



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

WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR

ED ROTHSTEIN
ACTING SECRETARY

**Senate Bill 96 - Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members and Veterans - Terminology - Active Service Members
SUPPORT**

January 27, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF) 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 96 - Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members and Veterans - Terminology - Active Service Members.

This bill broadens the definition of "eligible individual" under the Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members and Veterans by removing the limitation that a participant be an *active* service member or the spouse, child, or stepchild of an *active* service member.

Maryland is home to a significant military-connected population, and DVMF believes it is important to recognize and honor the service of all service members and veterans. We support the continued effort to expand eligibility, align with federal language, and modernize the veteran and military-connected definitions across the Code. There is no fiscal impact associated with this bill.

Thank you for your time, 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