

# **SB 301VeteransDiscountTestimonial.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alex Artcher

Position: FAV

## **Testimony of LCDR Alex Artcher in Support of SB 301**

**Committee on EEE**

**02 FEB 2026**

Dear Senators Simonaire, Brooks, Carozza, Ellis, Gallion, Gile, Smith, Watson & West

My name is LCDR Alex Artcher and I am a Product Manager with the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps from Gaithersburg, MD. I am testifying today in support of SB 301 because this bill will improve the lives of many veterans and make Maryland more affordable.

Although I am a junior officer. I am honored to have six retired USPHS Commissioned Corps officers as my mentors. I am part of a network where we share daily updates about life and the activities within the active USPHS Commissioned Corps. The recent government shutdown affected the retirement pay and other facets of life for my network of veterans. I was on a phone call with a veteran USPHS officer who informed me about the recent downturn and impact on his finances. The recent economic downturn had an immense financial impact on the veterans within my network. While active-duty officers might receive a rise in income, the cost of living of veterans continues to rise while their paycheck remains steady.

I urge this committee to support SB 301 to ensure that veterans who serve Maryland and our country have a decent quality of life in retirement. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

# **Maryland Military Coalition SB0301 Written Testimo**

Uploaded by: DAVID Dragics

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

February 10, 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 Report** – SB0301 – Veterans Discount Act

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

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition<sup>1</sup> (MMC), I write to request a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB0301 – Veterans Discount Act**, sponsored by Senator Bryan Simonaire. This bill requires State government entities to adopt regulations that provide for granting a waiver of statutory fees for the respective licenses they issue to veterans who apply for them. The bill enables the governing authority of each entity that issues these licenses to decide whether to waive the statutory fee required, in whole or in part, for that veteran either at the time of application or renewal.

This bill, by enabling various State government entities the option to waive their statutory fees for veterans, is similar to what many national retailers, such as The Home Depot, Target, L. L. Bean, Apple, Nike, and Verizon, and local retailers currently do. If enacted, it will be further recognition by the State of Maryland of those who served in uniform and are veterans as stated in § 9-901 of the State Government Article. The MMC firmly believes they deserve this recognition and benefit.

The Maryland Military Coalition strongly supports SB0301 and asks for a **FAVORABLE** 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. For further information, visit our website at <https://mdmilcoalition.org/>.

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<sup>1</sup> See attached list of member organizations.

Subject: Request for FAVORABLE Report – SB0301 –Veterans Discount Act

We want to thank Senator Simonaire for sponsoring this legislation and supporting the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Dragics". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'D' at the beginning.

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

**SB 301 Senator Simonaire\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kara Contino

Position: FAV

BRYAN W. SIMONAIRE  
Legislative District 31  
Anne Arundel County

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 301 – The Veterans Discount Act**

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 301.

I worked with the *Department of Veterans and Military Families*, numerous other Departments and veteran advocacy groups on this consensus legislation.

This bill honors our veterans and provides clear enabling authority for Departments and Boards to allow a veteran's discount on fees that are specifically set in statute.

Knowing the fiscal situation, this bill has no fiscal impact as it is enabling and creates no mandates.

However, in addition to providing enabling authority, it provides the flexibility to the Departments and Boards and the important framework for easy future implementation.

Over the years, different legislators have passed a few bills authorizing discount on fees for veterans. As I was researching other areas to provide discounts for veterans, I found there were literally 100s of places in Maryland law where the fees were set in statute.

Therefore, I looked for a more comprehensive way to provide a framework for discounts for our veterans.

Over the summer, I worked with the Attorney General's office to determine if and under what circumstances discounts could currently be applied to fees set specifically in statutes.

The answer was "*it depends*" as illustrated through many different scenarios.

In current law there were some cases, a discount would be allowed but in many other cases it would not be allowed.

The cleanest and most straightforward approach was to create an overall framework to grant this enabling authority throughout law where appropriate.

That is what this bill does by creating a general authorization section which is referenced by any section to grant enabling authority.

By creating this framework structure, it is very easy going forward to add or remove the enabling authority for any veteran's fee discount set in any section.

As you well know, the private sector has embraced this concept of honoring and thanking our veterans with discounts when shopping, going to restaurants and so many other areas.

There are 100s of fees set in statute and this bill took the top fees that would have the greatest impact on helping our veterans.

Generally speaking, the fees had to make sense to apply to veterans and be at least \$50 or more. However, if at a later date, the General Assembly wanted to authorize other fees, the framework would be there for easy inclusion.

Maryland can be a leader in providing a framework and authority to honor our veterans very similar to what the private sector already does.

*As one Department said, "I will note additionally that we have run into this predicament before, whereby an emergency or some unforeseen disaster occurred and we sought ways to provide some means of relief but were hampered by statutory language that needed legislative action."*

This is a meaningful bill that provides flexibility to our Departments, shows honor to our veterans and *Makes Maryland More Welcoming to Veterans.*

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

# **DVMF SB301 Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Morgan Murphy

Position: FAV



**Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families  
Office of the Secretary**

**WES MOORE**  
*GOVERNOR*

**ARUNA MILLER**  
*LT. GOVERNOR*

**ED ROTHSTEIN**  
*ACTING SECRETARY*

**Senate Bill 301 - Veterans' Discounts Act  
SUPPORT**

February 12, 2026

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

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMMF) is committed to leading veterans and their families through life's transitions, making Maryland the best state for military-connected communities. Our department supports Senate Bill 301 - Veterans' Discounts Act.

SB 301 simply allows state agency secretaries, boards, and commissions to waive certain fees for veterans, should they choose to. This legislation acknowledges the sacrifices of those who served and is a tangible way to honor their contributions and demonstrate Maryland's commitment to its veterans.

Maryland has a proud tradition of supporting its veterans, and Senate Bill 301 aligns with our State's values and commitment to those who have served. By reducing financial barriers, this bill will have a profound and positive impact on the lives of our veterans and their families. Together, we can continue to build a Maryland where all veterans receive the respect, support, and opportunities they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully ask the committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

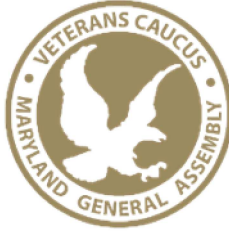
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward C. Rothstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed Rothstein  
Acting Secretary

# **SB301\_Veterans.pdf**

Uploaded by: Veterans Caucus Maryland

Position: FAV



MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
VETERANS CAUCUS

February 12, 2026

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

Re: SB301: Veterans' Discounts Act

Dear Chairman Feldman,

Please let this letter serve as notice of the support of the Maryland General Assembly Veterans Caucus for Senate Bill 301.

After review by our respective legislative committee, the Veterans Caucus believes that the above-mentioned legislation would provide a valuable benefit to the veterans of the State of Maryland and requests a favorable report.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Senator Benjamin Brooks  
Senate Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Rogers".

Delegate Mike Rogers  
House Chair

# **2026 MD SB 301 - Waived Fees for Veterans - Reques**

Uploaded by: Kaleigh Leager

Position: FWA

CONGRESSIONAL  
**SPORTSMEN'S**  
FOUNDATION

**To:** **Hon. Brian J. Feldman**  
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re:** **Senate Bill 301 – Veteran’s Discount Act**

**Position:** **Encouraged Amendment**

**Date:** **2/12/2026**

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Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Honorable Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

As the Assistant Manager, Mid-Atlantic States for the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF), I respectfully urge you to amend Senate Bill 301 (SB 301) – Veteran’s Discount Act to include a provision that provides the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with a reimbursement model for discounted and/or free hunting and fishing licenses within the State of Maryland. Such a reimbursement model<sup>1</sup> would not only solve the loss of conservation funding that would occur with the passage of this bill, but all discounted and/or free hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses in the future. While CSF appreciates the intent of these bills, we encourage this amendment to protect conservation funding.

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitals advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

In 2025 alone, the sportsmen and women of Maryland generated over \$27.1 million dollars for conservation for the DNR to carry out their critical conservation missions through the “user pays – public benefits” American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF). For example, revenue from the sale of hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses in Maryland goes directly to the DNR for wildlife and habitat management in addition to providing access to public lands and waterways for residents and non-residents to utilize, among other uses. Additionally, the Pittman-Robertson (PR)

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<sup>1</sup> [Reimbursement to State Fish and Wildlife Agencies for Free and Discounted Licenses](#)

and Dingell-Johnson (DJ) Acts are two ASCF cornerstones that authorize federal funding for state fish and wildlife agencies to manage and restore fish and wildlife resources. The distribution of these funds is formula-based and dependent on state size and the number of paid hunting and fishing license holders per state. This means states who distribute free, and in some cases discounted licenses, are losing funds both from the initial revenue loss that occurs in the sale of the license, as well as from funds that would be appropriated under PR and DJ. To compensate for this, some states have enacted legislation that reallocates funds from the state general fund to compensate the state fish and wildlife agency for the lost revenue. Tennessee provides a great example of an amendment that could be added to this bill to protect conservation funding to the WV DNR:

*Tennessee [Title 70, Chapter 2, § 70-2-104](#): “The agency shall be reimbursed for lost revenue resulting from the issuance of free or partially discounted combination hunting and fishing licenses created by statute on or after January 1, 2017, in an amount equal to the discounts received.”*

In closing, the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation understands and appreciates the intent of these bills and realizes the importance of outdoor recreation and the therapeutic opportunities they provide. However, offering free and discounted licenses without a reimbursement mechanism in place limits the ability of the DNR to fund their conservation work, which negatively impacts all residents. To protect the integrity of sportsmen-generated dollars through the ASCF, we encourage you to work towards providing statutory protections against lost conservation dollars by amending these bills to require the agency be reimbursed from the general fund for any free license the legislature decides to implement. For these reasons, we ask you to amend SB 301 and with such amendments included we would gladly lend our strong support for this bill.

Sincerely,



Kaleigh E. Leager  
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