



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland, Inc.

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January 31, 2025

David Heredia, Jr.
Commander, Department of Maryland
The American Legion
101 N. Gay Street, Suite E
Baltimore, MD, 21202

The Honorable Bryan W. Simonaire
Maryland State Senate
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

cc:

Recreational Equality for Service Members Act Committee
Co-Sponsors, The Honorable Johnny Ray Salling, J.B. Jennings, Jason Gallion, Johnny Mautz,
and Jack Bailey

Subject: Strong Support for Senate Bill 282 – The Recreational Equality for Service Members Act

Dear Senator Simonaire and Honorable Co-Sponsors,

On behalf of The American Legion Department of Maryland and our over 42,000 members, I would like to express our full support for Senate Bill 282 – The Recreational Equality for Service Members Act. This vital legislation ensures that active-duty service members, National Guard, Reservists, and veterans receive equal access to recreational opportunities in Maryland.

Our military personnel have dedicated their lives to defending our freedoms, often at great personal sacrifice. It is only fitting that they can enjoy Maryland's state parks, recreational facilities, and public resources without undue financial or administrative barriers. SB 282 seeks to address this by:

- **Ensuring Fair Access** – Expanding eligibility for discounted or free entry to state parks and recreational facilities for all service members and veterans.
- **Reducing Barriers** – Simplifying the process for service members to obtain recreational benefits, ensuring ease of access for those who have served.
- **Recognizing Military Contributions** – Honoring the sacrifices and service of military personnel by fostering an inclusive and supportive environment in Maryland's recreational programs.

This legislation reinforces Maryland's commitment to its military community, ensuring that those who have served are able to enjoy the benefits of recreation, outdoor activities, and community engagement. By passing SB 282, we demonstrate our appreciation for their service and uphold the principles of fairness and gratitude.

On behalf of the over 350,000 veterans, active-duty service members, National Guard, and Reservists in Maryland, I respectfully urge you to support SB 282 and advocate for its swift passage. Providing our military personnel with equitable access to recreational opportunities is a meaningful way to honor their service and well-being.

Thank you for your time and unwavering commitment to Maryland's military community. The American Legion, Department of Maryland stands ready to support this effort, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further. Please do not hesitate to reach out if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

David Heredia Jr.

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