



Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Office of the Secretary

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ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY

To: Secretary Tony Woods
From: Morgan Murphy, Director of Intergovernmental & Legislative Affairs
RE: 2024 Legislative Session Recap
Date: April 12, 2024

2024 Session By the Numbers

- 78 veteran/military family-related bills tracked
- 23 MDVA letters of support (most ever)
- 15 MDVA testimonies (most ever)
- 24 bills passed (most veteran/military family-related bills ever passed)

Bills Passed

- 1. Department of Veterans Affairs - Renaming and Deputy Secretary of Military Family Policy and Programs ([SB411/HB431](#))**
 - Renames MDVA to the Department of Veterans and Military Families.
 - Requires MDVA Secretary to appoint a Deputy Secretary of Military Family Policy and Programs.
- 2. Families Serve Act of 2024 ([SB478/HB604](#))**
 - Allows private employers to grant a hiring & promotion preference to spouses of eligible service members.
 - The State will add 10 points to any hiring selection test for eligible military spouses.
- 3. Time to Serve Act of 2024 ([SB477/HB580](#))**
 - Doubles paid time off from 15 to 30 days for state employees to use for National Guard training.
 - Doubles the disaster leave from 15 to 30 days for Executive Branch employees.

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4. **Vehicle Laws - Special Registration Plates - Gold Star and Next of Kin Families**
([HB231/SB275](#))
 - Waives the special registration license plate fee for Gold Star or Next of Kin designees.
5. **Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families** ([SB88/HB55](#))
 - Establishes a commission to study and make recommendations for developing and implementing a statewide strategic plan to make Maryland the best state for veterans and military families, including legislative and budgetary recommendations.
6. **Armed Forces - Support of Military Families and Addition of Space Force** ([HB1026/SB707](#))
 - Adds the Space Force to provisions of law related to the armed forces.
 - Adds Space Force to the definition of ‘military-connected student’ for purposes of the Purple Star School Programs.
 - Recognizes a ‘military-connected student’ as a dependant of a National Guard service member of any other state.
 - Authorizes military spouses and residents who are members of the National Guard of another state or a reserve component of the armed forces to terminate certain contracts at any time after the date the service member receives orders to relocate.
7. **Cosmetology Licensure Compact** ([SB27/HB383](#))
 - Adds Maryland to the Cosmetology Licensure Compact to provide reciprocity of license recognition from other member states, allowing a more streamlined process for military spouses to continue working when they move to Maryland.
8. **Courts – Military Records – Recordation and Inspection** ([HB125/SB159](#))
 - Modernizes recordkeeping in line with best practices and prevents fraudulent misuse of a veteran’s Social Security number.
9. **Discrimination - Military Status - Prohibition** ([SB413/HB598](#))
 - Prohibits discrimination based on military status in housing and employment.
10. **Education - Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery - Student Information**
([HB1492/SB1042](#))
 - Requires public schools to notify students taking the ASVAB and parents or guardians of students taking the ASVAB of the option to prohibit the release of a student's ASVAB test scores to military recruiters.
 - Establishes an opt-out process for scores to be shared with recruiters.
11. **Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps - Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption - Veterans Determined to be Unemployable** ([HB715/SB533](#))

- Authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to issue complimentary fishing and hunting licenses to unemployable veterans.

12. General Provisions - Commemorative Days - Maryland Veterans Suicide Prevention Day
([SB615](#))

- Requires the Governor to annually proclaim September 30th as Maryland Veterans Suicide Prevention Day.

13. Higher Education - Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship - Repeal of Service Terminal Date ([SB1178](#))

- Expands eligibility by removing the terminal date required to be eligible for the Douglas J.J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship.

14. Human Services - Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund ([HB773/SB597](#))

- Establishes the Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund to provide sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding and surfing opportunities for individuals with disabilities and service-disabled veterans.

15. Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Coverage for Prostheses (So Every Body Can Move Act) ([SB614/HB865](#))

- Requires the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, certain insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and HMOs to provide certain coverage for prostheses.

16. Maryland Military Installation Council - Membership ([SB214](#))

- Altering the membership of the Maryland Military Installation Council to include the Maryland Secretary of Labor or a designee, the State Superintendent of Schools or a designee, and the President of the Military Alliance Council of Charles County; and increasing the number of members selected by the Governor from 5 to 6 and requiring that at least one is a spouse of a service member.

