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Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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The Senate of Maryland ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 57 – Education Vet Notation

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 57.

This committee is familiar with allowing veteran notations on licenses as we passed 4 bills last year for several different Departments.

This year several other Departments would like to participate in this effort and help more veterans not only by providing acknowledgement of their veteran status but also providing more ways to get important information to our veterans.

Therefore, this bill adds the *Department of Education*.

This bill does two main things:

- 1) Enables the Department to issue licenses or display public profiles with the “Veteran” notation placed on it, and
- 2) If enabled, it establishes an outreach to a participating veteran via the *Department of Veterans and Military Families*. If the applicant wants the Veteran notation and consents to being contacted, they will receive information regarding the applicant’s eligibility for State or federal veterans’ benefits.

This bill is modelled after the existing MVA driver’s license veteran notation program and legislation I passed last year that created the authorization and framework to put a veteran’s notation on state issued professional licenses and state identification cards.

This bill expands the same authorizing process to the Department of Education. The bill provides flexibility for the Department of Education, if

they decide to implement it, on their own schedule and whatever license it deems appropriate.

This legislation provides multiple benefits, including reducing isolation:

This will help with networking and reducing isolation as more people including other veterans will see these licenses are veterans and hopefully reach out more to them.

One of the many factors of veterans' suicide is isolation especially as it pertains to a veterans' own service and experiences. This will allow for public awareness of veterans through thanking them for their service, other veterans seeing it and talking with them and re-enforcing they are not alone.

It provides another tool to reach out to our veteran population with their consent through using their contact information to share eligible benefits with them (this is currently done at the MVA by just sharing their email contact information if available in an Excel file). Note we are only reaching out half our veteran population at this point, and

It is another avenue for the public to show appreciation for their service.

If you think about it, you can't beat this program with all its potential benefits and flexibility.

For all these reasons, I ask for your favorable consideration.