



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Ben Barnes
The Honorable Mark S. Chang
House Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report HB1049 – Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program - Funding**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Military Coalition recommends a **FAVORABLE Report HB1049 – Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program – Funding**. As an advance practice nurse and member of the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide in Service Members, I have seen first hand the benefits achieved through the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program. During my tenure with the Challenge, I have watched the implementation of training, and the establishment of response teams, all assisting in the early identification and intervention of persons needing behavioral assistance. These programs have essentially been implemented on "shoe string" budgets, but even so, they have already been able to turn the tide on veteran suicides.

While I respect that the State is in a budget crisis, the funds called for in this legislation, \$5 Million in FY 2025 and the years through FY 2029, in reality are "budget dust", when viewed through the lens of service members who put their lives on the line so that we the rest of us can live free. Over time, it has been demonstrated that these prevention activities have decreased the rate of suicide in Maryland, and costs less than dealing with the ramifications of mental health disease that goes unchecked.

The MMC **strongly supports HB1049** and asks the Appropriations Committee for a **FAVORABLE report**. It is imperative that our State continue to take steps to protect our veterans and those suffering from mental health diseases.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000

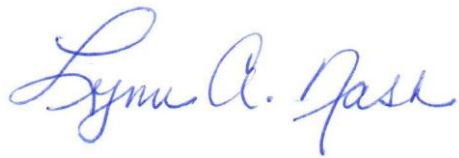
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Request for FAVORABLE Report HB1049 – Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program - Funding

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

We want to thank Delegate Feldmark for his continued support of of **ALL** of the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn A. Nash". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynn A. Nash
CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service
Communications Director

1 Attachment – Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

Maryland National Association of Retired Federal Employees Veterans Committee

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Platoon 22

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars