

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND
LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2024-02**

BILL NO. 2024-01

Title of Bill: Establishment – Commission on Veterans Affairs

Synopsis: To establish a Cecil County Commission on Veteran Affairs for the purpose of advancing the general welfare of our veterans through the advocacy and advisement of our veteran programs at the local, State and Federal level. These activities will help promote the health and wellness of our veterans as well as provide education about programs, resources, and opportunities for economic assistance to our veterans and their spouses. The Commission will help promote employment opportunities and encourage local businesses to hire and retain veterans and to educate businesses in workforce development initiatives intended to foster and develop gainful employment opportunities for all veterans of Cecil County.

Introduced by: Council President Gregory, Vice President Meffley, Councilwoman Hamilton and Councilwoman Culberson

Introduced and order posted on: January 16, 2024, postponed to January 23, 2024

Public hearing scheduled on: February 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Consideration scheduled on: February 20, 2024

By: _____
Council Manager

PUBLIC HEARING

Notice of time and place of public hearing and title of Bill having been posted by January 16, 2024, postponed to January 23, 2024 at the County Administration Building, 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Elkton, and having been published according to the Charter on January 24, 2024 and January 31, 2024, a public hearing was held on February 6, 2024 and concluded on February 6, 2024.

By: _____
Council Manager

Explanation: CAPITAL LETTERS INDICATE LANGUAGE ADDED TO EXISTING DOCUMENT
~~Strike through~~ indicates language deleted from existing document
Underlining indicates language added to document by amendment.
~~Double Strike through~~ indicates language stricken from document by amendment.

1 **WHEREAS**, Cecil County honors generations of our citizens who have earned the title of
2 “American Veteran” which is a badge of courage that unites this finest group of former service
3 members the world has ever known; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Cecil County veterans, with their selfless sacrifice, joined our Armed Forces and
5 have forged and defended the very idea of America, a promise of freedom, equality, democracy,
6 justice, possibility and hope; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Cecil County will continue to honor our veterans and live up to their example of
8 putting service before self, caring for our neighbors, and working passionately to build a County
9 worthy of all those who protect our lives and liberty; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Cecil County recognizes that many veterans are underserved or unserved in our
11 community and may not be aware of the programs available to assist them with any health and
12 wellbeing issues, economic issues and programs, educational assistance and job opportunities; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Cecil County desires to establish a Commission that will perform outreach and
14 assistance to our veterans to ensure they are receiving the full extent of benefits available to them
15 from the local, State and Federal government, as well as any profit or non-profit organization
16 created to assist veterans; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Cecil County, shall establish a Commission on Veteran Affairs to further assist
18 our veterans in Chapter 16 Boards, Committee and Commissions, Article V; and

19 **WHEREAS**, Chapter 16, Article V shall: (1) Create the Commission on Veterans Affairs; (2)
20 establish the membership; (3) outline the duties and responsibilities; (4) staff and meeting
21 compensation (5 adoption of regulation; (6) establish an Annual report and; (7) outline the
22 advocacy of the Commission.

23 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL**
24 **COUNTY, MARYLAND**, that a new Article VI to be titled “Commission on Veterans Affairs” in
25 Chapter 16 Boards, Committees and Commissions, of the Code of Cecil County is hereby enacted
26 to read as follows:

27 **ARTICLE VI. COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**

28 **SECTION 16-34. CREATION; PURPOSE**

29 **THE CECIL COUNTY COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS IS ESTABLISHED FOR THE PURPOSE OF**

30 **ADVANCING THE GENERAL WELFARE OF OUR VETERANS THROUGH THE ADVOCACY AND**
31 **ADVISEMENT FOR OUR VETERAN PROGRAMS AT THE LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL LEVEL. THESE**
32 **ACTIVITIES WILL HELP PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF OUR VETERANS AS WELL AS**
33 **EDUCATION, PROGRAMS AND HOW TO GET ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO OUR VETERANS AND**
34 **SPOUSES. THE COMMISSION WILL HELP PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ENCOURAGE**
35 **LOCAL BUSINESSES TO HIRE AND RETAIN VETERANS AND TO EDUCATE BUSINESSES IN WORKFORCE**
36 **DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES INTENDED TO FOSTER AND DEVELOP GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT**
37 **OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL VETERANS OF CECIL COUNTY.**

38 **16-35 MEMBERSHIP**

39 **A. THE COMMISSION SHALL CONSIST OF 9 MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE COUNTY**
40 **EXECUTIVE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL, EXCEPT FOR THE MEMBERS,**
41 **APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL, AND SHALL CONSIST OF:**

- 42 **1. TWO (2) MEMBERS OF COUNTY COUNCIL;**
43 **2. FOUR (4) MEMBERS WHO ARE VETERANS AND SHALL BE A MEMBER OF ANY**
44 **BONA-FIDE AND NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED VETERANS' GROUP SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO,**
45 **THE FOLLOWING:**

- 46 **(A) VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS;**
47 **(B) WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS VETERANS ASSOCIATION;**
48 **(C) AMERICAN LEGION;**
49 **(D) MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART;**

50 **3. THREE (3) MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT HAVE EXPERIENCE IN**
51 **VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

52 **B. THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MAY ALSO DESIGNATE THE FOLLOWING AS EX-OFFICIO**
53 **MEMBERS:**

- 54 **(1) THE GARRISON COMMANDER OF ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, OR THE**
55 **COMMANDER'S DESIGNEE;**
56 **(2) A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CECIL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT OR CECIL**
57 **COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE FAMILIAR WITH VETERANS' EDUCATIONAL AND**
58 **HEALTH ISSUES;**
59 **(3) A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE CECIL COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE;**

60 (4) A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE SUSQUEHANNA WORKFORCE NETWORK.

