

SENATE BILL 281

P1, R7

5lr0607
CF HB 475

By: **Senators Simonaire, Salling, Jennings, Gallion, Mautz, ~~and~~ Bailey, Folden, and James**

Introduced and read first time: January 10, 2025

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings and Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 25, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Transportation Equality for Service Members Act**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing rules of interpretation related to the uniformed services;
4 altering the rule of interpretation for “veteran”; altering the application of certain
5 provisions of law governing transportation to apply to all uniformed services, rather
6 than only certain uniformed services; and generally relating to veterans and
7 uniformed services.

8 BY renumbering

9 Article – Transportation

10 Section 11–103.4

11 to be Section 11–103.5

12 Annotated Code of Maryland

13 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

14 BY adding to

15 Article – General Provisions

16 Section 1–101.1, 1–101.2, 1–103.1, 1–114.1, 1–114.2, and 1–116

17 Annotated Code of Maryland

18 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

19 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

20 Article – General Provisions

21 Section 1–117

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.



1 Annotated Code of Maryland
2 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

3 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
4 Article – State Government
5 Section 9–901
6 Annotated Code of Maryland
7 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

8 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
9 Article – Transportation
10 Section 11–101, 12–301(i)(4)(i), 13–616.2(a)(2)(ii)1., 16–115(a)(1) and (2), and
11 23–202(a)(1)
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

14 BY adding to
15 Article – Transportation
16 Section 11–101.1, 11–101.2, 11–103.4, 11–148.2, 11–158.1, 11–174.2, and 11–178
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

19 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
20 Article – Transportation
21 Section 12–301(i)(4)(ii)1., 13–402.1(c), 13–616.2(a)(2)(ii)2.B., 13–619.1(a)(2) and (3),
22 (c), and (d)(1), 13–619.4(b) and (c), 13–810(f), 16–102(a)(7), 16–111(e)(1) and
23 (4), 16–115(d)(1), and 23–206.2(c)
24 Annotated Code of Maryland
25 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

26 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
27 That Section(s) 11–103.4 of Article – Transportation of the Annotated Code of Maryland be
28 renumbered to be Section(s) 11–103.5.

29 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
30 as follows:

31 **Article – General Provisions**

32 **1–101.1.**

33 **“ACTIVE DUTY” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9–901 OF THE STATE**
34 **GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.**

35 **1–101.2.**

1 "ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE
2 STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

3 1-103.1.

4 "ARMED FORCES" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
5 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

6 1-114.1.

7 "RESERVE COMPONENT" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
8 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

9 1-114.2.

10 "SERVICE MEMBER" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
11 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

12 1-116.

13 "UNIFORMED SERVICES" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
14 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

15 1-117.

16 (A) "VETERAN" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
17 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

18 (B) With respect to any State program of benefits, rights, or privileges applicable
19 to a veteran under this Code, "veteran" includes, if the individual is eligible under 38
20 U.S.C. § 101, a member of the commissioned corps of:

21 (1) the Public Health Service; or

22 (2) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or its
23 predecessor, the Coast and Geodetic Survey; ~~AN INDIVIDUAL WHO MEETS THE~~
24 ~~DEFINITION OF "VETERAN" UNDER § 9-901 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.~~

25 **Article – State Government**

26 9-901.

27 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

28 (B) "ACTIVE DUTY" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 37 U.S.C. § 101.

1 (C) “ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS:

2 (1) AN ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES; OR

3 (2) SERVING IN A RESERVE COMPONENT OF THE UNIFORMED
4 SERVICES ON ACTIVE DUTY ORDERS.

5 (D) “ARMED FORCES” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 10 U.S.C. § 101.

6 [(b)] (E) “Board” means the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Veterans Trust.

7 [(c)] (F) “Department” means the Department of Veterans and Military
8 Families.

9 (G) “MILITARY FAMILY” INCLUDES THE SPOUSE AND DEPENDENT
10 CHILDREN OF A SERVICE MEMBER OR VETERAN RELATED BY BLOOD, MARRIAGE, OR
11 ADOPTION.

12 (H) “RESERVE COMPONENT” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 37 U.S.C. § 101.

13 [(d)] (I) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Veterans and Military Families.

14 (J) “SERVICE MEMBER” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS A MEMBER OF:

15 (1) THE UNIFORMED SERVICES; OR

16 (2) A RESERVE COMPONENT OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.

17 [(e)] (K) “Trust” means the Maryland Veterans Trust.

18 (L) “UNIFORMED SERVICES” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 37 U.S.C. § 101.

