



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 0133 – Commission to Study African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland

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 0133 the *Commission to Study African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland*, sponsored by Delegate Bouchat. This bill will establish a Commission which will study the history of African American Soldiers who fought for the Union Army and make recommendations for an appropriate memorial.

Many African Americans fought valiantly on behalf of the Union. However, the extent of their participation, their individual stories, and unit history are not well known, including African American Soldiers from Maryland. The Commission proposed in this legislation will address this gap by studying the history of African American Civil War Soldiers and publishing its findings to enhance public awareness.

Most importantly, the Commission will make recommendations for an appropriate memorial to African American Civil War Soldiers. The monument will serve to not only memorialize those warriors but serve as an inspiration for future generations.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports HB 133** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Health and Government Operations Committee.

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

1101 Mercantile Lane, Suite 260 • Largo, Maryland 20774
(301) 583-8687 • (800) 808-4517

Respectfully,

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jayson Spiegel". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Jayson Spiegel
LTC USAR (Ret)
President

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

Lynn A. Dask
Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service

William 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. Bloodwin
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association

Ernest R. Robert
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Robert F. Winton
Military Officers Association of America

Charles Epstein
Military Order of the Purple Heart

E. J. [Signature]
Montford Point Marines of America

M. L. Meser
National Association for Black Veterans

Michael P. Hays
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

Christian Andreasen
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

John S. [Signature]
Reserve Organization of America

Catherine L. McGraw
Society of Military Widows

E. J. [Signature]
National Active and Retired Federal Employees
Veterans Affairs Directorate, NARFE MD

M. Blackwell
Veterans of Foreign Wars

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