

Signature Page (01-13-2021).pdf

Uploaded by: Patrick Guibao

Position: FAV

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition


Air Force Sergeants Association


American Military Society


Association of the United States Navy


Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service



Disabled American Veterans


Distinguished Flying Cross Association


Fleet Reserve Association


Jewish War Veterans of the USA


Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association


Military Officers Association of America


Military Order of the Purple Heart


National Association for Black Veterans


Naval Enlisted Reserve Association


NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers


Society of Military Widows


Veterans of Foreign Wars

SB 654 Veterans Outreach Ed FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Fidler

Position: FAV

Written Support

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Senate Bill 654 (Klausmeier) Veterans Affairs – Office of Communications and Public Affairs
– Veterans Advocacy and Education Act

Sara C. Fidler, President

sfidler@micua.org

March 10, 2022

On behalf of Maryland’s independent colleges and universities and the 58,000 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to support ***Senate Bill 654 (Klausmeier) Veterans Affairs – Office of Communications and Public Affairs – Veterans Advocacy and Education Act***. The bill renames the Outreach and Advocacy Program within the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) to be the Office of Communications and Public Affairs. MDVA, in partnership with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), is required to actively assist veterans and their dependents to access education and training benefits.

The State of Maryland and Maryland Institutions of Higher Education established a collaboration with MDVA on January 31, 2011, to serve veterans and their families and help them become members of our campus communities. The inclusion of veterans contributes to the diverse student population at MICUA institutions. The Maryland College Collaboration for Student Veterans Commission was established in 2016 (Ch.413 of 2016), and MICUA is a designated representative on the Commission. The Commission’s work consists of “ensuring the educational success of returning veterans, including their recruitment, successful transition into higher education, retention, and eventual graduation.” SB 654 creates a central location within MDVA for veterans to learn more about the various educational opportunities in the State and improve access to obtain a college degree and training for the workforce. The bill continues the good work of previous efforts for veterans and their families.

There are several MICUA institutions with deeply rooted connections to military bases in close proximity and they have demonstrated a strong commitment to provide a supportive school environment for all students, including veterans and their families.

We thank the sponsor for introducing this important piece of legislation. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Irnande Altama, Associate Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, ialtema@micua.org.

For these reasons, MICUA urges a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 654.

SB654 Wes Moore Testimony (Veterans Advocacy and E

Uploaded by: Wes Moore

Position: FAV

Testimony of Wes Moore
Former Army Captain and Candidate for Governor
Before the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Veterans Affairs - Office of Communications and Public Affairs - Veterans
Advocacy and Education Act
FAVORABLE (Senate Bill 654)

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

I am here in support of Senate Bill 654 **Veterans Affairs - Office of Communications and Public Affairs - Veterans Advocacy and Education Act.**

I would like to thank Senator Kathy Klausmeier for sponsoring this important bill. It would require collaboration between the State's Department of Veterans Affairs and the Maryland Higher Education Commission. This would help veterans and their families get access to education and job training. Helping them compete in the job market is not only our moral obligation but will create a stronger, better-prepared, workforce.

More than 360,000 veterans call Maryland home. These men and women who have served our country deserve our respect, appreciation, and support. In fact, Maryland is home to 50,000 veteran-owned small businesses. These generate more than \$20 million in sales each year and employ thousands of Marylanders. With an estimated 198,000 job vacancies in Maryland, helping our vets and their families get the skills and training they have earned can help them and our economy.

As a combat veteran and former Army Captain, I understand what our veterans need to succeed. Maryland must do a better job at expanding and improving the quality of care we provide to our veterans and their families. This includes supporting those experiencing mental illness and substance use disorders as well as investing in permanent supportive housing. A critically important step is providing the education and training needed to channel our veterans' remarkable ability, character, and work ethic.

There is a pledge we take in the United States military: leave no one behind. This is something that I and other veterans hold as solemn. I urge the committee to vote favorably on SB 654 so we can start to ensure that the Maryland men and women who took that pledge are not left behind.

SB 654 - letter of support with amendments.pdf

Uploaded by: George Owings

Position: FWA



Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Secretary

LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
LT. GOVERNOR

GEORGE W. OWINGS III
SECRETARY

March 8, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Members of the Committee
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 654 Veterans Affairs – Office of Communications and Public Affairs – Veterans
Advocacy and Education Act

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present a letter of support today in reference to Senate Bill 654 (SB654). This bill clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Outreach and Advocacy Program in the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs. SB654 renames the Program in a manner that makes its purpose clear.

