

March 23, 2022

Good Afternoon Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

HB167- Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial- Support

I am a proud graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy's Class of 1998 and a retired Coast Guard Reserve Officer. I have lived in Maryland for 16 of the past 22 years (living outside of the state only when my active-duty husband's assignments took us elsewhere), beginning with my assignment to Activities Baltimore at the Coast Guard Yard in 2000. Our family chose to retire to Maryland because of the wealth of opportunities for Veterans and Military Families and its appreciation of their service.

As home to some of the military's most important bases and units, large and small (Fort Meade, Fort Detrick, Joint Base Andrews, U.S. Naval Academy, Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Naval Air Station Patuxent, Army Corps of Engineers Baltimore, Coast Guard Yard, Coast Guard stations/aids to navigation teams, Coast Guard cutters, etc), our own Maryland National Guard, and units on the other side of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, there are tens of thousands of female service members who have lived in, been stationed in, or are from, Maryland. In today's modern service especially, but beginning with our earliest battles as a colony, Maryland's women have answered the call to serve, just as men did.

Now it is time for Maryland to recognize the service of its daughters, wives, sisters, and mothers, which for too long has been undervalued and underappreciated.

Please vote favorably for HB167 to initiate the development of a memorial to acknowledge the long-standing service of Maryland's women in the armed forces.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa E VanBuskirk".

Lisa VanBuskirk, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Reserve (Retired)