

VeteransCaucusLegislationSupportLetter_SB491.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV



MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
VETERANS CAUCUS

February 12, 2025

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
2W Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB491, General Provisions, Veterans Benefits – Honorable Discharge

Hearing Date: February 20, 2025

Dear Chairman Feldman,

Please let this letter serve as notice of the support of the Maryland General Assembly Senate Veterans Caucus for Senate Bill 491.

After review by our respective legislative committee, the Senate Veterans Caucus believes that the above-mentioned legislation would provide a valuable benefit to the veterans of the State of Maryland and requests a favorable report.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Senator Benjamin Brooks
Senate Chair

cc: Senator Dawn Gile

SB491 Memo Letterhead.pdf

Uploaded by: Dana Burl

Position: FAV



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Anthony Woods | Secretary

Dana Burl, Deputy Secretary
Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Senate Bill 491
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 20, 2025

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 491.

Maryland has long been a leader in supporting those who have served our nation. However, too many Veterans have been denied access to state benefits due to the nature of their discharge that, in many cases, resulted from circumstances beyond their control.

Senate Bill 491 ensures that Veterans who were discharged due to conditions stemming from **post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or military sexual trauma**, are still entitled to state benefits.

PTSD, TBI, and military sexual trauma (MST) are often the invisible wounds of war and service, impacting behavior, decision-making, and overall well-being. 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.

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.

DVMF is committed to supporting these veterans. We have established an MOU with the University of Baltimore Bob Parsons Veterans Advocacy Clinic to refer Maryland veterans with other than honorable discharges to seek legal assistance at the federal level. This bill will ensure recourse and access to benefits at the state level. By passing Senate Bill 491, Maryland is taking a stand for **fairness, justice, and the well-being of all who have served**. This legislation reaffirms our state's unwavering and inclusive commitment to its veterans.

I urge the committee to support Senate Bill 491 and ensure that all Maryland veterans receive the dignity, recognition, and benefits they have earned.

SB491_FAV_AARP 7.pdf

Uploaded by: James Campbell

Position: FAV



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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.



Military SA discharge - testimony - house - 2025 -

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FAV



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

P.O. Box 8782
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: 301-565-2277
www.mcasa.org

For more information contact:
Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire
443-995-5544

Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 491
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
February 20, 2025

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute which provides direct legal services for survivors across the State of Maryland. We urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 491.

Senate Bill 491 – Military Discharge and Sexual Trauma

This bill would define "honorable discharge" with respect to any State program of benefits, rights, or privileges applicable to a veteran to include certain discharges based on an experience of sexual trauma.

Research estimates there were 75,569 cases of sexual assault in the military in 2021 and 73,695 cases in 2023. On average, over the course of the war in Afghanistan, 24 percent of active-duty women and 1.9 percent of active-duty men experienced sexual assault.

<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2024/sexualassault>

Senate Bill 491 helps ensure that members who leave services as a result of experiencing sexual trauma are treated with respect and continue to receive the benefits they have earned.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 491**

DVMF SB491 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Morgan Murphy

Position: FAV



Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families
Office of the Secretary

WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR

ANTHONY C. WOODS
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.

THE WINELAND BUILDING, FOURTH FLOOR
16 FRANCIS STREET, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TOLL FREE: 866-793-1577 • ANNAPOLIS: 410-260-3838 • FAX: 410-216-7928

veterans.maryland.gov
TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

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

SB 491 Gen Pro -Vet Ben - Hon Disch FULL FINAL 021

Uploaded by: Robert Doyle

Position: FAV



**Statement of the Maryland Federation of
National Active and Retired Federal Employees
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee Hearing,
February 20, 2025
On SB 491 – General Provisions – Veterans Benefits – Honorable Discharge**

(Position – FAV)

Good Afternoon, Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee. I am pleased to provide this written statement and testify today on behalf of the State Legislative Committee of the Maryland National and Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), representing approximately 317,000 federal annuitants and employees in Maryland. For the continuing benefit of the more than 3,100 Veterans who are Maryland NARFE members – and for all Maryland Veterans - we support and ask you for a favorable report on SB 491 – General Provisions – Veterans Benefits –

Honorable Discharge. We thank Senator Dawn Gile and the other Co-Sponsors for introducing this Bill.