19 [(f)] (M) Except as otherwise provided [in this subtitle], “veteran” [means an
20 individual who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, other than
21 for training, and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable] HAS
22 THE MEANING STATED IN 38 U.S.C. § 101.

23 **Article – Transportation**

24 11–101.

25 In the Maryland Vehicle Law, the following words have the meanings indicated,
26 unless the context requires otherwise.

1 11-101.1.

2 "ACTIVE DUTY" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
3 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

4 11-101.2.

5 "ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE
6 STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

7 11-103.4.

8 "ARMED FORCES" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
9 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

10 11-148.2.

11 "RESERVE COMPONENT" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
12 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

13 11-158.1.

14 "SERVICE MEMBER" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
15 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

16 11-174.2.

17 "UNIFORMED SERVICES" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
18 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

19 11-178.

20 "VETERAN" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
21 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

22 12-301.

23 (i) (4) (i) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the
24 Administration may issue a temporary renewal for an identification card that extends the
25 expiration date for a period not exceeding 2 years for an applicant who:

26 1. Has the documentation required by federal law, as
27 enumerated in subsection (a)(4) and (5) of this section, on file with the Administration;

1 2. Has a photograph on file with the Administration that will
2 not be 16 years old or older by the expiration date of the temporary renewal; and

3 3. Has an identification card that was issued for the full term
4 under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

5 (ii) The Administration may make temporary renewal of an
6 identification card available to:

7 1. An active [duty] **SERVICE** member [of the armed forces of
8 the United States] or a spouse or dependent of the **ACTIVE SERVICE** member;

9 13-402.1.

10 (c) If a nonresident is a member of the [armed forces of the United States or of
11 the United States Public Health Service] **UNIFORMED SERVICES** and is serving on active
12 duty in this State or an adjoining state or the District of Columbia, the nonresident need
13 not register [his] **THE MEMBER'S** personal passenger vehicles in this State if the vehicles
14 are registered in the state of [his] **THE MEMBER'S** residence.

15 13-616.2.

16 (a) A person may apply to the Administration for a temporary parking placard on
17 a form provided by the Administration if:

18 (ii) The applicant, a dependent of the applicant, or any individual
19 who depends on the applicant for transportation:

20 1. Submits proof satisfactory to the Administration that the
21 individual has a disability as described in § 13-616(b)(1) of this subtitle; and

22 2. B. Is serving in the [armed forces of the United States]
23 **UNIFORMED SERVICES** and is stationed in the State;

24 13-619.1.

25 (a) (2) To be eligible for a special registration described under subsection
26 (c)(2)(i) of this section, an applicant shall provide proof that is satisfactory to the
27 Administration that the applicant is a recipient of an individually earned, combat-related
28 armed forces medal **OR A NON-COMBAT-RELATED UNIFORMED SERVICES MEDAL OF**
29 **THE HIGHEST LEVELS.**

30 (3) To be eligible for a special registration described under subsection
31 (c)(2)(ii) of this section, an applicant shall provide proof that is satisfactory to the
32 Administration that the applicant is ~~an honorably discharged~~ **A** veteran [of a branch of
33 the armed forces of the United States].

1 (c) Special registration plates issued under this section:

2 (1) May consist of any combination of letters, numerals, or both; and

3 (2) Shall include:

4 (i) For registration plates issued for an applicant described in
5 subsection (a)(2) of this section:

6 1. An emblem or logo as authorized by the Administration
7 that depicts the applicant's [armed forces] **UNIFORMED SERVICES** medal; and

8 2. Except on plates issued for Class D (motorcycle) vehicles,
9 words describing the medal printed across the bottom of the plates;

10 (ii) Words or an emblem or logo indicating that the special
11 registration plate holder is ~~an honorably discharged~~ **A** veteran [of a branch of the armed
12 forces of the United States]; or

13 (iii) An emblem or logo indicating that the registration plate holder
14 is the recipient of the U.S. Department of Defense Gold Star or Next of Kin lapel button.

15 (d) (1) The Administration, in consultation with the U.S. Department of
16 Defense, **THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, THE COMMISSIONED CORPS**
17 **OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC**
18 **ADMINISTRATION**, and appropriate representatives of the various branches of the [armed
19 forces] **UNIFORMED SERVICES**, shall adopt regulations specifying those [armed forces]
20 **UNIFORMED SERVICES** medals that are of the type described in subsection (a)(2) of this
21 section and which, when awarded to an individual, qualify that individual to apply for
22 special registration under this section.

23 13-619.4.

