he knows I am holding down the fort while he carries out the duties his country asks of him.

Currently, 21% of military spouses are facing unemployment. For most of my time as an active-duty military spouse, I have been part of this 21%. My experience aligns with the data on military spouse employment: it is difficult to find and sustain gainful employment between moves, solo parenting, and the lack of accessible childcare options. The gaps on my resume reflect decisions that were made due to a military move. I could not find employment due to these gaps and the lack of understanding from employers about my life and experiences as a military spouse. Military spouses are some of the strongest, most faithful, dedicated, adaptable, and resilient people I know- both in service to our country and in service to an employer who would hire us, despite our gaps in the paying workforce.

A few weeks ago, I was honored to meet Governor Moore, the First Lady, and Lt Governor Miller at a military spouse event in Annapolis, MD. At this event, I learned about the Families Serve Act of 2024. I stood in a room filled with Maryland governing officials and military spouses and heard the governing officials commit to actively serving military families and honoring their sacrifices. That night, I felt overwhelming pride in my home state. Often, military spouses feel overlooked, and the daily sacrifices we make so that our spouse can serve go unnoticed; this bill changes that narrative. This bill sends a direct message to military spouses that Maryland sees our sacrifices and wants to make a difference. The bill allows military spouses a better pathway to finding employment by expanding job opportunities. It also encourages employers to hire military spouses by allowing businesses to provide hiring preferences to military spouses. This bill could forever change a family's legacy by opening doors for military spouses that may not have been opened before and improving their economic opportunities.

By passing Senate Bill 478, the Families Serve Act, Maryland will communicate to military families and their service members that it is committed to supporting them. This bill supports military spouses, their families, and service members and is essential in supporting the Military. Military families and service members always remember how governing officials support them and honor their sacrifices. Passing this bill will encourage military families to stay in Maryland longer and consider calling it their home once they leave active duty. This bill addresses the 21% of unemployed military spouses by opening doors for them to find employment in Maryland. The bill incentivizes private businesses and state governments to establish hiring preferences for military spouses. This bill would have allowed me to find employment opportunities more easily in Maryland, significantly impacting my family's economic opportunities and improving our quality of life.

I fully support Senate Bill 478, the Families Serve Act, because it improves the quality of life for military families and service members by making it easier for military spouses to find employment and improves their economic opportunities. In passing Senate Bill 478, Maryland takes the next step in supporting military families and service members through legislative action, making Maryland the state of preference for military families.

RH Maryland Testimony 2-29.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Head

Position: FAV

Robert Head Testimony, Senate Finance Committee, 2/29/24

Good afternoon, Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and Members of the Committee.

I am Robert Head, Vice President for State Government and Political Affairs at Lockheed Martin. I am also a former Navy Intelligence Officer. Both of my brothers graduated from the Naval Academy and had distinguished military careers – I am also a resident of Calvert County. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of Senate Bill 478, the Families Serve Act of 2024 today.

Lockheed Martin has been proud to call Bethesda, Maryland, home since Lockheed and Martin Marietta merged in 1995, with approximately 2,000 employees in the state, and an additional 120,000 employees worldwide. Our heritage in Maryland goes back to the earliest days of the aviation and aerospace industry with our founder, Glenn L. Martin. Lockheed Martin currently has approximately 39 facilities in Maryland, with an economic impact of more than \$5 billion dollars annually to the state's economy.

Lockheed Martin is the largest global aerospace and defense company, with a strong commitment to the well-being of our military community. Of our 122,000 employee population, about one in five is a veteran, reservist, or military spouse. We are dedicated to supporting service members and their families, empowering veterans in transition to the civilian sector, and honoring the legacy of those who have served. Through funding research to help inform policy decisions and drive critical programming, we're working to make a positive impact on the lives of those who have sacrificed so much for our nation.

