



**Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families
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**Ed Rothstein, Acting Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veteran and Military Families
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF House Bill 270
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
January 27, 2026**

Good afternoon Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 270, the Military Family Inclusion Act.

This bill is about something simple, but powerful: representation.

In Maryland, we often say that we want to support our military-connected communities—but support is strongest when those communities are not just being served, but *being heard*. House Bill 270 ensures that the people most impacted by policy decisions have a seat at the table where those decisions are made.

As an Army Veteran, I know that service does not happen in isolation. It involves spouses, children, caregivers, and entire families. Yet too often, the voices of those family members—especially caregivers and youth—are missing from formal decision-making spaces.

This bill changes that.

House Bill 270 adds a family caregiver of a service-disabled veteran to the Maryland Commission on Caregiving, recognizing the invisible labor, sacrifice, and resilience of those who care for our wounded warriors. It adds a military-connected youth to the Maryland Youth Advisory Council, ensuring that young people who grow up in military families—often moving frequently, adapting constantly, and shouldering unique responsibilities—are represented. It modernizes the Veterans Commission to better reflect today's veteran and military family communities. And it makes a technical but important clarification to strengthen governance on the Veterans Trust Fund Board.

Together, these changes ensure that Maryland's councils and commissions reflect the realities of the people they serve.

This bill aligns with the Department's and administration's core belief: that no one should be left behind. When families, caregivers, and youth are included in the conversation, our policies become more responsive, more effective, and more human.

House Bill 270 does not create new bureaucracy—it creates better listening. It does not add red tape—it adds real voices.

On behalf of the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on House Bill 270.

Thank you for your time, and for your commitment to Maryland's military-connected communities.