24 (b) To be eligible for a special disabled veteran registration plate under this
25 section, an applicant shall provide proof that is satisfactory to the Administration that the
26 applicant is [an armed forces] **A** veteran who is between 50% and 99%, inclusive,
27 service-connected disabled as designated or classified by the U.S. Department of Veterans
28 Affairs.

29 (c) The Administration may issue a special disabled veteran registration plate
30 that does not display the international symbol of access in recognition of the vehicle owner's
31 service-connected disability to an individual who is [an armed forces] **A** veteran and is
32 between 50% and 99%, inclusive, service-connected disabled.

33 13-810.

1 (f) [(1) In this subsection, “military” includes the Commissioned Corps of the
2 Public Health Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the
3 Coast and Geodetic Survey.

4 (2) A vehicle is exempt from the excise tax imposed by this part on issuance
5 of an original certificate of title if the vehicle:

6 [(i) (1) Is owned by [a] **AN ACTIVE SERVICE** member [of the
7 military on active duty] or **A SERVICE MEMBER** who returns to the State from active duty;
8 and

9 [(ii) (2) Was formerly titled and registered in another state by the
10 present owner of the vehicle.

11 16–102.

12 (a) The licensing requirements of this title do not apply to:

13 (7) A member of the [armed forces of the United States or of the United
14 States Public Health Service] **UNIFORMED SERVICES** who is serving on active duty and
15 any dependent of the member, if:

16 (i) The driver has [with him] **IN THE DRIVER’S POSSESSION** a
17 license to drive issued to [him] **THE DRIVER** by [his] **THE DRIVER’S** state of domicile; and

18 (ii) The license authorizes the driver to drive in [his] **THE DRIVER’S**
19 state of domicile vehicles of the class [he] **THE DRIVER** is driving in this State;

20 16–111.

21 (e) (1) Notwithstanding subsection (d) of this section or any other provision of
22 this subtitle, the Administration may issue a provisional license to an individual who has
23 been licensed to drive in another state or country, or by the armed forces [of the United
24 States] for less than 18 months.

25 (4) Notwithstanding § 16–103(c)(3) of this subtitle, the Administration may
26 issue a license under § 16–111.1 of this subtitle without issuing a learner’s instructional
27 permit or a provisional license if the individual has been licensed to drive in another state
28 or country, or by the armed forces [of the United States], for at least 18 months.

29 16–115.

30 (a) (1) Subject to paragraph (5) of this subsection, a license issued under this
31 title to a driver at least 21 years old shall expire on the birth date of the licensee at the end

1 of a period of not more than 8 years determined in regulations adopted by the
2 Administration following the issuance of the license.

3 (2) Subject to paragraph (5) of this subsection, a license issued under this
4 title to a driver under the age of 21 years shall expire not later than 60 days after the
5 driver's 21st birthday.

6 (d) (1) A license shall remain in full force and effect during an absence from
7 the State if the license is held by:

8 (i) 1. A member of the [armed forces of the United States]
9 **UNIFORMED SERVICES** who is absent from this State on active service in the [armed
10 forces of the United States] **UNIFORMED SERVICES**; or

11 2. A dependent of the member who is residing with the
12 member outside the State; or

13 (ii) 1. A contract employee working on behalf of a federal agency
14 or branch of the [armed] **UNIFORMED** services who is absent from the State in service of
15 the contract; or

16 2. A dependent of the contract employee who is residing with
17 the contract employee outside the State.

18 23-202.

19 (a) (1) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, the Administration and the
20 Secretary shall establish an emissions control program in the State in accordance with the
21 federal Clean Air Act.

22 23-206.2.

23 (c) (1) A motor vehicle owned by at least one active duty member of the
24 [armed] **UNIFORMED** services [of the United States] at the time of a scheduled mandatory
25 inspection under this subtitle is exempt from the mandatory inspections required by this
26 subtitle if:

27 (i) An owner of the motor vehicle who is a member of the [armed]
28 **UNIFORMED** services [of the United States] has received [military] **OFFICIAL** orders:

29 1. For deployment outside the United States; or

30 2. To a duty station in a jurisdiction that is not subject to a
31 vehicle emissions control inspection and maintenance program; and

32 (ii) The exemption is not otherwise prohibited by federal law.

1 (2) In order to qualify for an exemption under paragraph (1) of this
 2 subsection, all owners of the motor vehicle shall certify that at least one owner of the motor
 3 vehicle has received [military] **OFFICIAL** orders for deployment outside the United States
 4 or to a duty station in a jurisdiction that is not subject to a vehicle emissions control
 5 inspection and maintenance program.

6 (3) The certification required in paragraph (2) of this subsection shall be
 7 made on a form provided by the Administration.

8 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
 9 October 1, 2025.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.