



Testimony in Support of Bill 6-24; Property Tax Credit – Disabled Veterans
Montgomery County Council
June 11, 2024, 1:30 pm
Respectfully submitted by
Dennis C. Alexander, Director of Government Relations

Council President Friedson, Vice President Stewart, and Members of the Council, on behalf of Easterseals, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Bill 6-24.

Easterseals is a nonprofit organization serving Maryland (except for the Eastern Shore), Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia, leading the way to full equity, inclusion, and access through direct and life-changing disability and community services to thousands of children and adults in our neighborhoods, regardless of their disability, military status, income, race, or age.

Easterseals provides an array of services for veterans and their families. These include our Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic that provides outpatient mental healthcare, the Veteran Staffing Network that connects employers with top-tier military talent and helps veterans and their spouses find meaningful jobs, the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program that helps veterans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness reintegrate into the labor force, and the Military Family Respite Program that offers respite care for military, veterans, and wounded warrior families with children.

Bill 6-24 would complement these and other services for veterans by providing much needed property tax relief to veterans with military-related disabilities and limited income.

As noted in the Staff Report prepared for the Council, about 74% of veterans in Montgomery County are homeowners, and 71% of those homeowners have a disability rating exceeding 50%. And the percentage of veterans with a disability rating exceeding 50% is increasing every year. Around a quarter of veterans with an eligible disability rating have incomes below the \$100,000 threshold established in this bill. Our own data show that about 42% of the clients we serve have a service-connected disability rating from the Veterans Administration. This closely mirrors data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that show that 46% of Gulf War-era II veterans have a service-connected disability.

In addition to reducing property tax liabilities for veterans, Bill 6-24 would have a positive economic impact in the County by increasing discretionary income for recipients of the tax credit and helping disabled veterans and surviving spouses avoid mortgage foreclosure or property tax liens and stay in their homes.

By supporting Bill 6-24, you will be sharing in our vision of creating a hopeful, inclusive community where all people realize their potential and live meaningful lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important bill and I respectfully request that you act favorably on it.