

SB0199. The Arc Maryland.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Ande Kolp

Position: FAV



The Arc Maryland
8601 Robert Fulton Drive
Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046
T 410.571.9320
www.thearcmd.org

SB0199: Individuals With Disabilities and Service-
Disabled Veterans Boating Fund - Eligible Companions
Senate Finance Committee
January 28, 2026
Position: Support

The Arc Maryland is a statewide training, support, and advocacy organization that is dedicated to advancing and preserving the rights and quality of lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

We support SB0199 and deeply appreciate the Sponsor's initiative to bring together stakeholders for input to strengthen this law so more individuals with disabilities can access water sports and other adapted water activities. The Individuals With Disabilities And Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund under the Maryland Department of Disabilities provides grants to fund adapted water sports such as sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding opportunities for people with disabilities including veterans with disabilities. "Adapted recreation" are activities that are modified to meet the individual needs of a person with a disability, such as a mobility disability.

This bill corrects a critical omission that advocates did not previously consider in the passage of the 2024 legislation that created this program: the option for people to have an eligible companion with them in their adapted activities to provide necessary support to the person with the disability. In this bill, the definition of an eligible companion ensures people may be able to access opportunities under this program with the support they need to facilitate their participation.

"ELIGIBLE COMPANION" MEANS AN ACCOMPANYING FAMILY MEMBER OR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITIES OR OF A SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN PARTICIPATING IN SAILING, BOATING, KAYAKING, CANOEING, PADDLEBOARDING, OR SURFING ACTIVITIES.

Adapted recreation creates opportunity and allows people with disabilities to



The Arc Maryland
8601 Robert Fulton Drive
Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046
T 410.571.9320
www.thearcmd.org

participate in sports and leisure activities with others. In Maryland, 24% of all people 18 and older are people with disabilities, but only 8 state parks in Maryland have adapted recreational equipment¹. These recreational opportunities are vital to physical and social well-being, and this grant program, as amended to include eligible companion participation, will ensure people with disabilities, who also need personal assistance by someone trained to address their needs, have equitable access to boating, surfing, and other adapted recreation in Maryland.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB0199.

Ande Kolp, Executive Director
www.thearcmd.org

¹ <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/accessibleactivities.aspx?activity=AdaptiveRecreationEquipment>

MDOD_SB0199_FAV_FIN_2026.01.26.pdf

Uploaded by: Anne Blackfield

Position: FAV



BILL: SB 199

POSITION: FAV - Favorable

COMMITTEE: Finance

DATE: January 26, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Maryland Department of Disabilities
217 East Redwood Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Chair Beidle,

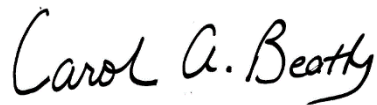
The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support for **SB 199, Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund – Eligible Companions**. SB 199 would expand the reach and effectiveness of the Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund (“the Boating Fund”).

The Boating Fund was originally established in MDOD by the General Assembly in 2024. The purpose of the Boating Fund is to award grant funds to eligible non-profit organizations that provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities and service-disabled veterans to participate in activities such as boating, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, or surfing. SB 199 would expand the statutory language to ensure that individuals with disabilities and service-disabled veterans can include their “eligible companions” (defined as “an accompanying family member or direct support professional”) in these activities.

MDOD believes this amendment will not have a fiscal or operational impact on the Boating Fund. Further, this expansion may remove a potential barrier to participation, as some individuals cannot safely or comfortably engage in recreational activities without the direct assistance of a trusted family member or support person

For these reasons, MDOD respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 199.

Sincerely,



Carol A. Beatty
Secretary, Department of Disabilities

Maryland Military Coalition SB0199 Written Testimo

Uploaded by: DAVID Dragics

Position: FAV



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

January 26, 2026

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

Subject: Request for **FAVORABLE Report** – SB0199 – Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund – Eligible Companions

Dear Chair Beidle and distinguished members of the Finance Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition¹ (MMC) and as its Legislative Director, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB0199 – Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund – Eligible Companions**, sponsored by Senator Bryan Simonaire. This bill authorizes the inclusion of an accompanying family member or direct support professional of an individual with disabilities or of a service-disabled veteran in grants provided by the Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund.

The MMC strongly supports this bill as it corrects the omission of “*accompanying family members or direct support professionals*” who assist individuals with disabilities or service-disabled veterans in the boating activities supported by this fund, which was established in 2024. It is a **no-cost, common-sense** amendment to the Maryland Code.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports SB0199** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Finance Committee.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 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. Visit our website at <https://mdmilcoalition.org/>.

