

FAVORABLE TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 57

Primary and Secondary Educators – Licenses and Public Profiles – Notation of Veteran Status

Position: Favorable

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is The Honorable, Dr. Cashenna A. Cross, Councilwoman-at-Large for the City of Glenarden and a retired United States Air Force veteran. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 57.

I myself am a Master Instructor trained by the United States Air Force Air Education and Training Command, having trained more than 6,000 United States and international mid-grade officers in secondary-level professional education programs that supported their development toward advanced and master's degree level leadership studies. This experience has given me firsthand understanding of the power of structured instruction, mentorship, and educator leadership in shaping future generations.

Throughout my military career and subsequent public service, I have witnessed how veterans continue their commitment to service long after they remove the uniform. Many transition into education because teaching provides another pathway to serve - guiding young people, strengthening communities, and helping shape the next generation of leaders.

Senate Bill 57 offers a simple but meaningful opportunity to recognize that continued service. Allowing educators to voluntarily include their veteran status on professional licenses and public profiles acknowledges the value of military experience while maintaining personal choice and privacy. It does not create mandates or unnecessary burdens; rather, it provides recognition and connection.

Veterans bring distinctive strengths into the classroom. They understand teamwork, accountability, adaptability, and leadership under pressure. They have operated in diverse environments and often possess a deep appreciation for civic responsibility and public trust. Students benefit from exposure to educators who model resilience, discipline, and service beyond self.

Maryland continues to seek innovative ways to recruit and retain qualified educators. Veterans represent a highly capable and mission-ready workforce already trained in mentorship, instruction, and leadership. Recognizing their service can help encourage more veterans to consider education as a profession while also affirming those who have already made that transition.

Equally important, this legislation helps ensure that veteran educators remain connected to benefits and resources available to them. Too often, individuals who have served are unaware of programs designed to support their continued success. This bill strengthens awareness without imposing obligation.

At its core, Senate Bill 57 is about respect - respect for service, respect for educators, and respect for the role both play in building strong communities. It acknowledges that service to country and service to students are part of the same continuum.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 57.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable, Dr. Cashenna A. Cross
Councilwoman-at-Large, City of Glenarden
United States Air Force Veteran (Ret.)
Municipal Advocate
571-719-8784