

Testimony in Support of House Bill 842

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 842.

As a retired United States Air Force veteran and a municipal leader serving Maryland communities, I have witnessed firsthand the long-term realities faced by military families after the loss of a service member. The transition following a line-of-duty death is not measured in months or years. Families often require extended time to stabilize financially, emotionally, and geographically before making permanent housing decisions.

Current law places a time limitation on when a surviving spouse must acquire a home to qualify for an existing property tax exemption. While likely created for administrative clarity, this restriction unintentionally denies relief to individuals whose circumstances do not align with an arbitrary timeline.

House Bill 842 corrects that inequity. The bill does not create a new benefit. It simply ensures that eligibility reflects service and sacrifice rather than timing.

From a local government perspective, the impact is limited and manageable, while the benefit to affected families is significant. Policies supporting military families must remain consistent with the commitment our state makes to those who serve and to those who bear the cost of that service.

Maryland has long demonstrated leadership in supporting veterans and their families. Passage of House Bill 842 continues that tradition by ensuring surviving spouses are treated with fairness and dignity.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable Dr. Cashenna A. Cross
Councilwoman At Large
City of Glenarden