As stated earlier, Lockheed Martin is pleased to support the Families Serve Act of 2024, as this proposed legislation will not only further Lockheed's commitment to the military community and their families, but also encourage other employers in the state to extend similar courtesies to military families who have given so much. Like Lockheed Martin, I am confident these employers will find this community of heroes to be a tremendous asset to their respective operations, further cementing Maryland's commitment to the military community and its families.

Thank you, again, to the Committee for your leadership on this initiative, and thank you to Governor Moore, Lt. Governor Miller, the First Lady, and Deputy Secretary Cohen and his Administration for leading this effort.

This concludes my testimony.

With appreciation,
Robert Head
Vice President, State Government and Political Affairs
Lockheed Martin Government Affairs

Testimony SB0478.pdf

Uploaded by: David Peterson

Position: FWA



Montgomery County Chapter
P.O. Box 7564
Gaithersburg, MD 20898-9996

Date, 2024

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

Subject: An **Important Point** Regarding SB0478, Families Serve Act

Dear Senator Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Montgomery County Chapter affiliate of the national Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) now has, among its members, active duty and retired officers from every uniformed service save the new Space Force. As a result, the membership is sensitive to its duty to advocate for the equal treatment of the uniformed services community in legislative matters that involve all those who wear or have worn our Nation's various uniforms. This duty also extends to the families of these veterans.

In large part, the chapter supports the intent of SB0478, as it certainly addresses a widely recognized need, and it demonstrates the Governor's expressed pledge to show 2024 to be the Year of the Military Family. While we applaud the Executive's intent with this legislation, we wish to point out that it has a troublesome flaw in its provisions that the General Assembly can easily correct. This involves the troublesome confusion over the expressions "armed services" and "uniformed services," when considering "veterans" benefits, such as is the subject of SB0476..

As written, this legislation seems to exclude the spouses of both the NOAA Corps officers and Public Health Service officers. We respectfully direct the Committee's attention to how the state defines "veteran" in law and has since 1984. The language in the Maryland Code, at **Maryland General Provisions Code Ann. § 1-117**, clearly states that:

“With respect to any State program of benefits, rights, or privileges applicable to a veteran under this Code, “veteran” includes, if the individual is eligible under 39 U.S.C. § 101, a member of the commissioned corps of (1) the Public Health Service; or (2) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or its predecessor, the Coast and Geodetic Survey.”

It is our contention that the legislative language presently in SB0478 needs to be harmonized with the § 1-117 provisions, such that it will be clear that the spouses of NOAA Corps and Public Health Service officers are eligible to take advantage of this benefit and will not be left behind.

It is our understanding that the Maryland Military Coalition will have testimony on this aspect of SB0478. The Montgomery County Chapter supports the advocacy by the Coalition and joins it in requesting a **FAVORABLE report with Amendment**. We believe that factoring in § 1-117 will clear up any and all confusion on exactly who is covered by this legislation. The Governor is addressing a practical workforce development need here, which we applaud.

The Montgomery County Chapter thanks you for your attention to our concern.

With respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David H. Peterson" followed by a horizontal flourish.

Captain David H. Peterson, NOAA (Ret)
Secretary
Montgomery County Chapter
MOAA

Maryland Military Coalition SB478 Favorable with A

Uploaded by: Jayson Spiegel

Position: FWA



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 with Amendment** – SB0478 – Families Serve Act

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) recommends a **FAVORABLE report with Amendment** by the Committee on *SB0478 – Families Serve Act*, sponsored by the President at the request of the Administration. This legislation authorizes private sector employers to grant a preference in hiring and promotion to spouses of eligible service members. The legislation also requires appointing authorities in the Executive Branch of State government to grant a credit on any selection test to an eligible service member's spouse.

This legislation is a key component of Governor Moore's pledge to make 2024 the Year of the Military Family in Maryland. As Governor Moore said in his December speech:

Our military families sacrifice everything so their loved ones can serve. They are just as much a part of the American story as those in the armed forces, ...States have a duty to answer the service and sacrifice of our military families with strong support.