17. Maryland National Guard - Tricare Premium Reimbursement Program - Alterations
([SB697/HB1504](#))

- Extends the full benefit of the Tricare Premium Reimbursement Program to service members' families.

18. Mental Health Law - County Mental Health Advisory Committees - Membership
([HB408/SB412](#))

- Adds a member who has experience with mental health care for veterans or is currently serving in the military to the list of groups from which individuals may be appointed to county committees.

19. Property Tax - Credit for Dwelling House of Disabled Veterans - Alterations ([HB63/SB6](#))

- Closes a loophole to provide a 50% property tax credit for those veterans who are 100%, but not permanently disabled.
- Allow for the counties and Baltimore City to monitor the disability status of veterans who are not permanently 100% disabled.

20. State Finance – Catastrophic Event Account and Federal Government Shutdown Employee Assistance Loan Fund – Noncivilian Federal Employees ([HB819/SB628](#))

- Extends Catastrophic Event Account and Federal Government Shutdown Employee Assistance Loan Fund to non-civilian federal employees.

21. State Retirement and Pension System - Military Service Credit - Eligibility ([SB368](#))

- Closes a gap in the military service credit eligibility in the State Retirement and Pension System by removing service date limitations of the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or the Coast and Geodetic Survey.

22. State-Owned Nursing Homes - Deficiencies, Citations, and Fines - Reporting Requirements ([SB712/HB938](#))

- Clarifies reporting times and expands oversight reporting at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home.

23. Study on African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland ([SB448/HB133](#))

- Creates a commission to study African American Civil War soldiers in Maryland, including muster rolls, locations of service, and all honors and recognitions awarded.
- Makes findings and recommendations regarding the funding, design, construction, and location of a memorial dedicated to these soldiers.

24. Vehicle Laws - Disabled Veteran Registration Plates - Issuance ([SB55/HB178](#))

- Authorizes the MVA to issue disabled veteran plates at no additional cost to veterans who are between 50% and 99% disabled.

Bills	Title	Employment	Education	Health & Wellness	Recognition	Economic Benefit
SB0411 (HB0431)	Department of Veterans Affairs - Renaming and Deputy Secretary of Military Family Policy and Programs					
SB0478 (HB0604)	Families Serve Act of 2024					
SB0088 (HB0055)	Maryland Commission on Veterans and Military Families					
SB0477 (HB0580)	Time to Serve Act of 2024					
HB0231 (SB0275)	Vehicle Laws - Special Registration Plates - Gold Star and Next of Kin Families					
HB1026 (SB0707)	Armed Forces - Support of Military Families and Addition of Space Force					
SB0027 (HB0383)	Cosmetology Licensure Compact					
HB0125 (SB0159)	Courts – Military Records – Recordation and Inspection					
SB0413 (HB0598)	Discrimination - Military Status - Prohibition					
HB1492 (SB1042)	Education - Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery - Student Information					
HB0715 (SB0533)	Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps - Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption - Veterans Determined to be Unemployable					
SB0615	General Provisions - Commemorative Days - Maryland Veterans Suicide Prevention Day					
SB1178	Higher Education - Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship - Repeal of Service Terminal Date					
HB0773 (SB0597)	Human Services - Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund					
SB0614 (HB0865)	Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Coverage for Prostheses (So Every Body Can Move Act)					
SB0214	Maryland Military Installation Council - Membership					
SB0697 (HB1504)	Maryland National Guard - Tricare Premium Reimbursement Program - Alterations					
HB0408 (SB0412)	Mental Health Law - County Mental Health Advisory Committees - Membership					
HB0063 (SB0006)	Property Tax - Credit for Dwelling House of Disabled Veterans - Alterations					
HB0819 (SB0628)	State Finance – Catastrophic Event Account and Federal Government Shutdown Employee Assistance Loan Fund – Noncivilian Federal Employees					
SB0368	State Retirement and Pension System - Military Service Credit - Eligibility					
SB0712 (HB0938)	State-Owned Nursing Homes - Deficiencies, Citations, and Fines - Reporting Requirements					
SB0448 (HB0133)	Study on African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland					
SB0055 (HB0178)	Vehicle Laws - Disabled Veteran Registration Plates - Issuance					