

CHRISTOPHER ERIC BOUCHAT  
*Legislative District 5*  
Carroll and Frederick Counties  
  
Judiciary Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 21st, 2025

The Honorable Delegate Pena- Melnyk  
Chairman of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

**House Bill 77- Favorable**

Please accept this letter of support for House Bill 77, Commission to Study African American Civil War Sailors in Maryland.

House Bill 77 seeks to establish the Commission to Study African American Civil War Sailors in Maryland in an effort to ensure that the contributions of African American service members during the Civil War are properly recognized.

Inspired by the successful passage of Senate Bill 448 last session, which led to the formation of a commission to study the contributions of African American soldiers during the Civil War, this new legislation seeks to further explore and document the history of African American sailors who deserve equal recognition. The proposed commission will be tasked with researching, documenting, and making recommendations for commemorating their legacy.

African American sailors from Maryland played a pivotal role in the Union's naval operations during the Civil War. Many of these men were formerly enslaved individuals who seized the opportunity to fight for their freedom and the preservation of the Union. Their duties ranged from manning ships to engaging in direct combat, often under challenging and perilous conditions.

One notable example is the service of African American sailors aboard the USS Constellation, stationed in Baltimore. These sailors not only performed essential duties but also participated in significant missions, such as intercepting vessels involved in the illegal slave trade.

These men deserve to be recognized for their invaluable contribution. I urge the committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 77.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Bouchat'.

Delegate Christopher Eric Bouchat