



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

HB 55 Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families
FAVORABLE
Health and Government Operations Committee
Tuesday, January 23, 2024

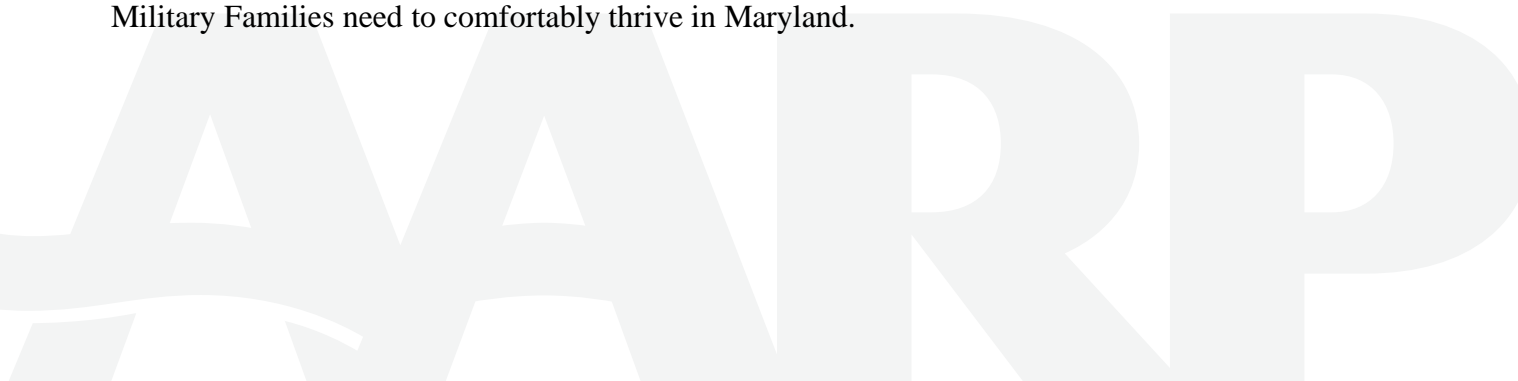
Good afternoon, Chair Pena-Melnyk and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. My name is Karen Kalla, volunteer AARP legislative aide, member of the AARP Executive Council, and resident of Montgomery County. AARP MD and its more than 850,000 members support HB 55 Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families. We thank Delegate Pruski for sponsoring this important legislation.

HB 55 would establish the Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families, comprised of veterans, legislators, policy makers, and others dedicated to enhancing the lives of veterans, to develop a plan to make Maryland a supportive and welcoming place for Veterans and their families.

AARP has nearly 6 million members who have served or are currently serving in the U.S. military, making AARP the largest Veteran's support organization in the market space. Approximately one quarter of all veterans in the U.S. are members of AARP.

AARP is dedicated to empowering Veterans and Military Families (VMF) to navigate the complexities of life's transitions by addressing the unique needs and expectations of this audience. More specifically, we are focusing on 1) caregiving - to prepare family caregivers to meet the unique needs of Veterans, including their mental and emotional health, 2) fraud - to provide timely and topical information and resources on the top scams effecting Veterans, 3) work and jobs - to improve the job-hunting journey of Veterans and Military Families, including Veteran women and Military spouses, and 4) earned benefits - to empower VMF communities to maximize earned benefits in both the military and civilian worlds, including the navigation of health care options. We envision that the proposed commission would address these as well as other vital aspects of Veteran and Military Family life.

Veterans and Military Families dedicate their lives to protecting the wellbeing of their fellow Americans. This commitment does not end when they leave formal service but continues with them forever. AARP believes we must honor the service and acknowledge the sacrifice of our Veterans and Military Families. House Bill 55 does so, by establishing a commission of and for Veterans to research and develop a plan that will provide the unique supports that Veterans and Military Families need to comfortably thrive in Maryland.



AARP Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for HB 55. For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451. Thank You!