

SENATE BILL 281

P1, R7

5lr0607
CF 5lr2420

By: **Senators Simonaire, Salling, Jennings, Gallion, Mautz, and Bailey**

Introduced and read first time: January 10, 2025

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings and Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Transportation Equality for Service Members Act**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing rules of interpretation related to the uniformed services;
4 altering the rule of interpretation for “veteran”; altering the application of certain
5 provisions of law governing transportation to apply to all uniformed services, rather
6 than only certain uniformed services; and generally relating to veterans and
7 uniformed services.

8 BY renumbering

9 Article – Transportation

10 Section 11–103.4

11 to be Section 11–103.5

12 Annotated Code of Maryland

13 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

14 BY adding to

15 Article – General Provisions

16 Section 1–101.1, 1–101.2, 1–103.1, 1–114.1, 1–114.2, and 1–116

17 Annotated Code of Maryland

18 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

19 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

20 Article – General Provisions

21 Section 1–117

22 Annotated Code of Maryland

23 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

24 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

25 Article – State Government

26 Section 9–901

27 Annotated Code of Maryland

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Transportation

Section 11–101, 12–301(i)(4)(i), 13–616.2(a)(2)(ii)1., 16–115(a)(1) and (2), and
23–202(a)(1)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Transportation

Section 11–101.1, 11–101.2, 11–103.4, 11–148.2, 11–158.1, 11–174.2, and 11–178

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Transportation

Section 12–301(i)(4)(ii)1., 13–402.1(c), 13–616.2(a)(2)(ii)2.B., 13–619.1(a)(2) and (3),
(c), and (d)(1), 13–619.4(b) and (c), 13–810(f), 16–102(a)(7), 16–111(e)(1) and
(4), 16–115(d)(1), and 23–206.2(c)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

That Section(s) 11–103.4 of Article – Transportation of the Annotated Code of Maryland be
renumbered to be Section(s) 11–103.5.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read

as follows:

Article – General Provisions

1–101.1.

“ACTIVE DUTY” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9–901 OF THE STATE
GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

1–101.2.

“ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9–901 OF THE
STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

1–103.1.

“ARMED FORCES” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9–901 OF THE STATE
GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

1 1-114.1.

2 “RESERVE COMPONENT” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
3 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

4 1-114.2.

5 “SERVICE MEMBER” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
6 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

7 1-116.

8 “UNIFORMED SERVICES” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
9 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

10 1-117.

11 With respect to any State program of benefits, rights, or privileges applicable to a
12 veteran under this Code, “veteran” includes[, if the individual is eligible under 38 U.S.C. §
13 101, a member of the commissioned corps of:

14 (1) the Public Health Service; or

15 (2) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or its
16 predecessor, the Coast and Geodetic Survey] AN INDIVIDUAL WHO MEETS THE
17 DEFINITION OF “VETERAN” UNDER § 9-901 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

18 **Article – State Government**

19 9-901.

20 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

21 (B) “ACTIVE DUTY” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 37 U.S.C. § 101.

22 (C) “ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS:

23 (1) AN ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES; OR

24 (2) SERVING IN A RESERVE COMPONENT OF THE UNIFORMED
25 SERVICES ON ACTIVE DUTY ORDERS.

26 (D) “ARMED FORCES” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 10 U.S.C. § 101.

[(b)] (E) “Board” means the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Veterans Trust.

[(c)] (F) “Department” means the Department of Veterans and Military Families.

(G) “MILITARY FAMILY” INCLUDES THE SPOUSE AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN OF A SERVICE MEMBER OR VETERAN RELATED BY BLOOD, MARRIAGE, OR ADOPTION.

(H) “RESERVE COMPONENT” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 37 U.S.C. § 101.

[(d)] (I) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Veterans and Military Families.

(J) “SERVICE MEMBER” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS A MEMBER OF:

(1) THE UNIFORMED SERVICES; OR

(2) A RESERVE COMPONENT OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.

[(e)] (K) “Trust” means the Maryland Veterans Trust.

(L) “UNIFORMED SERVICES” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 37 U.S.C. § 101.

[(f)] (M) Except as otherwise provided [in this subtitle], “veteran” [means an individual who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, other than for training, and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable] **HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 38 U.S.C. § 101.**

Article – Transportation

11–101.

In the Maryland Vehicle Law, the following words have the meanings indicated, unless the context requires otherwise.