According to the latest Department of Defense data, the active duty uniformed spouse unemployment rate is about 21 percent¹ compared to the national unemployment rate of 3.7 percent² and Maryland's unemployment rate of 1.9 percent.³ This bill will reduce spousal unemployment by authorizing a service member spousal hiring preference and providing a spousal hiring preference in state employment. The bill, therefore, aligns the State Personnel Management System with not only the Maryland Joins Forces focus on employment but also the

¹ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/3558394/military-spouses-to-gain-more-job-ops-thanks-to-growing-employment-partnership/#:~:text=More%20partners%20mean%20more%20job,spouses%20is%20at%20about%2021%25.>

² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf>

³ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.nr0.htm>

White House Joining Forces initiative designed to reduce underemployment of active duty spouses.

There are currently 14,292 active-duty spouses in Maryland.⁴ These spouses represent a pool of talented personnel who may be available to fill vacancies in state government. A spousal preference would not only facilitate hiring them but also recognize the sacrifices they make to support active-duty personnel and national security.

The MMC strongly supports the policies proposed in SB0478. However, we ask that the Committee favorably report the bill with an amendment to make clear that the spousal employment preference applies to all **uniformed services** spouses, not just armed forces spouses. The language in the current version of SB0478 is ambiguous as to whether the private sector spousal preference applies only to the armed forces or all the uniformed services. The bill language also confuses the two armed forces and uniformed services. Furthermore, the bill language makes clear that the state employment preference only applies to military spouses, not uniformed services spouses. We submit that there is no policy reason to apply the state employment preference only to military and not uniformed services spouses.

The armed forces consist of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Space Force. The uniformed services consist of the armed forces plus the Commissioned Officer Corps of the Public Health Service (PHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The respective Commissioned Corps of the PHS and NOAA play critical roles in Maryland. Both are headquartered in Montgomery County. Commissioned officers of the PHS serve at the National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration and Center for Medicare Services. PHS officers provide all the health care for the Coast Guard, which has no organic medical personnel. There are over 1,700 PHS officers in Maryland.

SB0478 defines “eligible service member” as a “full-time active duty member of the uniformed services of any branch of the armed forces.” This definition confuses two classes of veterans since the uniformed services are not part of the armed forces. All armed forces personnel are part of the uniformed services, but the opposite is not true.

The bill provides that an employer may grant a hiring preference to the spouse of an “eligible service member” which may apply to spouses of officers of the PHS and NOAA. However, the language “member of the uniformed services of any branch of the armed forces” is confusing and could be read to exclude spouses of PHS and NOAA officers.

⁴ <https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/state/MD>

The bill's language clearly states that the state spousal employment preference applies only to military spouses and not the spouses of all uniformed servicemembers.

The bill defines "eligible military spouse" entitled to the state employment preference as "an individual who is married to an active duty **military service member.**" The bill states that:

An appointing authority shall apply a credit of 10 points on any selection test for **an eligible military spouse.**

This language clearly excludes PHS and NOAA spouses because the PHS and NOAA are not military services.

We note the Time to Serve Act (SB0477) which increases the number of leave days for state employees who serve in the "uniformed services" with the Families Serve Act which provides a state employment preference to military spouses but not uniformed services spouses. We are puzzled as to why state employees who serve in the PHS Reserve should receive additional leave to serve but their spouses do not receive a preference in state employment. Accordingly the MMC urges the Committee to amend the bill so that it is in harmony with the definition found in the Time to Serve Act (SB0477).

SB0478 should state that "**uniformed services has the meaning stated in 38 U.S.C. §4303 and 20 C.F.R. § 1032.5(o).** The amended bill should further state that an "eligible **uniformed services spouse**" entitled to the state employment preference is " an individual who is married to an active duty **uniformed service member.**"

Finally, the bill should provide: "An appointing authority shall apply a credit of 10 points on any selection test for **an eligible uniformed services spouse.**"

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 this legislation and their continued strong support of the uniformed services and their spouses.