SB 491 will change existing Maryland Veterans law to expand the definition of "honorable discharge" to include discharges other than honorable which were based on incidents relating to a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI), which the Veteran received from an individual licensed to provide health services at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility, or based on an experience of military sexual trauma (MST)¹ which the Veteran disclosed to an individual licensed to provide health care services at a certain Veterans Affairs facility.

1

Military sexual trauma, or MST, is the term used by VA to refer to experiences of sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that a Veteran experienced during his or her military service. The definition used by the VA comes from Federal law (Title 38 U.S. Code 1720D) and is "psychological trauma, which in the judgment of a VA mental health professional, resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred while the Veteran was serving on active duty or active duty for training." Sexual harassment is further defined as "repeated, unsolicited verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature which is threatening in character." More concretely, MST includes any sexual activity where a Service member is involved against his or her will -- he or she may have been pressured into sexual activities (for example, with threats of negative consequences for refusing to be sexually cooperative or with implied better treatment in exchange for sex), may have been unable to consent to sexual activities (for example, when intoxicated), or may have been physically forced into sexual activities. Other experiences that fall into the category of MST include unwanted sexual touching or grabbing; threatening, offensive remarks about a person's body or sexual activities; and threatening and unwelcome sexual advances. The identity or characteristics of the perpetrator, whether the Service member was on or off duty at the time, and whether he or she was on or off base at the time do not matter. If these experiences occurred while an individual was on active duty or active duty for training, they are considered by VA to be MST. (From VA Fact Sheet on MST, April 2014)

Under this new definition of “honorable discharge,” Veterans who previously could not qualify for certain Veterans benefits in Maryland because their discharge was other than honorable for the reasons directly above will now be eligible for such benefits.

SB 491 will follow the example of the Restoration of Honor Act, Maryland legislation passed and signed into law by Governor Larry Hogan in May, 2022. This law changed the then definition of “honorable discharge” to include discharges other than honorable (1) solely due to the sexual orientation or gender identity of the individual being discharged or (2) based on a statement or consensual act of the individual being discharged related to the individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity, if the statement or consensual act was prohibited by the military or naval service at the time of discharge.²

Why SB 491 is needed

Military discharges are categorized into several types, including Honorable, General (under honorable conditions), Other Than Honorable (OTH), Bad Conduct, and Dishonorable. The type of discharge a service member receives significantly affects their post-military life, particularly regarding access to veterans' benefits and employment opportunities.

Many Veterans have received discharges other than honorable because of their service-related experiences of PTSD, TBI and MST. In data from 2014, the Department of Defense

² Article – General Provisions, Section 1–109.1, Annotated Code of Maryland, (2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

(DoD) released records indicating that 13% of post-9/11 veterans, around 318,000, received a less-than-honorable discharge between fiscal years (FY) 2000 – 2013. From 2009 to 2015, the Army has separated at least 22,000 combat veterans who had been diagnosed with mental health disabilities like PTSD or TBI for alleged misconduct, despite reforms intended to halt the administrative separations of veterans suffering from service-related conditions. These unjustly discharged veterans were ineligible for veterans' benefits, and the impacts of the "less-than-honorable" discharges made them socially isolated from the military and veterans community, and more likely to be homeless, suffer from substance abuse, go without treatment for physical and mental injuries, become incarcerated, and die by suicide.³

In that time (from 2000-2015), there was an increasing recognition of the impact of PTSD and TBI on service members' conduct, including the acknowledgement that some behaviors leading to less than honorable discharges were linked to service-related mental health issues. The Pentagon issued policy guidance in in this area, such as the 2014 memorandum from Secretary Chuck Hagel directing discharge review boards to give "liberal consideration" to petitions where PTSD or other mental health conditions played a role in the misconduct leading to the discharge. In 2017, a memorandum from Undersecretary Kurta expanded on the Hagel Memorandum by instructing discharge review boards to consider any underlying mental health condition as a mitigating factor in military misconduct.⁴

³Restoring Honor To Veterans With Invisible Injuries, Goldsmith, Kristofer; Russell, Dr. Judith; Columbia University, December 2015.