The Outreach and Advocacy Program was established in 2006 to inform veterans of the services, benefits, and assistance available to them by the state and federal government. Over the course of the last 15 years, the Program's communications role and program management responsibilities have increasingly expanded. This bill does three things: (1) as they exist in 2022, it crystallizes the roles and responsibilities of the Program, (2) related to the purpose of the Program it ensures transparency across federal, state, and local government as well as private sector, and (3) it establishes a foundation for future state leaders to clearly understand the breadth of responsibility assigned to the Program.

The amendment to SB654 only addresses the title of the bill and change to program name. In lieu of changing the title from a program to an office, the amendment clarifies in the title that we continue to provide outreach and advocacy but recognizes the transformation of the program and its evolving communications role. The amendment also ensures continuity of operations and consistency across MDVA programs. Every other arm of the Department is a 'program'. Therefore, the role of communications, outreach, and advocacy, should also be a program. Outreach and advocacy has been a cornerstone of this program. If the program title changes to the office of communications and public affairs our constituents will wonder if outreach and advocacy on behalf of veterans has ended, which it has not.

Page 2

This is a commonsense bill with no fiscal impact. The bill explains how the program has evolved since 2006, it describes the added responsibilities placed on the program, and clarifies to all whom we serve, exactly what we do. I respectfully ask that this committee provide a favorable vote, with the amendment, to SB654.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Owings III". The signature is stylized with several loops and a vertical line through the middle. The initials "III" are clearly visible at the end of the signature.

George W. Owings III
Secretary

SB0654-293725-01.pdf

Uploaded by: Katherine Klausmeier

Position: FWA



SB0654/293725/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

08 MAR 22
12:39:30

BY: Senator Klausmeier
(To be offered in the Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 654
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 2, strike “**Office of Communications and Public Affairs**” and substitute “**Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy Program**”; in lines 5 and 6, strike “Office of Communications and Public Affairs” and substitute “**Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy Program**”; in lines 6 and 8, in each instance, strike “Office” and substitute “**Program**”; in line 11, strike the first “Office” and substitute “**Program**”; in lines 11 and 12, strike “Office of Communications and Public Affairs” and substitute “**Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy Program**”; in line 15, strike “9–940 through” and substitute “**9–940 and 9–942 through**”; in lines 15 and 16, strike “Office of Communications and Public Affairs” and substitute “**Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy Program**”; and after line 18, insert:

“BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – State Government
Section 9–941
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2021 Replacement Volume)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 1, in line 22, strike the brackets; in the same line, strike “Outreach” and substitute “**COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH,**”; and in lines 22 and 23, strike “**OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**”.

On page 2 in lines 1 and 3, and on page 6 in line 11, in each instance, strike “Outreach” and substitute “**COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH,**”.

On page 2, in line 1, strike beginning with “part” through “means” and substitute **“PART, “PROGRAM” MEANS”**; in the same line, strike the last bracket; in line 3, strike “an” and substitute **“A”**; in line 15, strike “Outreach and Advocacy”; in line 23, strike **“OFFICE”** and substitute **“PROGRAM”**; and in line 27, strike the second set of brackets.

On page 2 in lines 2, 3, 5, 11, 13, and 15, on page 3 in line 26, on page 4 in line 8, on page 5 in line 5, and on page 6 in lines 12 and 19, in each instance, strike the bracket.

On page 2 in lines 2 and 3 and 4, and on page 6 in line 12, in each instance, strike **“OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS”**.

On page 2 in lines 5, 11, 13, 15, and 27, on page 4 in line 8, and on page 5 in line 5, in each instance, strike **“OFFICE”**.

On page 3, in line 11, strike **“PUBLIC AFFAIRS”** and substitute **“OUTREACH”**; in line 26, strike “Outreach and Advocacy”; and in line 27, strike **“DEPARTMENT”**.

On page 5, in line 5, strike “Outreach and Advocacy”; and strike beginning with the first “by” in line 28 down through **“AFFAIRS”** in line 29 and substitute **“BY THE COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH, AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM”**.

On page 6, in line 11, strike the third bracket; in line 19, strike “outreach” and substitute **“COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH,”**; and strike line 20 in its entirety.