

HB 708 – Property Tax – Exemption for Disabled Veterans – Percentage of Disability
Ways and Means Committee
February 18, 2020

Good afternoon Chairwoman Kaiser and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee. I Tammy Bresnahan Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland and a service-disabled combat Veteran. AARP has more than 870,000 members and over 200,000 of them are Veterans. AARP and its membership support **HB 708 – Property Tax – Exemption for Disabled Veterans – Percentage of Disability**. There is nothing more than sacred nor more patriotic than serving our country. AARP's membership recognizes this service.

HB 708 expands the eligibility criteria of a property tax exemption for specified disabled veterans and surviving spouses of veterans to include veterans with at least an 80% service-connected disability. Under current law, veterans must have a 100% service-connected disability to be eligible for the property tax exemption.

An 80% permanent disability rating reflects a severe disability, where the life and livelihood of the Veteran will be significantly impacted. Such a Veteran is far less likely to be able gain and maintain employment and is far more likely to require the assistance of a caregiver. Since the caregiver is often the Veteran's spouse, the spouse is also disadvantaged in maintaining meaningful employment. The cumulative effect exacerbates the challenge of owning and remaining in a home.

AARP believes we must honor the service and acknowledge the sacrifice of our severely disabled Veterans. HB 708 does so, by providing greater economic viability for a severely disabled Veteran and the Veterans caregiver by ensuring their ability to afford and remain in their home.

We respectfully request a favorable report for HB 708. For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.