Respectfully,



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. Asphal 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 F. 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

Maryland Military Coalition
Recommended Technical Amendments – HB0604, Families Serve Act of 2024

Article – Labor and Employment

3-714

(a) (1) In this section[, “eligible] **THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.**

(2) **“ELIGIBLE SERVICE MEMBER” MEANS A FULL-TIME ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES [OF ANY BRANCH OF THE ARMED FORCES] OF THE UNITED STATES.**

(3) **“ELIGIBLE veteran”** means a veteran of [any branch of the armed forces] **THE UNIFORMED SERVICES** of the United States who has received an honorable discharge or a certificate of satisfactory completion of military service, including:

[(1)] (1) the National Guard;

[(2)] (2) the military reserves;

[(3)] (3) the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service; and

[(4)] (4) the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(b) An employer may grant a preference in hiring and promotion to:

(1) an eligible veteran;

(2) the spouse of an eligible veteran who has a service-connected disability;

[or]

(3) **THE SPOUSE OF AN ELIGIBLE SERVICE MEMBER; OR**

(4) the surviving spouse of a deceased eligible veteran.

(c) Granting a preference under subsection (b) of this section does not violate any State or local equal employment opportunity law.

Article – State Personnel and Pensions

7-207

(c) (1) (I) In this subsection [, “eligible] **THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.**

(II) **“ELIGIBLE [MILITARY] SPOUSE” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS MARRIED TO AN ACTIVE DUTY [MILITARY SERVICE] MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.**

(III) **“ELIGIBLE veteran” means a veteran of [any branch of the armed forces] THE UNIFORMED SERVICES of the United States who has received an honorable discharge or a certificate of satisfactory completion of military service, including the National Guard, [and] the military reserves, THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, AND THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION.**

(IV) **“UNIFORMED SERVICES HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-1104 OF THIS ARTICLE.**

(2) (i) An appointing authority shall apply a credit of [ten] **10** points on any selection test for:

1. **AN ELIGIBLE [MILITARY] SPOUSE**

2. an eligible veteran;

[2.] **3.** the spouse of an eligible veteran who has a service-connected disability; or

[3.] **4.** the surviving spouse of a deceased eligible veteran.

(ii) An appointing authority shall apply a credit of two additional points on any selection test for a former prisoner of war.

(3) The following applicants are ineligible for a credit under this subsection:

(i) a current State employee; and

(ii) an eligible veteran who is convicted of a crime after being discharged from or completing military service.

Nash_COA Oral testimony SB 478_ Fav w amend_Feb 29

Uploaded by: Lynn Nash

Position: FWA



Statement of CAPTAIN (R) Lynn A. Nash
SB 478 - Families Serve Act
February 29, 2024
FAVORABLE with Amendment

Dear Chair Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Committee

Good afternoon.

I stand before you on behalf of the 1,700 active-duty U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Officers, our 7,000 retired PHS service members, and their family members who live in Maryland. I am providing testimony on the Families Serve Act. My name is CAPT (R) Lynn Nash, and I am a retired PHS Officer and a lifetime member of the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service. While I represent PHS officers on the Maryland Military Coalition, today I am here on behalf of COA and PHS families. I have lived in Montgomery County since 1995 and I made a conscious choice to remain in Maryland when I retired after 30 years of service in both the U.S. Army and the PHS.

In December, the Governor and Lt. Governor declared 2024 as the Year of the Military Family. In late January, the President offered SB 478 on behalf of the administration. When I read the bill, I was dismayed. While the intention of the bill was to offer a spousal hiring preference in state government positions to service spouses, something that the Coalition had offered as one of its legislative priorities at our listening session in November, what I read was a tangling of terms.

As you well know, legislation is all about the definition of terms. In my view, SB 478 is frankly a mess. I would like to point out why I am concerned as well as the needed technical changes to bring this bill into compliance with **existing state law**.

