

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



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 320
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3658 · 301-858-3658
800-492-7122 Ext. 3658
Fax 410-841-3586 · 301-858-3586
Bryan.Simonaire@senate.state.md.us

The Senate of Maryland ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 167 – DNR Veterans Notation

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 167 - *DNR Veterans Notation*.

This bill authorizes a ‘*Veteran Notation*’ on a *Department of Natural Resources*’ License, Permit, Registration, or Public Profiles. This may sound familiar. That is because last year we passed similar legislation for other Departments, specifically:

- *Dept of Labor*
- *Dept of Health*
- *Dept of Environment*
- *Dept of General Services*

I worked with and have the support of the:

- *Department of Natural Resources,*
- *Department of Veterans and Military Families* and
- The military community on this consensus legislation.

First, let me say this is enabling legislation and sets up the framework to implement at the Department’s timing.

This bill does two main things:

- 1) Enables the Department to issue Licenses, Permits, Registrations, or display Public Profiles with the “*Veteran*” notation placed on them, and
- 2) An important aspect of this bill is, 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.

These programs were initially modeled after the existing MVA driver licenses.

While the MVA program has been hugely popular, Maryland has a long way to go to reach our veterans as less than 50% of our veteran population is taking advantage of the MVA program.

That's why it is imperative we use as many methods as possible to reach out to our veterans. This legislation provides one more tool to reach out to veterans while also providing additional benefits to the veteran community.

This legislation provides multiple benefits, including reducing isolation:

1. This will help with networking with more people including other veterans who see their License, Permit, Registration, or Public Profile.
 - a. 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.
2. It provides another tool for the *Department of Veterans and Military Families* to reach out to our veteran population with their consent, and
3. It is another avenue for the public to show appreciation for their service.

There is no opposition, no fiscal impact and tremendous support.

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