

# **Maryland Military Coalition HB0248 Written Testimo**

Uploaded by: DAVID Dragics

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

January 28, 2025

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

Subject: **Request FAVORABLE Report** – HB0248 – Motor Vehicle Registration – Fee Exemption –  
Unemployable Disabled Veterans

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 on HB0248 – Motor Vehicle Registration – Fee Exemption – Unemployable Disabled Veterans**, sponsored by Delegate Mike Griffith. This bill would exempt from registration fees one vehicle that is either owned, leased, or personally used by an unemployable disabled veteran.

This legislation recognizes the sacrifices made by unemployable disabled veterans and the financial burden that registration fees place upon them. It includes them with other veterans who, as designated or classified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, have lost the use of a hand, arm, or leg, are totally disabled; have permanent vision impairment; or are the surviving spouses of a deceased disabled veteran.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports HB0248** and asks for a **FAVORABLE report** from the Environment and Transportation Committee. These unemployable disabled veterans deserve this exemption.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 22 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. Visit our website at <https://www.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

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## **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

## **HB248\_AARP\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Karen Kalla

Position: FAV



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**HB248 Motor Vehicle Registration – Fee Exemption- Unemployed Disabled Veterans  
FAVORABLE  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
January 30, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Karen Kalla, AARP Maryland volunteer legislative aide and resident of Montgomery County. AARP Maryland represents more than 850,000 members statewide and is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization advocating for Marylanders aged 50 and older, as well as their families. AARP has four area of focus serving members of the military: caregiving, fighting fraud, helping with career and employment opportunities through the Veterans and Military Spouse Job Center, and access to benefits. AARP Maryland supports HB248 Motor Vehicle Registration – Fee Exemption – Unemployed Disabled Veterans. We thank Delegate Griffith for sponsoring this bill.

**What HB248 Does**

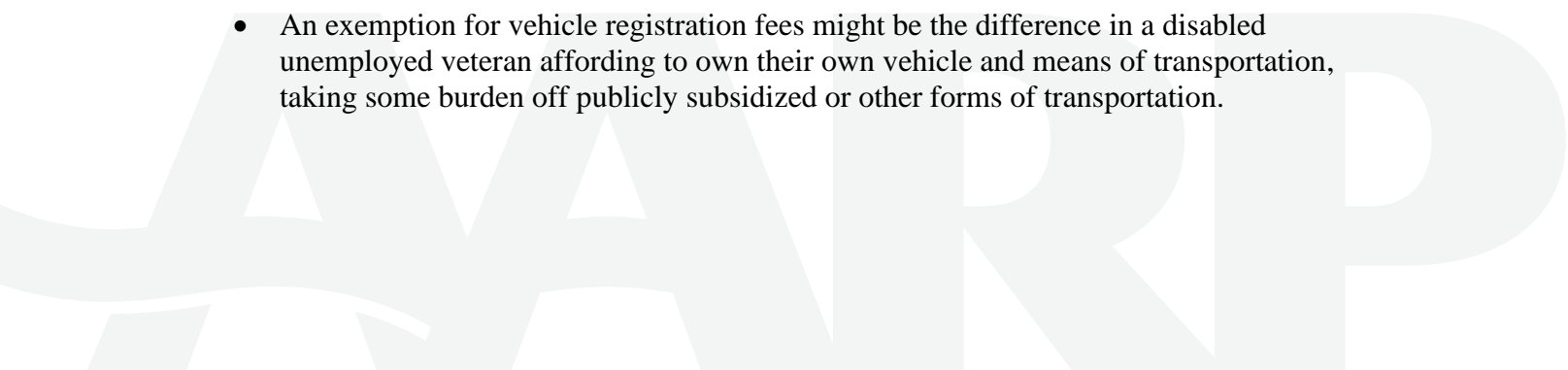
- Exempts from Maryland vehicle registration fees, one vehicle owned by, or leased to and personally used by a veteran who is unemployable due to a service-connected disability.
- Exempts from Maryland vehicle registration fees, one vehicle owned and personally used by an individual who is the surviving spouse of a deceased disabled veteran.
- HB248 will take effect October 1, 2025.

**Why This Matters**

Veterans serve our country and people, putting their lives and livelihoods in jeopardy to protect and preserve our democracy and quality of life. As they transition to civilian life, many will be unable to work due to injuries sustained in the line of duty. In 2023, Maryland had approximately 348,459 veterans living in the state. Of those, 83,978 or 23.8% had a service-connected disability.

