



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

January 28, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report** – SB0013 – Commission to Study African American Civil War Sailors in Maryland

Dear Chair Feldman and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC), I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB0013 – Commission to Study African American Civil War Sailors in Maryland**, sponsored by Senator C. Anthony Muse. This bill will establish a Commission that will study the history of African American Sailors who fought for the Union Navy and make recommendations for an appropriate memorial.

Of the nearly 18,000 men of African descent who served in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War, and identified by name, more than 2,300 were from Maryland. The size of the Maryland contingent benefited from an agreement to transfer nearly 800 of them from incomplete units of the U.S. Colored Troops into the navy.¹ However, the extent of their participation, their individual stories, and their naval unit history are not well known. The Commission proposed in this legislation will address this gap by studying the history of African American Civil War Sailors and publishing its findings to enhance public awareness of the contributions they made.

Most importantly, the Commission will make recommendations for an appropriate memorial to these sailors. The memorial, when completed, will serve to not only commemorate their service to the Union but also how they served important roles on some of the navy's most important ships.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports SB0013** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

¹ <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2001/fall/black-sailors>, Black Men in Navy Blue During the Civil War, Prologue Magazine, Fall 2001, Vol. 33, No. 3

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The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 22 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors. Visit our website at <https://www.mdmilcoalition.org/>.

We want to thank Senator Muse for sponsoring this legislation and for his support of the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Dragics". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David L. Dragics
COL (Ret), U.S. Army
Legislative Director



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
National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans
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
National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers
Platoon 22
Reserve Organization of America
Society of Military Widows
Veterans of Foreign Wars