



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

January 23, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Request for **FAVORABLE with Amendment Report** – SB0161 – Natural Resources –
State Park Entry Fee – Exemptions

Dear Chair Feldman and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition¹ (MMC), I write to request a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT Report** by the Committee on **SB0161 – Natural Resources – State Park Entry Fee – Exemptions**, sponsored by Senator Bryan Simonaire. This bill would exempt from State Park Entry fees former Maryland National Guard members if that individual was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

The MMC supports the intent of this bill. However, we believe that **this benefit should be extended to all former members of the Reserve Component who have been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable**, not just former Maryland National Guard members. Under Article – State Government, §9-901 (H) and 38 U.S.C. §101(27), the Reserve Components “means, with respect to the Armed Forces— (A) the Army Reserve; (B) the Navy Reserve; (C) the Marine Corps Reserve; (D) the Air Force Reserve; (E) the Coast Guard Reserve; (F) the Army National Guard of the United States; and (G) the Air National Guard of the United States. The Reserve Component of the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Service, as a uniformed service, must also be included. These individuals have served in uniform on weekends and at annual training just as their counterparts in the Maryland National Guard have. The MMC believes they are equally deserving of this modest recognition and benefit.

The MMC believes that expanding this benefit to all former members of the Reserve Component will not have a material impact on revenue from State Park Entry fees. Providing an exemption for all members of the Reserve Component could promote increased attendance at state parks. In those state parks where there is a per-person day-use entry fee, any decrease

¹ See attached list of member organizations.

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as a result of exempting a member of the Reserve Component will be offset by fees for family members.


The MMC recommends that **lines 21 and 22 of page one of SB0161** be amended to read: **Former Reserve Component status if the holder was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.**

The Maryland Military Coalition supports SB0161 and asks for a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT** report from the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

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 Senator Simonaire for sponsoring this legislation and supporting the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David L. Dragics".

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