



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 28, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Request for **FAVORABLE Report** – HB1443 – Local Government – Hiring and Promotion Preferences for Veterans and Spouses of Service Members and Veterans (Families Serve Act)

Dear Chair Korman and distinguished members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC), I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **HB1443 – Local Government – Hiring and Promotion Preferences for Veterans and Spouses of Service Members and Veterans (Families Serve Act)**, sponsored by Delegate Mike Griffith. This legislation enables counties and municipalities to grant, by local law, a preference in the hiring and promotion of spouses of eligible uniformed services members, eligible veterans, spouses of certain eligible veterans and eligible service members, and surviving spouses of deceased eligible veterans. It essentially duplicates at the local level of government what the Families Serve Act of 2024 did at the state level of government.

The employment of spouses of members of the uniformed services is one of the biggest challenges these individuals continue to face. Last year, during the hearings for the Families Serve Act of 2024, it was pointed out that the estimated unemployment rate for these spouses in Maryland was approximately 11 percent. Creating incentives for the employment of these spouses is important to not only the retention of families in the uniformed services but also to the readiness of the armed forces.

HB1443 would enable those local jurisdictions, that choose to enact this legislation and authorize hiring and promotion preferences, to compete for qualified individuals to fill key vacancies. Per the Maryland Department of Labor's Census of Employment and Wages,¹ there are over twice as many individuals employed at the local level of government as there are at the state level. Further, the ten counties and jurisdictions near or in which there are major defense installations² account for over 85 percent of those

¹ <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/lmi/ces/>

² <https://oldcc.gov/defense-spending-state-fiscal-year-2023>, Defense Spending by State Fiscal Year 2023, page 59

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positions. **Passing this bill increases the number of potential employment opportunities for those individuals who are eligible to take advantage of the preferences offered.**

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports HB1443** and asks for a **FAVORABLE report**. As was pointed out last year, the Department of Defense (DoD) is placing greater emphasis on the quality of life to better serve military families and help with recruiting and retention. In addition, quality of life is increasingly factored into basing decisions. The passage of this bill will further improve Maryland's position to successfully sustain and attract new DoD missions.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 22 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups. It represents over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors. Visit our website at <https://mdmilcoalition.org>.

We want to thank Delegate Griffith for sponsoring this legislation and for supporting the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,



David L. Dragics
COL (Ret), U.S. Army
Legislative Director



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

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

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 Active and 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