



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

January 19, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report -- HB 0055** -- Maryland Commission on Veterans and Families

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC), I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on HB 0055 the *Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families*, sponsored by Delegate Pruski. 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 force structure that all too often is not represented.

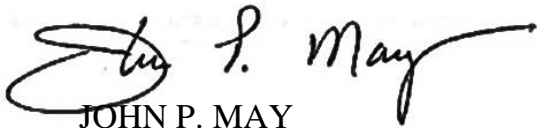
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The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports HB 0055** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Health and Government Operations Committee. Establishing this Commission directly supports and enhances the Moore Administration's Year of the Military Family initiative.

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 Delegate Pruski for sponsoring this legislation and his strong support of the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John P. May". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

JOHN P. MAY
Vice President

Member organizations signature page follows.

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. [unclear]
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 [unclear]
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

Phyllis J. Collins
Fleet Reserve Association

Seldon [unclear]
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Steve L. Bloodwin
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association

Emmett R. Robert
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Robert J. Winton
Military Officers Association of America

Charles [unclear]
Military Order of the Purple Heart

[unclear]
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

[unclear]
Reserve Organization of America

Catherine L. McGraw
Society of Military Widows

[unclear]
National Active and Retired Federal Employees
Veterans Affairs Directorate, NARFE MD

M. Blackwell
Veterans of Foreign Wars