



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

January 30, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report** – SB0055 – Vehicle Laws – Disabled Veteran Registration Plates -- Issuance

Dear Chair Smith and distinguished members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) and as its Legislative Director, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB0055 – Vehicle Laws – Disabled Veteran Registration Plates – Issuance**, sponsored by Senator William Smith, Jr. This legislation authorizes the Motor Vehicle Administration to issue certain special registration plates to those disabled veterans with a service-connected disability rating between 50 percent and 99 percent, inclusive, as designated or classified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The MMC strongly supports the expansion of the availability of Disabled Veteran Registration Plates to those eligible individuals as proposed by this legislation. In its latest report, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs indicates there are 42,005 veterans in Maryland with a service-connected disability rating between 50 percent and 99 percent.¹ The adoption of this bill will create an added benefit for those veterans in this category.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports** SB0055 and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Judicial Proceedings Committee. This bill builds on the Moore Administration's Year of the Military Families, providing another benefit that assists and helps the veterans and their families who have bravely served, fought, and sacrificed for our state and country.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 21 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over

¹ https://www.data.va.gov/dataset/FY-2021-Disability-Compensation-Recipients-by-Coun/k9i5-f2ec/about_data, FY 2021 Disability Compensation Recipients by County, November 30, 2022

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150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

We want to thank Senator William Smith for sponsoring this legislation and his continued strong support of the veterans community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Dragics". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'D' at the beginning.

David L. Dragics
COL USA (Ret)
Legislative Director

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

C. W. Allen
Association of the United States Navy

Lynda A. Gash
Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service

Wilbert B. Fisher
Disabled American Veterans

Dillard H. Hedberg
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

Phyllis J. Collins
Fleet Reserve Association

Dillard H. Hedberg
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Steve L. Bloodstein
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association

Emmett R. Robert
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Robert J. Winton
Military Officers Association of America

Charles E. Galt
Military Order of the Purple Heart

[Signature]
Montford Point Marines of America

M. L. Messer
National Association for Black Veterans

Michael P. Hays
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

Christian Andreasen
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

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Reserve Organization of America

Catherine L. McShaw
Society of Military Widows

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

M. Blackwell
Veterans of Foreign Wars