It is incumbent upon our local, state, and national governments to make sure that we acknowledge the sacrifices of our veterans by providing them with benefits lost because of their service to our country. In this case, the lost benefit is that of certain abilities and employment to support themselves and their families.

- An exemption for vehicle registration fees might be the difference in a disabled unemployed veteran affording to own their own vehicle and means of transportation, taking some burden off publicly subsidized or other forms of transportation.



- Knowing they will be adequately supported upon return to civilian life, provides greater incentive for individuals to enlist in military services.

### **Broader Context – Service-Connected Disability Status**

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs 2022 Report states:

- According to the US Census, compared to civilian counterparts, veterans today are more likely to suffer from trauma-related injuries, substance abuse, and mental health disorders.
- Compared to veterans of other service eras, Post 9/11 veterans have a significantly higher chance (43%) of having a service-connected disability and to have a rating of 70% or higher (39%).
- Among all veterans, men are no more likely to have a disability than women, but women are more likely to have a rating of 70% or higher.
- According to the VA, in December 2022 Post 9/11 veteran claims made up 24% of the total inventory, Gulf War made up 36%, and combined Vietnam, peacetime, and other eras made up 44%.

While the costs of HB248 might seem problematic in the short run, the benefits gained from those who have militarily served our country are incalculable. AARP believes we must honor the service and acknowledge the sacrifice of our veterans. HB248 does so, by providing greater economic viability for disabled, unemployable veterans and their dependents.

For these reasons, AARP Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for HB248. For questions or more information, please contact Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or by calling 410-302-8451.

## **MGAVC25\_HB0248.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mike Delegate Rogers

Position: FAV



MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
VETERANS CAUCUS

TO: Chair Marc Korman  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
FROM: Maryland Veterans Caucus, House Membership  
DATE: January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Testimony in Favor of HB0248**  
**HB0248 – Motor Vehicle Registration - Fee Exemption - Unemployable Disabled Veterans**

**Chair Marc Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,**

The Maryland Veterans Caucus, House Membership respectfully requests a favorable report on HB HB0248 – Motor Vehicle Registration - Fee Exemption - Unemployable Disabled Veterans.

This bill was sponsored by Delegate Mike Griffith, with the purpose of establishing that not more than one vehicle owned by, or leased to, an unemployable disabled veteran is exempt from vehicle registration fees.

Veterans who serve our country honorably have already given their all in support of Marylander's freedoms and deserve to be respected by their government, especially those with disabilities from their service. We should not be subjecting veterans to undue financial burdens from vehicle registration fees when they have already served our country so respectably and given so much.

The Veterans Caucus mission it to study, develop, and promote legislation designed to improve the quality of life for veterans and families in the State of Maryland in the areas of employment, education, economics, training, and health. And to assist the Department of Veterans and Military Families in achieving its mission and goals, on behalf of the veterans and their families in the State.

The Veterans Caucus House Legislative Review Board offers and recommends support and a favorable report of HB 0248.

Thank you,

*Mike Rogers*

Delegate Mike Rogers  
House Chair, Veterans Caucus

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To study, develop, and promote legislation designed to improve the quality of life for veterans in the State of Maryland in the areas of benefits, employment, education, economics, training, and health, and to assist the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families in achieving its mission and goals, on behalf of all veterans in the State.



## **2025 JVC HB0248 SB0179 Vehicle Registration Fee Ex**

Uploaded by: Nigel Forney

Position: UNF



**JOINT VETERANS COMMITTEE OF MARYLAND, Inc.**

**TESTIMONY**

**HB0248 / SB0179 Motor Vehicle Registration – Fee Exemption – Unemployable Disabled Veterans**

20 January 2025

House Hearing: Environment and Transportation 30 January 2025 1:30pm

Senate Hearing: Judicial Proceedings 22 January 2025 10:00am

The Maryland Joint Veterans Committee (JVC) **OPPOSES** HB0248 / SB0179 Motor Vehicle Registration – Fee Exemption – Unemployable Disabled Veterans for the following reasons:

- The bill's new language specifically calls out UNEMPLOYABLE veterans can only receive exemption for 1 vehicle and it must be service related
- This bill discriminates against UNEMPLOYABLE veteran because they are being deprived the same benefits their counterparts who can work
  - Only focuses on individuals who are unemployable and restricts them to exemption of 1 vehicle registration fees
  - Individuals who lost the use of a hand, arm, leg, sight or are 100% disabled but able to work are unlimited in the number of vehicles exempt from fees
- The VA categories of Total disability individual unemployability means the individual cannot work and is on a fixed income
  - UNEMPLOYABLE disabled veterans may require more than 1 vehicle to assist the unemployable veteran
- One reason some disabled veterans have remained in Maryland is due to this benefit

The JVC encourages an **UNFAVORABLE** vote.