⁴ Shifting Tides: The Evolution of Discharge Policies and Their Lasting Impacts on Veterans; Linares, Andrew, March 20, 2024, found at: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/shifting-tides-evolution-discharge-policies-lasting-impact-veterans-1tt3c>

Regarding MST, Veterans also may receive less than honorable discharges due to misconduct which they believe resulted from their experience of sexual assault and/or sexual harassment trauma. In the 2017 DOD memorandum, it was noted that “evidence of misconduct, including any misconduct underlying a Veteran’s discharge may be evidence of ...behavior consistent with experiencing sexual assault or sexual harassment. A determination made by the VA that a Veteran’s mental health condition ... including sexual assault or sexual harassment is connected to military service, while not binding on the DOD is persuasive evidence that the experience occurred during military service.”⁵

On the Federal level, the VA has taken significant steps to look at the underlying problems of STSD, TBI and MST on discharge characterizations. The 2018 Honor Our Commitment Act mandated the VA to provide mental health care to veterans with service-connected trauma or military sexual trauma, regardless of their discharge status. And in 2020, the Discharge Appeal Review Board was created to provide a final opportunity for veterans to appeal their discharge characterization at the Department of Defense level.⁶

We hope that SB 491 will offer significant help to MD veterans like the help offered by the Federal efforts described above. Additionally, if this legislation is enacted, Maryland will

⁵ Under Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 25 August 2017, subject: Clarifying Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Considering Requests by Veterans for Modification of their Discharge Due to Mental Health Conditions, Sexual Assault, or Sexual Harassment, found at <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/bcnr/Pages/Resources.aspx>

⁶ Supra, note 3.

have legislation similar to the New York State Restoration of Honor Act (2019). This law authorizes the New York State Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) to restore state Veterans benefits to Veterans who have a less than honorable discharge due to PTSD, TBI, MST, or Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Gender Expression. While the law does not change a Veteran's official federally issued character of discharge, if the Veteran receives a favorable determination and their service is considered honorable for the purpose of receiving New York State Veterans Benefits, DVS will provide the Veteran an award letter with a list of New York State Veterans benefits for which the Veteran is now eligible.⁷

We believe that SB 491 is a significant step to honor and help those who served and sacrificed for our Nation but have been denied benefits they earned and deserved because of unfairly characterized discharges.

We respectfully ask that you give a favorable report to SB 491.

Thank you.

Robert M. Doyle, Co-Chair
Maryland Federation – NARFE
State Legislative Committee
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Edgewater, MD 21037
bdoyle47@verizon.net
H (410) 798-0079
C/Text (301) 693-1774

⁷ Restoration of Honor Act Fact Sheet – New York State Department of Veterans Services, found at <https://veterans.ny.gov/documents/2024/07>

DG Written Testimony_SB0491.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Gile

Position: FAV

DAWN D. GILE
Legislative District 33
Anne Arundel County

Finance Committee

Chair

Anne Arundel County
Senate Delegation



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB0491 - General Provisions - Veterans Benefits - Honorable Discharge

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

SB0491 would broaden the eligibility criteria for veterans seeking to upgrade their discharge status from “less than honorable” to “honorable” for the purpose of accessing state benefits, ensuring alignment with existing federal policy.¹

Background

When service members are separated from service, the Department of Defense (DoD) authorizes six characterizations of service for military service members to receive on discharge: (1) Honorable; (2) Under Honorable Conditions (General); (3) Under Other than Honorable (OTH) Conditions; (4) Bad Conduct; (5) Dishonorable, and (6) Uncharacterized.² Federal and state benefits are withheld from veterans who are not discharged as “honorable” or “general” (otherwise known as “less-than-honorable”).

For decades, service members received less-than-honorable discharges due to reasons that are no longer considered valid grounds for such classifications. These include:

- Mental health conditions, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Sexual assault or harassment during military service (“military sexual trauma” or MST)
- Sexual orientation (including under the *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* policy)

After federal policy changes, such as the repeal of *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) established a process for veterans to apply for a discharge upgrade if their less-than-honorable classification was based on conduct that is no longer considered grounds for such a status. This process enables veterans to seek upgrades for the reasons outlined above, ensuring they receive the recognition and benefits they deserve.

