



March 18, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Health & Government Operations
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Bonnie Cullison
Vice Chair, Health & Government Operations
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Vice Chair Cullison,

I would like to express my full support for *House Bill 875 - Veterans - Persons Providing Veterans Benefits Services and Veterans Benefits Appeals Services - Fees and Compensation*.

Those who serve in our armed forces are the backbone of America. Unfortunately, we have all heard stories about the difficulties that many of our nation's veterans experience when trying to seek out benefits they have earned. Working with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can often be a complex process, and it is something my office is happy to assist with. In addition to contacting their Federal Representatives, veterans can also reach out to Veteran Service Officers (VSO) for assistance navigating, and even applying for, their benefits. Like the assistance provided by Federal Representatives, VSOs offer VA benefit claim assistance for free.

Despite the existence of these free services, there are bad actors who prey on our veterans. These unaccredited VA claim service companies often use misleading advertising to lure veterans to their businesses and charge outlandish fees for services that can be acquired for free through VSOs.

While I am a co-sponsor of HR1139, which would address this pressing issue on a federal level, Maryland's veterans cannot wait for Congress to act. HB875 will allow Maryland's Attorney General to enforce existing federal law on a state level to protect Maryland's veterans from those seeking to take advantage of them.

I strongly urge this committee to give *House Bill 875 - Veterans - Persons Providing Veterans Benefits Services and Veterans Benefits Appeals Services - Fees and Compensation* the highest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Trone", written in a cursive style.

David Trone
Member of Congress