11–101.1.

“ACTIVE DUTY” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9–901 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

11–101.2.

“ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9–901 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

1 11-103.4.

2 "ARMED FORCES" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
3 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

4 11-148.2.

5 "RESERVE COMPONENT" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
6 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

7 11-158.1.

8 "SERVICE MEMBER" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
9 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

10 11-174.2.

11 "UNIFORMED SERVICES" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
12 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

13 11-178.

14 "VETERAN" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE
15 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

16 12-301.

17 (i) (4) (i) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the
18 Administration may issue a temporary renewal for an identification card that extends the
19 expiration date for a period not exceeding 2 years for an applicant who:

20 1. Has the documentation required by federal law, as
21 enumerated in subsection (a)(4) and (5) of this section, on file with the Administration;

22 2. Has a photograph on file with the Administration that will
23 not be 16 years old or older by the expiration date of the temporary renewal; and

24 3. Has an identification card that was issued for the full term
25 under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

26 (ii) The Administration may make temporary renewal of an
27 identification card available to:

28 1. An active [duty] SERVICE member [of the armed forces of

the United States] or a spouse or dependent of the **ACTIVE SERVICE** member;

13–402.1.

(c) If a nonresident is a member of the [armed forces of the United States or of the United States Public Health Service] **UNIFORMED SERVICES** and is serving on active duty in this State or an adjoining state or the District of Columbia, the nonresident need not register [his] **THE MEMBER’S** personal passenger vehicles in this State if the vehicles are registered in the state of [his] **THE MEMBER’S** residence.

13–616.2.

(a) A person may apply to the Administration for a temporary parking placard on a form provided by the Administration if:

(2) (ii) The applicant, a dependent of the applicant, or any individual who depends on the applicant for transportation:

1. Submits proof satisfactory to the Administration that the individual has a disability as described in § 13–616(b)(1) of this subtitle; and

2. B. Is serving in the [armed forces of the United States] **UNIFORMED SERVICES** and is stationed in the State;

13–619.1.

(a) (2) To be eligible for a special registration described under subsection (c)(2)(i) of this section, an applicant shall provide proof that is satisfactory to the Administration that the applicant is a recipient of an individually earned, combat–related armed forces medal **OR A NON–COMBAT–RELATED UNIFORMED SERVICES MEDAL OF THE HIGHEST LEVELS**.

(3) To be eligible for a special registration described under subsection (c)(2)(ii) of this section, an applicant shall provide proof that is satisfactory to the Administration that the applicant is [an honorably discharged] A veteran [of a branch of the armed forces of the United States].

(c) Special registration plates issued under this section:

(1) May consist of any combination of letters, numerals, or both; and

(2) Shall include:

(i) For registration plates issued for an applicant described in subsection (a)(2) of this section:

1 1. An emblem or logo as authorized by the Administration
2 that depicts the applicant's **[armed forces] UNIFORMED SERVICES** medal; and

3 2. Except on plates issued for Class D (motorcycle) vehicles,
4 words describing the medal printed across the bottom of the plates;

5 (ii) Words or an emblem or logo indicating that the special
6 registration plate holder is **[an honorably discharged] A veteran [of a branch of the armed**
7 **forces of the United States]**; or

8 (iii) An emblem or logo indicating that the registration plate holder
9 is the recipient of the U.S. Department of Defense Gold Star or Next of Kin lapel button.

10 (d) (1) The Administration, in consultation with the U.S. Department of
11 Defense, **THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, THE COMMISSIONED CORPS**
12 **OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC**
13 **ADMINISTRATION**, and appropriate representatives of the various branches of the **[armed**
14 **forces] UNIFORMED SERVICES**, shall adopt regulations specifying those **[armed forces]**
15 **UNIFORMED SERVICES** medals that are of the type described in subsection (a)(2) of this
16 section and which, when awarded to an individual, qualify that individual to apply for
17 special registration under this section.

18 13-619.4.

19 (b) To be eligible for a special disabled veteran registration plate under this
20 section, an applicant shall provide proof that is satisfactory to the Administration that the
21 applicant is **[an armed forces] A veteran** who is between 50% and 99%, inclusive,
22 service-connected disabled as designated or classified by the U.S. Department of Veterans
23 Affairs.