Additionally, we would like to bring your attention to the Maryland Department of Transportation's implementation of this law in regards to veterans. Per their 2024 written testimony on HB0716, MDOT said "The MVA requires a customer present a letter from Veteran Affairs (VA) confirming the customer's 100% disabled status in order to issue the license plate set." In doing so, MDOT has placed great restrictions on veterans to obtain this benefit than the law provides. If you lose use of a hand, arm or leg due to service, this does not mean the VA will rate you 100% disabled. We recommend you review the processes and procedures established by MDOT in relation to this code to ensure the veterans are receiving the benefits prescribed by MD law.

The Joint Veterans Committee of Maryland, Inc. is a community of congressionally chartered veteran organizations in the State of Maryland drawn together by strong bonds of respect and mutual ideas and ideals to promote true patriotism, to pursue by legislation and other activities, to advance the welfare of all veterans, their widows, their orphans, and their dependents. JVC is comprised of the following Maryland Veteran Service Organizations: American Veterans (AMVETS), Marine Corps League (MCL), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), Catholic War Veterans (CWV), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US (VFW).

POC:



**JOINT VETERANS COMMITTEE OF MARYLAND, Inc.**

**TESTIMONY**

**HB0248 / SB0179 Motor Vehicle Registration – Fee Exemption – Unemployable Disabled Veterans**

**20 January 2025**

House Hearing: Environment and Transportation 30 January 2025 1:30pm

Senate Hearing: Judicial Proceedings 22 January 2025 10:00am

Deborah C Rey, Maj, USAF (Ret)

JVC Legislative Chair

301-997-4183

[Jvcmd2024@gmail.com](mailto:Jvcmd2024@gmail.com)

# **DVMF HB248 LOI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Morgan Murphy

Position: INFO



**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS & MILITARY FAMILIES**

**Office of the Secretary**

**WES MOORE**  
*Governor*  
**ARUNA MILLER**  
*Lt. Governor*  
**ANTHONY WOODS**  
*Secretary*

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**House Bill 248 - Motor Vehicle Registration - Fee Exemption - Unemployable Disabled Veterans  
Letter of Information**

January 28, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman  
House and Government Operations Committee  
240 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee-

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.

This letter provides information and context on the number of Maryland veterans classified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as "unemployable." We hope that this letter will help to inform the Committee about the relatively small fiscal and operational implications of House Bill 248.

The latest data available from 2023 shows 3,997 Maryland veterans are currently classified as unemployable. This designation refers to an individual who cannot maintain a steady source of income that supports them financially (known as substantially gainful employment) due to their service-connected disability. In addition, at least one of the following criteria must be true:

- They have at least 1 service-connected disability rated at 60% or more disabling, or

- They have 2 or more service-connected disabilities, with at least 1 rated at 40% or more disabling and a combined rating of 70% or more

It is important to note that even though this classification of veterans might have been awarded a disability compensation rating of less than 100%, they continue to feel a significant impact from their service-connected disabilities that prevents them from being able to maintain employment. DVMF recognizes the enormous challenges that unemployable veterans with service-connected disabilities face on a daily basis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A' and a distinct 'W'.

## **HB0248 - MVA - LOI - Motor Vehicle Registration -**

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

January 30, 2025

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

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 248 – Motor Vehicle Registration - Fee Exemption - Unemployable Disabled Veterans***

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 248 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

HB 248 would extend registration fee exemptions from the existing 100% disabled veteran requirement to veterans who are unemployable due to a service-connected disability as defined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Currently, the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) processes exemptions for disabled veterans and offers free registration and free "Disabled Veterans" license plate sets to eligible customers. The MVA requires a customer to present a letter from the VA confirming the customer's 100% disabled status to issue the license plate set. Under the requirements of this bill, the MVA would be able to accept a VA letter confirming those individuals who have been granted an unemployable rating and accordingly qualify for exemptions from vehicle registration fees. Unlike 100% disabled veterans, this proposal will limit eligible vehicles to just one personally used vehicle that is owned by or leased to an unemployable veteran. The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families indicated there are just under 4,000 Marylanders that would qualify for this exemption.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 248.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer  
Administrator  
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration  
410-787-7830

Matthew Mickler  
Director of Government Affairs  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
410-865-1090