



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Dubious Veterans Charity Loses Appeal to Overturn Cease and Desist Order**

**BALTIMORE, MD (July 1, 2016)** - Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh and Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith announced today a final decision was issued in the case against the Southern Maryland Veterans Association and its director, Daniel T. Brashear. The final decision upholds multiple violations of the Maryland Solicitations Act, including misleading potential donors to a charitable organization, using false and misleading advertising in connection with a solicitation, and failing to register with the Secretary of State before soliciting, all of which Mr. Brashear must adhere to.

"I applaud the Secretary of State's final decision in this case," said Attorney General Frosh. "This case highlights why strong enforcement is needed to safeguard the generosity of Maryland donors and legitimate veterans charities."

"A charity that cannot show it operates within the law will not be permitted to solicit charitable donations," said Secretary of State Wobensmith. "This decision is a victory for those who were misled and mistreated by this organization."

The final decision follows a lengthy administrative review process to determine whether the charity could continue soliciting the public for charitable donations to run its programs.

Earlier this year, the Secretary of State issued a cease and desist order against the charity, its principal, Daniel T. Brashear and an alleged former associate, Norman Randolph McDonald. Both Mr. Brashear and Mr. McDonald requested hearings to overturn the order, which were held March 9-10, 2016 before the Office of the Secretary of State.

On April 19, 2016, proposed decisions upholding the cease and desist order against both Mr. Brashear and Mr. McDonald, as well as the charity, were issued by the Secretary of State's designated hearing officer, Kathleen Smith. Mr. McDonald did not object to the proposed decision, which became final on May 5, 2016.

Mr. Brashear and the charity objected to the hearing officer's proposed decision. On June 7, 2016, Mr. Brashear presented his objections in person before the Secretary of State at an exceptions hearing. As explained in the final decision announced today, the Secretary of State decided to uphold the cease and desist order against the charity and Mr. Brashear.

The charity had been a visible presence outside grocery and retail stores in Southern Maryland prior to the cease and desist order. In response to multiple complaints, an investigation by the Secretary of State's Charities and Legal Services Division, aided by the Office of the Attorney General, showed that the organization was allegedly not assisting with the housing needs of veterans as claimed in marketing materials distributed at these various locations. The charity was also not registered with the Secretary of State.

The Office of the Secretary of State registers and regulates charitable organizations that solicit charitable contributions in Maryland. The Office works to ensure that charitable contributions made by Marylanders go to qualified charitable organizations and are used for the intended purpose.

Anyone who is solicited by this organization, or any representative on behalf of this organization, is encouraged to contact Michael Schlein, Investigator, Charities and Legal Services Division at 410-260-3879. To check if a charity is registered or to report other suspected violations of charitable giving law, please call 410-260-3879 or 1-800-825-4510. More information on charities can be found on the Secretary of State's charity home page: <http://www.sos.state.md.us/Charity/SearchCharity.aspx>.