



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland, Inc.

The War Memorial Building, Baltimore, Maryland 21202
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February 12, 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: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members

Subject: Strong Support for Maryland SB 114 – Honoring Veterans Through Professional License Recognition

Dear Senators Simonaire and Jackson,

On behalf of The American Legion Department of Maryland and our over 42,000 members who proudly support the nearly 350,000 veterans and their families across this great state, I write to express our unwavering and enthusiastic support for Senate Bill 114 (SB 114). This legislation, which authorizes the Maryland Department of Labor to establish a process for including a veteran status notation on occupational licenses, is a significant and necessary step in recognizing the service and sacrifices of Maryland's veterans.

For too long, veterans have faced unnecessary barriers when seeking the recognition, resources, and respect they deserve. These men and women have honorably served our nation and continue to contribute to our communities in countless ways—as professionals, entrepreneurs, and leaders. However, many struggle to access the benefits they have earned simply because their veteran status is not readily identifiable.

This bill is not merely about administrative efficiency; it is about honoring those who served and ensuring their sacrifices are acknowledged in meaningful ways. Including a veteran designation on professional licenses will:

1. **Facilitate Access to Benefits** – Veterans should not have to navigate bureaucratic hurdles to verify their service. A simple designation on a professional license provides immediate verification, ensuring that they can quickly connect with the benefits and services they have rightfully earned.
2. **Recognize and Honor Their Sacrifice** – This notation is more than just an administrative detail. It serves as a daily reminder to employers, clients, and colleagues that the individual holding this license has served our nation with honor.
3. **Strengthen Support and Outreach** – Identifying veterans within licensed professions enables Maryland to better understand their unique needs and tailor policies and programs that provide them with essential support and opportunities.

As Commander of The American Legion Department of Maryland, I have spoken with countless veterans who feel frustrated by the complexities of proving their status when seeking assistance or opportunities. SB 114 will eliminate one of these barriers and send a strong message that Maryland values and respects its veterans.

Our organization, along with other veteran service organizations such as the DAV and VFW, works tirelessly to support veterans by providing free assistance through accredited Veteran Service Officers (VSOs). SB 114 will complement these efforts, helping veterans gain access to the resources, recognition, and opportunities they have earned.

This legislation affirms that Maryland is committed to honoring its veterans not just in words, but through tangible action. It is a bold and necessary step in ensuring that those who have given so much to our nation are supported in their civilian careers.

We commend your leadership in sponsoring SB 114, and we urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to pass this bill without hesitation. Maryland's veterans have served us—now it's our turn to serve them.

Thank you for your commitment to our veterans. Together, we can make Maryland a state that truly honors and supports those who have served.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Heredia Jr.".

David Heredia, Jr.
Commander, Department of Maryland
The American Legion

cc: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members