

**DANA JONES**  
*Legislative District 30A*  
Anne Arundel County

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DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO TEM

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Appropriations Committee

*Subcommittees*

Vice Chair, Health and Social Services

Oversight Committee on Pensions

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Joint Committee on Administrative,  
Executive, and Legislative Review

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President, Women Legislators of Maryland



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 161  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3211  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3211  
Dana.Jones@house.maryland.gov

**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

**Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones**  
**Before the Ways and Means Committee**

**In Support of HB 644**  
**Property Tax - Exemption for Dwellings of Surviving Spouses of Disabled Veterans -**  
**Application**  
**February 17th 2026, 1:00 pm**

For the record, I am Delegate Dana Jones, representing District 30A in the House of Delegates.

Chair Wilkins, Vice-Chair Feldmark, and members of the Ways and Means Committee, I am here today to introduce HB 644, Property Tax - Exemption for Dwellings of Surviving Spouses of Disabled Veterans - Application. The purpose of this legislation is to provide an alternative method of verification to qualify for the surviving spouse property tax exemption under 7-208 of the Property Tax Article.

Currently, this section of law provides for a property tax exemption to surviving spouses of disabled veterans, surviving spouses of those who died in the line of duty, and surviving spouses of those who receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, as defined in law, a disabled veteran includes an individual who qualifies posthumously for a 100% service connected disability. The legislation before you today seeks to align the definition section with the eligibility criteria in the statute. It will do so by allowing Dependency and Indemnity Compensation paperwork as acceptable documentation for the purposes of qualification. In doing so, this will prevent surviving spouses, who would be eligible based on the definitions of disabled veteran and surviving spouse, from being excluded from this benefit despite clearly meeting the legislative intent of the statute.

This issue came to me in a very similar manner to how it came to Delegate Valderrama, who most recently introduced similar legislation in 2023. One of my constituents came to me frustrated at this discrepancy in the law. Her husband passed away from lung cancer that resulted from asbestos connected to his service in the Coast Guard. After his death, The Veterans Administration granted her eligibility for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), confirming that her husband's cancer was connected to his service and the cause of his death. This would qualify her as a surviving spouse per the definition in the statute, but the DIC paperwork she received, which attests to his service connected death, would not qualify as appropriate documentation to grant her the exemption.

This is in direct conflict with the legislative intent of the statute. Due to the discrepancy between the definitions and the eligibility documentation, Maryland is excluding widows who should rightfully be receiving this benefit.

I am proud to have the support of Maryland's Veterans Caucus, and I want to thank the Maryland Military Coalition for joining me today to testify in favor of this necessary and common sense change.

With that, I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have, and I would respectfully request a favorable report from the Committee on HB 644.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Jones" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Dana Jones