In 1984, then Governor Hughes promulgated §1-117, Article 1 of Section 28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Article 1 states:

WITH RESPECT TO ANY STATE PROGRAM OF BENEFITS, RIGHTS, OR PRIVILEGES APPLICABLE TO A VETERAN UNDER THIS CODE, THE TERM "VETERAN" INCLUDES MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE AND THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (OR ITS PREDECESSOR, THE COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY) IF ELIGIBLE UNDER §101, TITLE 38 OF THE U.S. CODE.

As currently written, **SB 478 breaks faith with USPHS and NOAA officers** who have devoted years to protect and defend the constitution, as well as protect the health and changing environment of our Nation. Do you know that we take the same oath? We just don't work for the Department of Defense.

SB 478—Families Serve Act - **Favorable with Amendments**

SB 478 does exactly the opposite of the Governor's manta—as currently written, **SB 478 leaves Public Health Service and NOAA spouses BEHIND.**

As someone who has served in a military service and a uniformed service, perhaps I'm sensitive to terms. The terms military, armed forces, armed services and uniformed services are separate and distinct. They are codified by law and they are NOT interchangeable.

You've heard the statistics about service spouse unemployment—I don't need to repeat them. I've testified before you on other similar measures, you know that I care about this topic.

This bill needs technical changes. I am simply asking that you make the needed changes to comport this bill with existing Maryland code. **Correcting the language in SB 478 does not cost anything** and passing an amended bill will do much to help service spouses, including those married to a PHS or NOAA officer, get meaningful employment as well as fill existing government vacancies with much needed talent.

I ask for a favorable report with amendments. Please don't leave us behind.

Nash_COA SB 478_ Fav w amend_Feb 29 2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Lynn Nash

Position: FWA



Protecting the interests of the USPHS Commissioned Corps since 1951

February 29, 2024

Honorable Pamela G. Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: **Request for a FAVORABLE Report with Amendment- SB 478 Families Serve Act**

Dear Chair Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of the 1,700 active-duty U.S Public Health Service (PHS) Officers, our 7,000 retired PHS service members, and their family members who live in Maryland, I am providing testimony on the Families Serve Act. My name is CAPT (R) Lynn Nash, and I am a retired PHS officer and a lifetime member of the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service. While I represent PHS officers on the Maryland Military Coalition, today I am here on behalf of COA and PHS families. I have lived in Montgomery County since 1995 and I made a conscious choice to remain in Maryland when I retired after 30 years of service in both the U.S. Army and the PHS.

In December, the Governor and Lt. Governor declared 2024 as the Year of the Military Family. In late January, the President offered SB 478 on behalf of the administration, which included twenty-three co-sponsors. When I read the bill, I was dismayed. While the intention of the bill was to offer a spousal hiring preference in state government positions to service spouses, something that the Coalition had offered as one of its legislative priorities at our listening session in November, what I read was a tangling of terms.

As you well know, legislation is all about the definition of terms. In my view, SB 478 is frankly a mess. I would like to point out why I am concerned as well as the needed technical changes to bring this bill into compliance with **existing state law**.

In 1984, then Governor Hughes promulgated §1-117, Article 1 of Section 28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Article 1 states:

WITH RESPECT TO ANY STATE PROGRAM OF BENEFITS, RIGHTS, OR PRIVILEGES APPLICABLE TO A VETERAN UNDER THIS CODE, THE TERM "VETERAN" INCLUDES MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE AND THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (OR ITS PREDECESSOR, THE COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY) IF ELIGIBLE UNDER §101, TITLE 38 OF THE U.S. CODE.

SB 478—Families Serve Act - **Favorable with Amendments**

As currently written, **SB 478 breaks faith with USPHS and NOAA officers** who have devoted years to protect and defend the constitution, as well as protect the health and changing environment of our Nation. Do you know that we take the same oath? We just don't work for the Department of Defense.