¹ [How To Apply For A Discharge Upgrade | Veterans Affairs](#)

² [VETS USERRA FACT SHEET 3 Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Existing Law

Maryland already provides a process for veterans to request reconsideration of their eligibility for state benefits if their discharge was based on a statement or consensual act related to their sexual orientation or gender identity—conduct that was prohibited by the military or naval service at the time of their discharge.

Solution

SB0491 would expand the grounds for reconsideration to include:

- A diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI) made by a licensed healthcare provider at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility.
- A disclosed experience of sexual trauma reported to a licensed healthcare provider at a designated VA facility.

This expansion aligns Maryland's discharge upgrade process with federal VA policy, ensuring greater consistency and fairness for affected veterans.

Additionally, I am offering a sponsor amendment to correct a minor drafting error and clarify the specific circumstances in which the expanded process may be applied.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB0491.

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Uploaded by: Senator Gile

Position: FAV



SB0491/873020/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

18 FEB 25
10:30:34

BY: Senator Gile

(To be offered in the Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee)

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 491

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 2, strike beginning with “POST-TRAUMATIC” in line 2 down through “INJURY” in line 3 and substitute “A COVERED MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION AS DEFINED IN 38 U.S.C. § 1166”; in line 4, after “A” insert “HOSPITAL OF THE ARMED FORCES OR A”; in line 5, after “OF” insert “MILITARY”; in lines 5 and 6, strike “38 U.S.C. § 1720” and substitute “38 U.S.C. § 1166”; and in line 7, after “A” insert “HOSPITAL OF THE ARMED FORCES OR A”.

SB 491 Written Testimony _ Maryland Military Coali

Uploaded by: Lynn Nash

Position: FWA



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 20, 2025

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

Subject: Request for a **FAVORABLE Report with Amendments - SB 491 – General Provisions – Veterans Benefits – Honorable Discharge**

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

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC), I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE REPORT** with **AMENDMENTS** by the Committee on **General Provisions – Veterans Benefits – Honorable Discharge**. This bill is designed to allow a veteran who has a “covered mental health condition” or has been a victim of a sexual trauma, to apply for state veteran benefits while awaiting a federal discharge upgrade. This bill seeks to assist in making a veteran “whole” after trauma.

However, the bill needs amendments:

1. The citation currently in the bill is incorrect. The citation should be 38 U.S.C. §1166 (not 1720 which deals with nursing home transfers).
2. The following should be amended to more clearly adhere to the citation.

(3) BASED ON AN INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS RELATING TO:

- (I) Diagnosis of ~~post traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury~~ a “covered mental health condition” disclosed to an individual licensed to provide health care services at a hospital of the Armed Forces or at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility, that the Secretary determines to be related to military sexual trauma. “Covered mental health condition” means post- traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, or other mental health diagnosis described in the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (published by the American Psychiatric Association).
- (II) An experience of sexual trauma, as described in 38 U.S.C. ~~§1720~~ §1166 disclosed to an individual licensed to provide health care services at a hospital of the Armed Forces or at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility. The term “military sexual trauma” means, with respect to a

