



Commissioned Officers Association of the United States Public Health Service

Protecting the interests of the USPHS Commissioned Corps since 1951

February 20, 2025

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

Re: Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report – SB 309 – Department of Veterans and Military Families – Online Registry**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the Commissioned Officers Association, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB 309 – Department of Veterans and Military Families – Online Registry**. This bill would require that the Department establish and maintain an online registry to provide veterans, military families and interested individuals with information; and for the Department to write an annual report. An ongoing issue is having up-to-date statistics regarding those currently serving, those who have served and their families, caregivers and survivors living in Maryland. In addition, there is no rapid method of providing timely information to these same individuals when a need arises.

This bill creates an on-line registry, that while voluntary, would provide timely statistics. It provides the Department's Communications, Outreach and Advocacy Program with a timely way of disseminating information. Likewise, it provides members on the registry with a way of asking questions that would be directed to the correct entity within the Department.

Maryland is home to the headquarters of both the U.S. Public Health Service AND the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Commissioned Corps. In addition to my headquarters, U.S. Public Health Service officers serve in the Department of Health and Human Services operating administrations including the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Health Resources and Services Administration, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, as well as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, among

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others. This includes the 1398 officers, 8 Ready Reservists and over 7,000 retirees living in Maryland.

The Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service ***strongly supports SB 309 – Department of Veterans and Military Families – Online Registry*** asks the Committee for a **FAVORABLE report.**

The mission of the Commissioned Officers Association (COA) is to protect and enhance the public health and safety of the United States by supporting and advancing the interests of the Commissioned Corps and its officers through advocacy, education, training and dissemination of professional information.

We want to thank Senator Simonaire for his continued commitment to our veterans and 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, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN
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