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**SB491 – General Provisions – Veterans Benefits – Honorable Discharge
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 20, 2025
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. My name is Jim Campbell, State President Emeritus of AARP Maryland, and a former member of the House of Delegates. On behalf of AARP Maryland and our 850,000 members across the state, I urge the Committee to pass Senate Bill 491-General Provisions-Veterans Benefits- Honorable Discharge - sponsored by Senator Gile and the bipartisan group of co-sponsors. Thank you for your interest in this legislation.

SB491 expands the definition of Honorable Discharge to allow individuals who received less than honorable discharge to qualify for state benefits. The bill would apply to veterans whose less than honorable discharge was due to a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress, Traumatic Brain Injury, or who had experienced sexual trauma. The person making this determination must be a licensed health professional by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Maryland's veterans and their families make tremendous sacrifices to serve the nation. SB 491 provides the opportunity to honor them and assist in their recovery for injuries suffered while serving. For these reasons, we respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB 491.

If you have questions or for follow up, please contact Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

