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**HB448 - "Modernization of Military Laws Act"**

HB448 is the crossfile to Senator Bryan Simonaire's SB275 which is part of package of bills that represents the most comprehensive overhaul of military law in our state's modern history.

We have worked directly with the Uniformed Services, military advocates, federal and state agencies, military legal experts and our DLS legal counsel to draft a consensus and workable solution.

**HB448** accomplishes 7 things:

**1. Standardizes military terminology – Base Definition**

It standardizes terminology to federal definitions and sets a baseline for definitions. It puts a halt to defining the same term in different ways throughout different articles.

**Creates Standard References to federal definitions with new definitions:**

- Active Duty 37 USC 101 (Title 37 Uniformed Services)
- Armed Forces 10 USC 101 (Title 10 Armed Forces)
- Reserve Component 37 USC 101 (Title 37 Uniformed Services)
- Service member – Combination of these terms
- Uniformed Services 37 USC 101 (Title 37 USC Uniformed Services)
- Veteran 38 USC 101 (Title 38 Veterans)

**2. Centralizes military terminology**

This bill centralizes all Uniformed Services definitions in one location opposed to defining all over Maryland law. All articles will now only reference the definitions in the Dept of Veterans and Military Families section: State Govt 9-901 and not define them in each Article

Future revisions to current definitions will be very easy and create consistency

### 3. Modernizes military terminology

This bill modernizes our laws by using 21st century terminology: Example

Reserve Component – Include all Uniformed Services Reserve Units. In Spring 2021, 1st officers were commissioned in PHS Ready Reserve Corps.

Veteran – Aligns with federal definition

Service Member – Expands to all Uniformed Services members

Uniformed Services ID Card – Updated from ‘military ID’ that is no longer used

### 4. Provides Rules of Interpretation for military terminology

This bill updates terms in the General Provision Article’s Rules of Interpretation so if there is any absence of a definition, these terms will apply.... basically, a catch all for undefined terms. They all reference back to the State Govt 9-901.

### 5. Defines ‘Military Families’ to be inclusive of all members

This bill adds a definition of ‘military families’ as the Department changed its name last year to “*Department of Veterans and Military Families*’.

The new Department title is not inclusive of non-military families.

Therefore, this definition makes it inclusive, similar to how we define ‘military service’ in some cases that include all branches of the Uniformed Services.

This definition sets the base, not the ceiling.

### 6. Codifies the authority and duty to support our service members

This bill aligns law with the current practice of providing services to our service members. It codifies existing practice for the Department’s requirements and provides statutory authorization to the Department. Used the Department’s revised mission statement in the wording of the language in the bill.

### 7. Incorporates ‘Uniformed Services’ where appropriate

There are inconsistent benefits scattered all across Maryland law, and this bill along with the package of bills, replace ‘armed forces’ with ‘uniformed services’ and provide equal treatment to all of our service members.

Lastly, I would note that in general, these bills are **not changing the underlying policy but providing equality among our service members**. And worked very hard to keep the **fiscal note to zero** or within all the Department’s current budget.

I ask for your favorable consideration on HB448.