

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 96 – Health Active-Duty Requirements

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 96.

I worked with the Department of Health, Military advocates and others on this **consensus** legislation.

In current law, the Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Program for Service Members and Veterans is **only eligible** for those who are **currently serving on active duty**.

This bill simply expands the Behavioral Health Services Program to all service members, independent of active-duty status.

**For one example**, Uniformed Services **reservists** who have served on active-duty previously and are dealing with behavioral health issues are currently not eligible for these support programs. This bill opens those services up to **all service members** not just those currently on active duty.

Last year when I worked on the Modernization of Maryland Military Laws Act, this issue was brought up by the **Department of Health**. They discussed this issue with me requesting all service members be eligible for these services.

However, due to the sheer scope of last year's package, we decided **not** to change the underlying policies as we modernized our Military terms and structure.

One of the advantages of passing last year's bill is the **ease of changing the scope of benefits anywhere in Maryland law** due to the centralization of military terms now in the State Government Article.

Therefore, while the scope of this change will be very impactful, the change is simple.

This bill simply changes the term "Active Service Member" to "Service member".

That is the bill and for all these reasons, I ask for your favorable consideration.