



Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families  
Office of the Secretary

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GOVERNOR

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SECRETARY

Senate Bill 491-General Provisions - Veterans Benefits - Honorable Discharge  
SUPPORT

February 17, 2025

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

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF) is committed to leading veterans and their families through life's transitions, making Maryland the best state for the military-connected communities. DVMF fulfills its mission through five core programs: the Service and Benefits Program, which helps veterans access federal, state, and local earned benefits; Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, offering assisted living and skilled nursing care; the Cemetery and Memorial Program, providing dignified resting places and maintaining memorials honoring Maryland's veterans; the Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy Program, fostering connection and awareness; and the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund, offering financial assistance to veterans and their families in need. These programs reflect Maryland's commitment to honoring and empowering its military-connected community.

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families supports Senate Bill-491-General Provisions - Veterans Benefits - Honorable Discharge.

Senate Bill 491 expands the definition of "honorable discharge" under Maryland law to include veterans who were discharged under less than honorable conditions solely due to conditions stemming from **post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or military sexual trauma**, are still entitled to state benefits.

This legislation acknowledges the injustices many service members have faced and ensures that Maryland does not deny vital state benefits to those who have served our country with honor and sacrifice. Too often, instead of receiving the care and support they needed, these Veterans were simply discharged - stripping them of the very benefits meant to help them recover.

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This bill acknowledges the reality of these injuries and ensures that Maryland does not deny benefits to those whose discharges were the result of service-connected trauma, not misconduct.

By enacting SB 491, Maryland will continue its leadership in supporting our military and veteran communities by ensuring they are not excluded from programs designed to assist them.

Thank you for your consideration and I ask the committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'W'.

Anthony C. Woods  
Secretary