24 (c) The Administration may issue a special disabled veteran registration plate
25 that does not display the international symbol of access in recognition of the vehicle owner's
26 service-connected disability to an individual who is **[an armed forces] A veteran** and is
27 between 50% and 99%, inclusive, service-connected disabled.

28 13-810.

29 (f) **[(1)** In this subsection, "military" includes the Commissioned Corps of the
30 Public Health Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the
31 Coast and Geodetic Survey.

32 **(2)]** A vehicle is exempt from the excise tax imposed by this part on issuance
33 of an original certificate of title if the vehicle:

34 **[(i)] (1)** Is owned by **[a] AN ACTIVE SERVICE** member **[of the**
35 **military on active duty] or A SERVICE MEMBER** who returns to the State from active duty;

1 and

2 [(ii)] (2) Was formerly titled and registered in another state by the
3 present owner of the vehicle.

4 16–102.

5 (a) The licensing requirements of this title do not apply to:

6 (7) A member of the [armed forces of the United States or of the United
7 States Public Health Service] **UNIFORMED SERVICES** who is serving on active duty and
8 any dependent of the member, if:

9 (i) The driver has [with him] **IN THE DRIVER’S POSSESSION** a
10 license to drive issued to [him] **THE DRIVER** by [his] **THE DRIVER’S** state of domicile; and

11 (ii) The license authorizes the driver to drive in [his] **THE DRIVER’S**
12 state of domicile vehicles of the class [he] **THE DRIVER** is driving in this State;

13 16–111.

14 (e) (1) Notwithstanding subsection (d) of this section or any other provision of
15 this subtitle, the Administration may issue a provisional license to an individual who has
16 been licensed to drive in another state or country, or by the armed forces [of the United
17 States] for less than 18 months.

18 (4) Notwithstanding § 16–103(c)(3) of this subtitle, the Administration may
19 issue a license under § 16–111.1 of this subtitle without issuing a learner’s instructional
20 permit or a provisional license if the individual has been licensed to drive in another state
21 or country, or by the armed forces [of the United States], for at least 18 months.

22 16–115.

23 (a) (1) Subject to paragraph (5) of this subsection, a license issued under this
24 title to a driver at least 21 years old shall expire on the birth date of the licensee at the end
25 of a period of not more than 8 years determined in regulations adopted by the
26 Administration following the issuance of the license.

27 (2) Subject to paragraph (5) of this subsection, a license issued under this
28 title to a driver under the age of 21 years shall expire not later than 60 days after the
29 driver’s 21st birthday.

30 (d) (1) A license shall remain in full force and effect during an absence from
31 the State if the license is held by:

32 (i) 1. A member of the [armed forces of the United States]

1 **UNIFORMED SERVICES** who is absent from this State on active service in the [armed
2 forces of the United States] **UNIFORMED SERVICES**; or

3 2. A dependent of the member who is residing with the
4 member outside the State; or

5 (ii) 1. A contract employee working on behalf of a federal agency
6 or branch of the [armed] **UNIFORMED** services who is absent from the State in service of
7 the contract; or

8 2. A dependent of the contract employee who is residing with
9 the contract employee outside the State.

10 23–202.

11 (a) (1) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, the Administration and the
12 Secretary shall establish an emissions control program in the State in accordance with the
13 federal Clean Air Act.

14 23–206.2.

15 (c) (1) A motor vehicle owned by at least one active duty member of the
16 [armed] **UNIFORMED** services [of the United States] at the time of a scheduled mandatory
17 inspection under this subtitle is exempt from the mandatory inspections required by this
18 subtitle if:

19 (i) An owner of the motor vehicle who is a member of the [armed]
20 **UNIFORMED** services [of the United States] has received [military] **OFFICIAL** orders:

21 1. For deployment outside the United States; or

22 2. To a duty station in a jurisdiction that is not subject to a
23 vehicle emissions control inspection and maintenance program; and

24 (ii) The exemption is not otherwise prohibited by federal law.

25 (2) In order to qualify for an exemption under paragraph (1) of this
26 subsection, all owners of the motor vehicle shall certify that at least one owner of the motor
27 vehicle has received [military] **OFFICIAL** orders for deployment outside the United States
28 or to a duty station in a jurisdiction that is not subject to a vehicle emissions control
29 inspection and maintenance program.

30 (3) The certification required in paragraph (2) of this subsection shall be
31 made on a form provided by the Administration.

32 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect

1 October 1, 2025.