

HB167 Written Testimony - Dan Tootle.pdf

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Position: FAV

HB167 - Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial

Written Testimony of Dan C. Tootle in SUPPORT for the Bill

to the

Maryland House of Delegates Health and Government Operations
Committee

1:30 pm

on

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

Urging the Governor to create a certain commission with appropriate funding and authority for the purpose of establishing a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial that honors the service of women veterans of the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Women Veterans of the State of Maryland to urge this Committee to approve and further move the House of Delegates Bill HB167 through the legislative process of the 2020 Maryland General Assembly. I am also asking that the accompanying Bill HB167F that provides the funding basis for the Commission's operations be approved as well.

I particularly want to thank Delegate Heather Bagnall of District 33 for agreeing to originate this bill after receiving a request from myself to do so. When I contacted Delegate Bagnall to request that such a bill to create a commission that will lead to the funding and establishment of a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial, I was not certain that the request coming from a non-woman veteran would be seriously considered to become a matter of legislation within the current General Assembly session. But pleasantly Delegate Bagnall understood the need for such a memorial no matter from whom the request had come and has proceeded accordingly. So, here we are today assessing the worth of this requested action on the part of our Governor.

As to why a memorial is appropriate and is needed to honor the women of this state who have put on the uniform and have served as a member of this nation's and our state's armed forces? Part of the answer has to do with just how many of our state's women have served in that manner. The Dept of the Veterans Administration tells us that our state has 427,068 veterans at this time; of which 46,123 (10.8%) are women who have served in the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard. So, that is how many women veterans of our state currently are within Maryland.

But a major part of that answer is to acknowledge and honor the women of our state who have been willing to assume the risk of such service, and who have served in every area of armed forces assignment on our behalf publicly and properly.

And we have many more such women who will become veterans in the coming years. The Department of Defense tells us that 1,417,370 persons are currently serving on active duty for the United States. Of that number, 204,101 are women who are wearing the uniform; many of whom are serving right here in Maryland and who will become part of our state's women veteran population in the near future.

What I have not been able to determine specifically is how many of our women veterans have served in the Maryland National Guard or Air Guard or have been reservists who have been called to active duty from their private civilian lives. But, given that our state counts 8,000 National Guard and Air Guard members at this time, a similar percentage to that of the VA's resident count indicates that there are approximately 1,400 women among that number who also will join their veteran counterparts when they retire or separate from active duty here in Maryland.

So, the number of the women veterans who reside in our cities and communities is significant in numbers and whom, like the other Maryland veterans play significant roles as leaders and productive citizens who are backbone members in every walk of life wherever they may live, in much the same manner as they acted while on active duty.

At the present time the state of Maryland Department of Veterans manages five veteran memorials. They are the War Memorial Building, the Maryland Korean War Memorial, and the Maryland Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Baltimore, and the Gold Star Families Monument, and the Maryland World War II Memorial in Annapolis. There is not a similarly managed memorial for Maryland's Women Veterans, but there is a memorial monument to honor women in military service that is located at the Chesapeake House Travel Plaza in Cecil County along the I-95 freeway but not managed by the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs.

This memorial was dedicated on Veterans Day of 2014 after having been designed through a collaboration of the public and several agencies; to include the "Commission on the Establishment of the Women in Military Service Monument" that was established by the 2005 General Assembly for that purpose. Senator Kathy Klausmeier was identified to me as having been the head of that Commission.

The existing monument was furnished as in "in-kind" donation by the architect and construction company that provided the remodeling of the Chesapeake House Travel Plaza. It consists of a granite monument that includes an inspirational quote, along with triangular bronze plaques. Access to the monument is through the Food Court of the Plaza.

What our women veterans of Maryland deserve is a significant memorial within Maryland that honors their service and reflects the honor shown by them for willingly placing themselves in danger on behalf of the citizens of Maryland and this nation. The women of Maryland have served as members of this nation's and state's armed forces in every conflict since beginning in the 19th century's World War I and have answered the call to such duty in every conflict of this nation through today's Middle East wars.

