



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland, Inc.

The War Memorial Building, Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-752-1405

January 24, 2025

David Heredia, Jr.
Commander, Department of Maryland
The American Legion
101 N. Gay Street, Suite E
Baltimore, MD, 21202

The Honorable Bryan W. Simonaire
Maryland State Senate
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Michael A. Jackson
Maryland State Senate
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

cc: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members

Subject: Strong Support for Maryland SB 89 – Honoring Veterans Through Professional License Recognition

Dear Senators Simonaire and Jackson,

On behalf of The American Legion Department of Maryland and our over 42,000 members who proudly support the nearly 350,000 veterans and their families across this great state, I write to express our unwavering and enthusiastic support for Senate Bill 89 (SB 89). This legislation, which authorizes professional licensing boards to include a veteran status notation on licenses and certificates, represents more than a procedural change—it is a bold and necessary acknowledgment of the sacrifices made by Maryland’s veterans.

For far too long, veterans have faced unnecessary barriers when seeking the recognition, resources, and respect they deserve. These are men and women who answered our nation’s call, often at great personal cost, and they continue to contribute to our communities as professionals, entrepreneurs, and leaders. Yet, many struggle to access benefits and resources simply because their status as veterans is not easily recognized.

This bill is not just about simplifying processes; it is about **honoring the identity of those who served** and ensuring their sacrifices are acknowledged in meaningful ways. Recognizing veteran status on professional licenses and certificates serves several critical purposes:

1. **Facilitating Access to Benefits:** Veterans shouldn’t have to jump through hoops to prove their service. A simple designation on a license provides immediate verification and ensures they are quickly connected to the benefits and services they have earned.

2. **Acknowledging Their Sacrifice:** For veterans, this notation is more than an administrative detail. It is a daily reminder to the professional community, clients, and colleagues that the individual holding this license has served their nation with honor.
3. **Enhancing Targeted Support:** By identifying veterans in licensed professions, Maryland can better understand their needs and develop policies and programs to provide them with the support they need to thrive.

As Commander of The American Legion Department of Maryland, I have spoken with countless veterans who feel overlooked or frustrated by the complexities of proving their status and accessing resources. SB 89 eliminates one of these barriers and shows Maryland's veterans that their service matters.

Our organization, along with other veteran service organizations like the DAV and VFW, works tirelessly to support veterans by providing free assistance through accredited Veteran Service Officers (VSOs). SB 89 will complement these efforts, making it easier for veterans to receive the care, recognition, and opportunities they have earned.

This legislation sends a clear and powerful message: Maryland honors its veterans, respects their contributions, and values their role in our professional communities. It's not just a policy change—it's a statement of gratitude.

We commend your leadership and dedication in sponsoring SB 89, and we urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to pass this bill without hesitation. Maryland's veterans have already given so much—now it's time for us to step up for them.

Thank you for standing with our veterans. Together, we can ensure that Maryland continues to be a state that honors its heroes in both word and action.

Sincerely,

David Heredia Jr.

David Heredia, Jr.
Commander, Department of Maryland
The American Legion

cc: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members