



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In a session that ran just 71 days rather than the usual 90, and where the session was adjourned due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) advocated for and managed to get 14 bills passed that aligned with our legislative agenda. We started with eight pre-filed bills of MMC interest. The final total grew to 87 bills submitted (including cross-files), 42 of which were targeted for action by the MMC. Most were heard in one or both chambers.

In support of our advocacy, MMC members met with the Veterans' Caucus, reached out to Legislators and their staffs and produced Fact Sheets, including one on State Taxation of Uniformed Services Retirement. Our influence was also recognized when our President was invited to attend Governor Hogan's announcement of military initiatives on January 15, 2020.

Unfortunately, we didn't get further with the military retirement income tax subtraction, even with the Governor's support of 100% exclusion. Legislators were unable to further veteran income tax deductions, first in the face of the Kerwin report, which recommended additional large financial commitments to improve Maryland education and then with rapid pandemic closures bringing additional requirements for state funding. However, and in spite of all of the uncertainty, we certainly increased our visibility in Annapolis by providing over 70 written and over 60 oral testimonies supporting our legislative agenda along with calls to action that resulted in several hundred letters and emails arriving in Annapolis.

But the MMC isn't just about the four months when the Legislature is meeting. The MMC also influenced the site selection for a 2nd Veterans' Home. While we hoped it would be in Central Maryland, and more specifically, Rockville -- where there is a large population of veterans and better access to community-based services, Secretary Owings selected a state-owned site in Sykesville, Maryland. We hope that site selection will progress to permitting and building -- an issue the MMC will continue to monitor, while promoting the consideration of a possible third home.

And finally, the MMC continues to mature. We have increased the number of Coalition Members from 11 to 17. We have implemented a member-managed website that now includes a mechanism for on-line donations, and have a Facebook presence, so please follow and "like" us. These actions are signs that we, as a Coalition, continue to grow and become more professional.

What follows is a description of the bills passed -- our 2020 ACCOPLISHMENTS! As always, we value your thoughts and suggestions, and we look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Norton
Colonel, USA (Ret)
President

CURRENTLY SERVING

- HB 133 Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program - Deployed Military Personnel - Exemption.** Exempts active duty servicemembers from mandatory vehicle emissions inspections when deployed (Effective October 1, 2020).
- HB 503 Primary and Secondary Schools - Dependent Children of Service Members - Enrollment and Documentation Requirements.** Requires County School Superintendents to allow a dependent child of a military member, who is relocating to the state on military orders and is not yet residing in that county during the enrollment period, to apply for enrollment in a public school in the same manner and the same time as individuals residing in the county (Effective July 1, 2020).
- SB 391**
- HB 506 Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition Exemption for Military Personnel, Spouses, and Dependents - Alterations.** Expands conditions under which a spouse or family member of active duty is eligible for resident (in-state) tuition. Allows the family member to retain resident status if the family member is accepted and maintains continuous enrollment after the service member moves (Effective July 1, 2020).
- SB 458**
- HB 362 Maryland National Guard - Tuition Assistance Program - Modifications.** Increases from 50% to 100% the percentage of tuition that can be reimbursed at in-state rates to an eligible member of the Maryland National Guard (Effective July 1, 2020).
- SB 282**

CURRENTLY SERVING & VETERANS

- HB 349 Occupational and Professional Licensing - Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses - Revisions to Reciprocity Requirements.** Alters the eligibility requirements for a service member, veteran, or military spouse to apply for an expedited occupational or professional license from the Maryland Department of Labor with proof of licensure in good standing from another state held for 1 year (Effective July 1, 2020).
- SB 280**
- HB 593 Veterans Education Protection Act.** Prohibits specified for-profit institutions of higher education and private career schools from enrolling new Maryland residents in an on-line program if they fail to have at least 10% of their annual revenue, as specified, from a source other than federal funds, including education aid (civilian or military), or institutional debt. Changes the revenue cap to include federal tuition benefits for active duty, veterans, and their families. Intended to prevent institutions from targeting them (Effective July 1, 2020).
- SB 294**

VETERANS

- HB 257 Property Tax Credit for Disabled Veterans.** Authorizes local governments to grant a property tax credit for the dwelling house of disabled veterans with a service-connected disability rating of at least 50%, or their surviving spouse (Effective June 1, 2020).
- SB 417**
- HB 766 Property Tax Credit for Disabled Active Service Members & Surviving Spouses.** Expanded eligibility for certain credits authorized against the county or municipal corporation property tax to include certain active duty, retired, or honorably discharged members of the armed forces of the United States and certain surviving spouses. Applies to taxable years beginning after June 30, 2020 (Effective October 1, 2020).
- SB 700**
- HB 012 Department of Veterans Affairs - Homes for Veterans - Veterans of Uniformed Service.** Provided that any state program of benefits, rights, or privileges applicable for Veterans should explicitly include members of all seven of the Uniformed Services (Effective July 1, 2020).
- SB 341**
- HB 236 Hunting and Fishing Licenses - Active Military, Former Prisoners of War, Recipients of the Purple Heart Award, and Disabled Veterans.** Extended complimentary or discounted hunting and fishing licenses to certain military personnel, former prisoners of war, recipients of the Purple Heart Award, and disabled veterans (Effective June 1, 2020).
- SB 025**

SB 142 Natural Resources - Recreational License Donation Program and Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund. Requires the Department of Natural Resources to establish a process for an individual purchasing certain licenses and stamps to make a voluntary monetary donation to the Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund; requiring the Department to collect donations and deposit them into the Fund; authorizing the Chesapeake Bay Trust to make grants to eligible sponsor organizations that provide opportunities to benefit veterans or members of the Armed Forces of the United States (Effective June 1, 2020).

HONORING VETERANS, SERVICEMEMBERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

- HB 570 Carroll County - Education – Recognition Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps**
SB 366 Instructors. Includes Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) instructors in Carroll County in the definition of certificated public school employees for collective bargaining purposes (Effective June 1, 2020).
- HB 596 Veterans of the Afghanistan / Iraq Conflicts Scholarships.** Allows initial scholarships under the Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarships to continue to be awarded for another ten years (June 30, 2030); thereafter, existing scholarships may be renewed (Effective July 1, 2020).
- HB 646 Special Plates for Veterans - Fees.** Requires that MVA charge an additional fee for special plates for individually earned, combat-related armed forces medals and that the fee (\$10) be credited to the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund (Effective July 1, 2020)