

SENATE BILL 85

P1

(PRE-FILED)

5lr0740
CF HB 455

By: **Senators Simonaire and M. Jackson**

Requested: September 2, 2024

Introduced and read first time: January 8, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 9, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Braille Flag Memorial Act of 2025**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Veterans and Military Families to
4 designate a location for an American braille tactile flag to be placed on the grounds
5 of one or more State veterans' cemeteries; and generally relating to State veterans'
6 cemeteries and American braille tactile flags.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
8 Article – State Government
9 Section 9–906(a)
10 Annotated Code of Maryland
11 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

12 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
13 Article – State Government
14 Section 9–906(b)
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

17 BY adding to
18 Article – State Government
19 Section 9–906(j)
20 Annotated Code of Maryland
21 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



Preamble

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that there are approximately 130,000 blind veterans in the United States who are legally blind, and more than one million who have low vision that causes a loss of ability to perform necessary daily activities; and

WHEREAS, The American braille tactile flag was created by the Kansas Braille Transcription Institute in Wichita, Kansas, and through the American Braille Flag Project, to allow blind Americans and blind veterans to experience the American flag; and

WHEREAS, Maryland has five State veterans' cemeteries visited by thousands of people annually; and

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland is known as a state that recognizes the great contributions of our blind community and honors the dedication of our uniformed services members and veterans; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – State Government

9–906.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) **“AMERICAN BRAILLE TACTILE FLAG” MEANS A TACTILE FLAG DESIGNED TO ALLOW BLIND PEOPLE TO EXPERIENCE THE AMERICAN FLAG, INCLUDING A FLAG CREATED BY THE KANSAS BRAILLE TRANSCRIPTION INSTITUTE.**

(3) “Eligible dependent” means:

(i) a child who meets the requirements stated in 38 C.F.R. § 38.620(e); or

(ii) a parent who meets the requirements stated in 38 C.F.R. § 38.620(i).

~~(3)~~ (4) “Eligible spouse” means a spouse who meets the requirements stated in 38 C.F.R. § 38.620(e).

~~(4)~~ (5) “State veterans’ cemetery” means a cemetery that the Department establishes under this section.

1 **[(5)] (6)** In this section and in § 9–907 of this subtitle, “veteran” means
2 an individual who:

3 (i) served other than dishonorably on active duty in the armed
4 forces of the United States; or

5 (ii) served other than dishonorably as a member of the State militia
6 ordered into active service of the United States by order of the President and was killed in
7 the line of duty.

8 **[(6)] (7)** “Washington Cemetery” means the Civil War cemetery grounds
9 authorized by Chapter 213 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1870.

10 (b) The Department may establish one or more cemeteries in the State for the
11 burial of veterans and their eligible spouse or dependents as authorized by the Secretary.

12 **(J) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DESIGNATE A LOCATION FOR AN AMERICAN
13 BRAILLE TACTILE FLAG TO BE PLACED IN ONE OR MORE STATE VETERANS’
14 CEMETERIES AS AUTHORIZED BY THE SECRETARY TO HONOR MEMBERS OF THE
15 UNIFORMED SERVICES, VETERANS, AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO
16 ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED.**

17 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
18 October 1, 2025.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.