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

Respectfully,

David L. Dragics
COL (Ret), U.S. Army
Legislative Director

¹ See attached list of member organizations.



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

SB199_Fello_FAV

Uploaded by: Jonathon Rondeau

Position: FAV

January 28, 2026

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

RE: SB199 – Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund - Eligible Companions

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Fello, we write in support of ***SB199 – Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund - Eligible Companions.***

Across Maryland, Fello is building communities where people belong. With a team of more than 650 employees, Fello supports over 5,000 people with disabilities each year – creating opportunities that empower people to live the lives they choose. From advancing equity and respect to expanding access and connection, inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. One powerful way this comes to life is through Fello Communities: beautiful, safe, and accessible rental housing that offers choice and stability for residents across income levels, from affordable to market-rate homes.

SB 199 expands access for people with disabilities by providing funding opportunities for eligible companions through the Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund. The Fund allows individuals with disabilities or service-disabled veterans to participate in water-dependent activities such as boating, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding. By including companions, the bill promotes inclusion, shared experiences, and greater access to recreational opportunities on Maryland’s waterways.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB199.

Sincerely,



Jonathon Rondeau
President & CEO

mobile: 410.591.3600

fello.

fello.org

410.269.1883



SB 199 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



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 199 – Boating Fund Companions

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 199.

I worked with the *Department of Disabilities, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Veterans and Military Families* and advocates in drafting this consensus legislation.

Recently, the General Assembly passed a bill to create the “*Individuals With Disabilities and Service–Disabled Veterans Boating Fund*”.

This program offers grant money to non-profits who provide sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, and surfing opportunities for individuals with disabilities and, service–disabled veterans.

What this bill does is:

- It allows accompanying family members and direct support professionals of an individual with disabilities or a service-disabled veteran to participate in the program.

As you can imagine, many times a person with disabilities cannot participate in programs like this without their support person assisting them.

Of course, without this bill - that would discourage a lot of people from participating and that is the exact opposite of the goal of this program.

Therefore, it makes sense to allow an accompanying family member or a direct support professional to help those with disabilities so they can participate.

That’s the bill.

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

Approve SB 199 testimony 01 26 26 .pdf

Uploaded by: Karen Holcomb

Position: FAV

Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 199 submitted on January 26,2026

**Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund
Finance Committee Hearing January 28, 2026 at 2:PM**

To Chair Beidle, Vice -Chair Hayes, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to **SUPPORT for SB199 on behalf of Chimes as a volunteer Board member of Chimes International and the Chimes Maryland Advisory Council.**

Chimes mission is to foster a compassionate and inclusive community where individuals of differing abilities and behavioral health needs are supported and thrive. Chimes enables futures by providing holistic support, advocacy, and innovative solutions that enhance independence, well -being and a sense of belonging.

Chimes Maryland as the largest not-for profit provider of community services in the state supports children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism, and other co-occurring conditions throughout the Baltimore metropolitan region. Committed to helping each individual reach their fullest potential, Chimes offers a diverse array of services tailored to every stage of life.

SB 199, as proposed by Senator Simonaire, allows an opportunity for individuals with disabilities or service -disabled veterans **and their eligible family members or Direct Support Professionals (DSP) companions** to be included and funded to assist these individuals, participate, engage in and enjoy sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing ,paddleboarding or surfing as recreational activities that may not be otherwise available to them without this grant funding.

Thank you for your consideration and **the Chimes urges a favorable report from this committee for SB199.**

**Karen Holcomb
9822 Fairlee Cove Drive
Chestertown, Maryland 21620**

DVMF SB0199 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 199 - Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund - Eligible
Companions
SUPPORT**

January 28, 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 199 - Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund - Eligible Companions.

In 2024, DVMF was proud to support the creation of the Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund. This year, SB199 expands the fund's purpose to include an eligible companion, meaning an accompanying family member or direct support professional of an individual with disabilities or of a service-disabled veteran participating in sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, or surfing activities.

Including eligible companions in the fund's purpose shows Maryland's commitment to understanding the day-to-day realities of living with a disability, and reinforces Governor Moore's pledge to leave no one behind. This bill has no fiscal impact.