They have served honorably and with distinction. First, in non-combat duty positions, and now they serve their duties across every type of military service. Regardless of the duties to which they have been assigned and have served, they have faced the same dangers as their male counterparts; their untimely deaths in combat and combat-related operations has clearly attested to the risks that they have taken and the honor and respect they so richly deserve.

When I served my 21-years of active duty as a Navy officer and aircraft carrier pilot, there were no women allowed to serve on naval combat vessels or to act as pilots or crewpersons of combat aircraft. The Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps operated within similar constraints for the women who served on active duty at that time. However, the restriction for women to serve in such duties has been shown to have been an artificial restraint through their subsequent service that has been performed since such restrictions were removed. But that historical restriction did nothing to disprove the depth and value of the invaluable service having been provided by women to meet our state's and nation's military needs no matter where assigned to serve.

I am a veteran who has been inspired to speak up and to ask that a Commission be created with appropriate funding and authority for the purpose of establishing an appropriate memorial that honors the service of the women veterans of Maryland who have served, those serving now, and for those who will serve in the future on behalf of those whom such service protects.

Sincerely,

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 18, 2022

Testimony in Support of House Bill 167 - Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial

Good afternoon Madam Chairwoman, Madam Vice Chairwoman, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on House Bill 167 - Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial.

This bill would establish a commission to create a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial. As of now, there is currently no memorial specifically honoring the Maryland women who have served and continue to serve in all branches of our military. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) reports that women represent approximately 20% of new recruits, about 15% of active duty military members, and 18% of the guard and reserve forces. NCSL also reports that, as of March 2019, at least 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have enacted legislation to establish a female veteran program, designate a commemorative day or month, or provide for special license plates. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, in 2016, women veterans represented approximately 9% of the U.S. veteran population and approximately 13% of Maryland's veteran population.

It is past time that we honor the service, dedication, honor, and sacrifice of these valiant women who have served in our armed forces. I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 167.

2022 MNA HB 167 House Side.pdf

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Position: FAV



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: HB 167
Title: Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial
Hearing Date: January 18, 2022
Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 167 – Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial*. The bill would create a commission to develop a recommendation on the creation of a memorial to honor Maryland women who have served our state and nation as part of the military.

Women have served as part of our nation’s armed services in many roles, including combat roles in today’s military. Women first entered military services as nurses as early as the Revolutionary War period. In 2021, there were almost 30,000 nurses, both women and men, across all branches of the militaryⁱ. Highlights of the history of nursing in military service include:

- Dorothea Dix was appointed as the Superintendent of Nurses for the Union Army in June 1861.
- Clara Barton, a nurse, served during the Civil War and was known as the “Angel of the Battlefield”. Later, Barton founded the Red Cross.
- Nursing became a permanent part of the military with the establishment of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901ⁱⁱ;
- The Navy Nurse Corp was founded in 1908ⁱⁱⁱ. When the United States first entered World War 1, there were 403 Army nurses on active duty. This number grew to 21,460, with 10,000 serving overseas by November 1918.^{iv} Over 1,500 nurses served in the Navy during this time period.
- At the beginning of World War II in 1941, there were less than 7,000 nurses on active duty. The number grew to over 57,000 active-duty nurses by 1945. In the Navy, there were 12,000 active duty and reserve nurses during the war, including some nurses who became prisoners of war.^v
- During the Korean War, there were 540 Army nurses and 200 Navy nurses.^{vi}
- In the war in Vietnam, 11,000 women served with 90% of them being nurses.^{vii}

We support the Commission proposed in *House Bill 167* as an important in recognizing and honoring women, including nurses, who have served in the military.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.health.mil/News/Articles/2021/05/11/Military-nursing-highlighted-during-National-Nurses-Week>

ⁱⁱ <https://e-anca.org/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, United States Navy. "White Task Force: the story of the Nurse Corps, United States Navy." (NAVMED 939 1945),

^{iv} Ibid

^v Ibid

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/86001/women-veterans-bravely-served-vietnam-war/>