61 C. ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE EX OFFICIO
62 MEMBERS, SHALL BE APPOINTED FOR THREE-YEAR TERMS AND SHALL CONTINUE TO SERVE UNTIL
63 THEIR REAPPOINTMENT OR UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS ARE APPOINTED. VACANCIES, EXCEPT
64 THOSE AT THE EXPIRATION OF A TERM, SHALL BE FILLED IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE ORIGINAL
65 APPOINTMENTS AND FOR THE UNEXPIRED TERM. ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD SHALL SERVE
66 WITHOUT COMPENSATION, EXCEPT THAT THEY MAY BE REIMBURSED FOR NECESSARY AND
67 PROPER EXPENSES INCURRED WHILE PERFORMING THEIR DUTIES THEREON.

68 D. THE COMMISSION SHALL SELECT FROM ITS MEMBERSHIP A CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND A
69 SECRETARY-TREASURER EACH TO SERVE AT THE PLEASURE OF THE COMMISSION. UPON THE
70 DEATH, DISABILITY, RESIGNATION, OR REMOVAL OF ANY MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION, THE
71 COUNTY EXECUTIVE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHARTER, SHALL APPOINT A PERSON
72 REPRESENTING THE ORIGINAL GROUP FOR THE UNEXPIRED TERM. THE COMMISSION HAS THE
73 POWER TO ESTABLISH AND APPOINT ADVISORY GROUPS AND COMMITTEES TO ASSIST IN ITS
74 PROGRAM OF ACTIVITY, WHICH MEMBERSHIP IS NOT RESTRICTED SOLELY TO MEMBERS OF THE
75 COMMISSION.

76 16-36 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

77 A. TO RESEARCH, ASSEMBLE, ANALYZE AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION AND
78 EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS RELATING TO ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT WILL ASSIST IN MEETING
79 THE NEEDS OF VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES;

80 B. TO INSTITUTE AND CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER PROGRAMS, MEETINGS AND
81 CONFERENCES TO PROMOTE THE RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS;

82 C. TO ADVISE THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND COUNTY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF
83 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN THE STATE AND COUNTY RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF VETERANS AND
84 THEIR FAMILIES;

85 D. TO CREATE AN OUTREACH PROGRAM WITH LOCAL BUSINESS TO HELP PROMOTE THE
86 EMPLOYMENT AND/OR JOB RETENTION OF VETERANS;

87 E. TO ASSIST IN PLANNING APPROPRIATE PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE
88 CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY VETERANS AND ASSIST IN PLANNING COMMEMORATION ACTIVITIES
89 RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY VETERANS.

90 **16-37 STAFF; MEETING COMPENSATION.**

91 **A. THE CECIL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES, OR ITS SUCCESSOR**
92 **AGENCY, SHALL PROVIDE STAFF SUPPORT TO THE COMMISSION.**

93 **B. THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION SHALL BE CALLED BY THE CHAIRPERSON. THE**
94 **COMMISSION SHALL MEET REGULARLY AND AS OFTEN AS NECESSARY TO PERFORM ITS DUTIES**
95 **BUT NOT LESS THAN 6 TIMES PER YEAR.**

96 **C. THE MEMBERS SHALL RECEIVE NO COMPENSATION FOR THEIR SERVICE BUT MAY BE**
97 **REIMBURSED FOR REASONABLE AND NECESSARY EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE DISCHARGE OF**
98 **THEIR DUTIES.**

99 **16-38 ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS.**

100 **THE COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT SUCH REGULATIONS AS DEEMED NECESSARY TO GOVERN ITS**
101 **PROCEDURES AND BUSINESS. SUCH REGULATIONS SHALL BE ADOPTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE**
102 **CHARTER AND COUNTY CODE OF CECIL COUNTY.**

103 **16-39 ANNUAL REPORT.**

104 **THE COMMISSION SHALL SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT OF ITS ACTIVITIES, TOGETHER WITH**
105 **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF VETERAN PROGRAMS TO**
106 **THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND COUNTY COUNCIL AND ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE AGENCY BY JULY 1**
107 **OF EACH YEAR.**

108 **16-40 ADVOCACY.**

109 **THE COMMISSION SHALL NOT ENGAGE IN ANY ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES AT THE LOCAL, STATE OR**
110 **FEDERAL LEVELS UNLESS APPROVED BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE.**

111 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND, that,**
112 **in the event any portion of this legislation is found to be unconstitutional, illegal, null or void, it is**
113 **the intent of the County Council to sever only the invalid portion or provision, and that the**
114 **remainder of the Resolution shall be enforceable and valid.**

115 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND, that**
116 **the foregoing recitals are adopted as if fully rewritten herein.**

117 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND, that**
118 **this Bill shall take effect 60 calendar days from the date that it becomes law.**

CERTIFICATION

I, HEREBY CERTIFY that the above Bill was posted for the public on the public bulletin board with the date, time and location of the public hearing meeting, copies were made available for the public, a copy was distributed to the press, and copy was made available on the Cecil County website.

BY: Council Manager