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

SB199_CRAB_FAV

Uploaded by: Paul Bollinger

Position: FAV



**Testimony of
Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating (CRAB)
Before the Maryland Senate Finance Committee
On Senate Bill 199
January 28, 2026**

Dear Members of the Senate Finance, I am Paul Bollinger, President & CEO of Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating (CRAB) and I have been honored to serve in this position since 2016. CRAB is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year and our mission to provide sailing instruction and boating for people with disabilities and recovering warriors continues to grow.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 199, Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund - Eligible Companions. The importance of this Bill and what it will mean to thousands of people with disabilities and disabled veterans cannot be overstated. CRAB hosts thousands of Marylanders and warriors every year. We can speak first-hand about the life changing experience that sailing on the Bay can be for people who never thought they would have the opportunity to be on a boat and learn to sail.

The passage of S. 199 will provide additional financial resources for nonprofits like CRAB to bring the healing and therapeutic value offered by the water to our recovering warriors. More sailing and fishing clinics will serve to train and bring greater confidence to warriors who may suffer from PTSD, missing limbs or paralysis, or self-doubt about one's abilities. CRAB removes all of the impediments to boating and our trained volunteers focus on a warrior's abilities.

CRAB provides sailing and boating at no-charge to over 1,800 guests every year. We expect to increase this number by 25% this year while operating from the premier Annapolis Adaptive Boating Center. CRAB's water programs have expanded in the past 3 years to include Remote-Controlled Sailboat Racing for guests who don't want to leave the dock; and, fishing from a 40' power catamaran called "Dream Catcher." We can say with some authority, recovering warriors prefer fishing over sailing, but they always love being on the water.

We also are very pleased to announce that CRAB is teamed with the US Naval Academy Sailing Team to host the Recovering Warrior Sailing Regatta in September. This event brings together the next generation of military leaders and recovering warriors who have given more than most in the defense of our country for a wonderful day of competitive sailing, lunch, and an awards ceremony.

CRAB is grateful to have the opportunity to testify in support of SB 199 and we appreciate your support for its passage.

SB199.Council.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Senate Finance Committee

January 28, 2026

SB 199: Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund – Eligible
Companions

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), a statewide public policy organization led by people with developmental disabilities and their families, creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to lead the lives they want with the support they need.

In 2024, the General Assembly created the Boating Fund. The purpose of the Boating Fund is to award grants to fund adapted water sports – like sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding – opportunities for people with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities. Adapted sports are activities modified to meet the individuals of people with disabilities

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Expands the language of the Boating Fund created in 2024 to make sure people with disabilities can include their “eligible companions” in the activities.
- Defines eligible companions as “an accompanying family member or direct support professional.”

WHY is it important?

- **Adapted recreation creates opportunity.** Adapted recreation allows people with disabilities to participate in sports and leisure activities with others. This allows everyone to have recreation opportunities regardless of their disability.
- **People with disabilities want inclusive recreation opportunities.** 10.7% of all Marylanders and 22.47% of Marylanders 18 and older are people with disabilities, but only 8 state parks in Maryland have adapted recreational equipment¹. More needs to be done to create recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.
- **Many people with developmental disabilities rely on family members and direct support professionals to meaningfully engage in recreational activities.** This expanded language removes a potential barrier to participation.

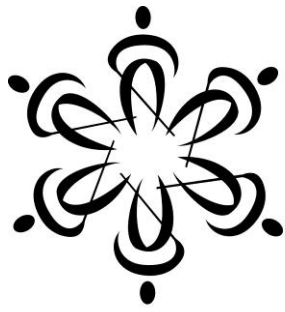
Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director: RLondon@md-council.org

¹ <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/accessibleactivities.aspx?activity=AdaptiveRecreationEquipment>

SB199_NFB_FAV

Uploaded by: Ronza Othman

Position: FAV



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND
MARYLAND

Live the life you want.

From: Ronza Othman, President
National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
15 Charles Plaza, #3002
Baltimore, MD 21201 president@nfbmd.org

To: Senate Finance Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the Senate Finance Committee to give a favorable report to SB0199, which establishes a program, operated by the Maryland Department of Disabilities, that would enable individuals with disabilities to participate in and bring companions to assist them in boating activities.

Many disabled people cannot participate in these programs because they have no transportation or they need assistance in the activities of boating. This bill will fix that problem by allowing a companion to accompany them. The Department of Disabilities will administer the fund for companions. This department has the experience and knowledge to handle questions that may arise and to ensure that the people requesting the fund are legitimate operators.

Please vote in favor of SB0199 and give veterans and other disabled people the opportunity to take advantage of valuable experiences. For those reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB0199. For questions, please contact me at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.