



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

January 29, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Request for a **Favorable** Report – HB0151 - Sales and Use Tax - Distribution of Cannabis Sales Tax Revenue - Maryland Veterans Trust Fund

Dear Chair Wilkins and Distinguished Members of the Ways and Means Committee

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition¹ (MMC), I write to request a **FAVORABLE Report** by the Committee on **HB0151 – Sales and Use Tax – Distribution of Cannabis Sales Tax Revenue – Maryland Veterans Trust Fund** sponsored by Delegate Joe Vogel. This bill directs that 3% of the sales and use tax revenue collected from the sale of cannabis to be distributed to the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund (the MVTF),

The MVTF was established in State Government Article § 9-913. The MVTF is a nonprofit entity within the Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF) established to provide emergency financial assistance, or grants, to veterans and members of the Maryland National Guard to cover expenses such as mortgage or rent payments, utility payments, and auto and auto insurance payments. In addition, the MVTF may also provide grants to organizations that deliver services to veterans. Thus far, the MVTF receives no State appropriated funds. Rather, the MVTF relies on private-sector donations, and proceeds from lotteries and other games. This year, for the first time, an income tax checkoff (line 39 of Maryland Form 502) will be available to further fund the MVTF.

Unfortunately, the MVTF periodically runs out of funds and cannot support all potential deserving claimants. When the MVTF runs out of funds, applications for assistance are suspended. Last year, more than 200 qualified applicants were initially denied support due to insufficient funds. This challenge is particularly acute in times of Government shutdowns, DOGE reductions to the federal workforce, and rising inflation.

¹ See attached list of member organizations.

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As the Executive Director of the MVTF said at a Maryland Veterans Commission meeting last year, “there are too many claimants and not enough funds.” In response, the DVMF has launched a fund-raising campaign to increase private sector donations to the MVTF.

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/calendar-26-mvtf-donations> and established a feature in kiosks at Maryland Motor Vehicle offices where users can make donations. While an aggressive fund-raising campaign is laudable, the MVTF requires a sustained revenue stream that will enable it to satisfy the needs of eligible claimants suffering financial hardship.

The MMC applauds Delegate Vogel’s innovative solution to help solve the MVTF’s financial shortfall and place the MVTF on sound financial footing. HB051 would direct a small percentage of proceeds from the cannabis sales tax to fund the MVTF now and in the future. This bill ensures that the MVTF will have an additional source of funds to support all potential claimants who are suffering financial hardship and apply for assistance.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports HB0151** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Ways and Means 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. For further information and a list of our member organizations, visit our website at <https://mdmilcoalition.org/>.

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

Respectfully,



Jayson L. Spiegel
LTC, USAR (Ret
President