SB 478 does exactly the opposite of the Governor's manta—**as currently written, SB 478 leaves Public Health Service and NOAA spouses BEHIND.**

As someone who has served in a military service and who finished my time on active duty in the Public Health Service, I have spent a great of time trying to educate members and their staffs about the distinct difference in the terms military, armed services, armed forces and uniformed services. Each term is separate and distinct, codified by law and they are NOT interchangeable. As a result, **I write to ask that you make the needed technical changes to bring this legislation into compliance with existing Maryland code.**

This bill is necessary because spouses have over time experienced high levels of unemployment. I have personally taken a great deal of time to raise the issue of spousal unemployment, because especially here in high-cost Maryland, most service spouses need to work. Spousal unemployment is one of the top issues that influences service members staying on active duty. Over the last 10 years, most service branches have suffered huge losses in both recruiting and retention. Improving spousal employment is focus area 1 in **Maryland Joins Forces** and the White House's **Joining Forces** initiatives.

As the Maryland Military Coalition points out, there are more than 15,000 active-duty spouses. Maryland state government has over 9,000 vacancies remaining, even after the Administration's actions to reduce that number. **Correcting the language in SB 478 does not cost anything** and passing an amended bill will do much to help service spouses, including those married to a PHS or NOAA officer, get meaningful employment as well as fill existing government vacancies with much needed talent.

I ask that you make the very needed technical amendments to SB 478, which the Maryland Military Coalition has provided, to bring the legislation into compliance with existing Maryland code. Then, once amended, that you give this bill a **favorable report with amendments.**

Respectfully,



Lynn A. Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN
CAPTAIN (Retired), United States Public Health Service
Lynn.Slepski@outlook.com
District 39

HARRY HUGHES, Governor

2291

Approved May 15, 1984.

CHAPTER 343

(Senate Bill 408)

AN ACT concerning

Veterans - Definition

FOR the purpose of including members of certain uniformed services in the definition of "veteran" for the purpose of certain State programs .

BY adding to

Article 1 - Rules of Interpretation
Section 28
Annotated Code of Maryland
(1981 Replacement Volume and 1983 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article 1 - Rules of Interpretation

28.

WITH RESPECT TO ANY STATE PROGRAM OF BENEFITS, RIGHTS, OR PRIVILEGES APPLICABLE TO A VETERAN UNDER THIS CODE, THE TERM "VETERAN" INCLUDES MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE AND THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION OR ITS PREDECESSOR, THE COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY) IF ELIGIBLE UNDER §101, TITLE 38 OF THE U.S. CODE .

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 1984.

Approved May 15, 1984.

CHAPTER 344

(Senate Bill 440)

AN ACT concerning

Maryland Military Coalition
Recommended Technical Amendments – SB 478, Families Serve Act of 2024

Article – Labor and Employment

3-714

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(2) **“ELIGIBLE SERVICE MEMBER” MEANS A FULL-TIME ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES [OF ANY BRANCH OF THE ARMED FORCES] OF THE UNITED STATES.**

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[(1)] (1) the National Guard;

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[(3)] (3) the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service; and

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(b) An employer may grant a preference in hiring and promotion to:

(1) an eligible veteran;

(2) the spouse of an eligible veteran who has a service-connected disability;

[or]

(3) **THE SPOUSE OF AN ELIGIBLE SERVICE MEMBER; OR**

(4) the surviving spouse of a deceased eligible veteran.

(c) Granting a preference under subsection (b) of this section does not violate any State or local equal employment opportunity law.

Article – State Personnel and Pensions

7-207

(c) (1) (I) In this subsection [, “eligible] **THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.**

(II) **“ELIGIBLE [MILITARY] SPOUSE” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS MARRIED TO AN ACTIVE DUTY [MILITARY SERVICE] MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.**

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(IV) **“UNIFORMED SERVICES HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-1104 OF THIS ARTICLE.**

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1. **AN ELIGIBLE [MILITARY] SPOUSE**

2. an eligible veteran;

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