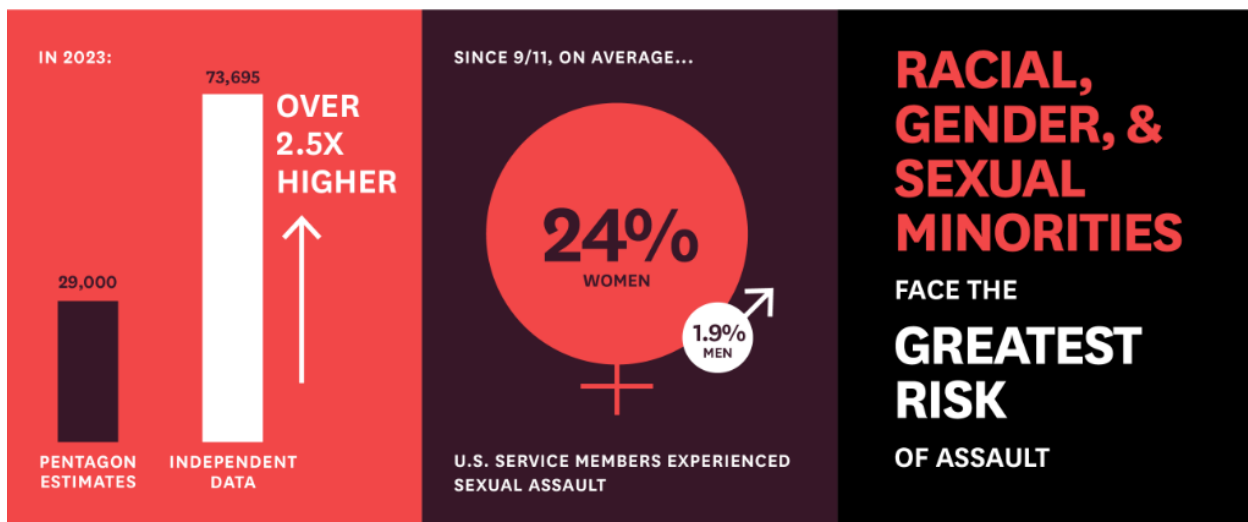
FAVORABLE Report with Amendments - SB 491 – General Provisions – Veterans Benefits – Honorable Discharge

veteran, a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment during active military, naval, air, or space service.

According to the [Cost of War Project](#):

- In 2013, the Department of Defense reversed a ban on women in combat.
- From 2016 onward, all military jobs were opened to women.
- Recently released Department of Defense (DoD) data shows that 29,000 military personnel were sexually assaulted in 2023. In addition, during the same period, close to 25% of active-duty women were sexually harassed (a decrease from 28.6% in 2021).
- Independent data shows ever higher rates than DoD estimates.
 - 75,569 cases in 2021
 - 73,695 cases in 2023
 - **On average, during the period of 2001-2021 twenty four percent (24%) of active-duty women and 1.9 percent (1.9%) of active-duty men experienced sexual assault.**
 - Racial minority and LGBTQ+ service members face the greatest risk of sexual assault.
- While these numbers are horrible, they follow a decade of interventions intended to address the sexual assault crisis:
 - 10 DoD Inspector General reports
 - 60 Government Accountability Office recommendations
 - Over 200 government panel and task force recommendations
 - 150 Congressional provisions, including passage of the **“I am Vanessa Guillen Act” (Military Justice Improvement and Increasing Prevention Act) in 2023**, which removes commanders authority over sexual assault cases and hands it to independent prosecutors. SPC Guillen was murdered at Fort Hood, Texas after suffering multiple incidents of sexual harassment.
 - More than 50 Secretary of Defense initiatives

Sexual Assault in the Military: Estimates



FAVORABLE Report with Amendments - SB 491 – General Provisions – Veterans Benefits – Honorable Discharge

Sexual trauma is a wound that doesn't show and is difficult to "heal". Often victims are unwilling to seek assistance because they fear retaliation. Many times, victims become isolated, leading to more problems in their conduct while in service. Many are removed from service under less than honorable conditions.

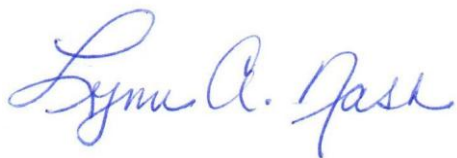
The Coalition seeks an **amendment to clarify the citation and definitions offered**. There is no fiscal note at this time, however, costs should be minimal, as this bill simply affords a service member earlier access to healing services.

We support the intent of **SB 491** and ask for a **FAVORABLE report with AMENDMENTS** to allow veterans to seek access to benefits they have earned. These amendments have been coordinated with the Department of Veterans and Military Families as well as the bill sponsors.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

We want to thank Senator Gile again for her on-going support of **ALL** of 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
CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service
Communications Director



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Platoon 22

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars