



MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

February 11, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair  
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB458 – Higher Education - Nonresident Tuition Exemption for Military Personnel,  
Spouses, and Dependents - Alterations

Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of military families and the Department of Defense, I am writing in support of policy changes proposed in SB 458, a bill that addresses residency requirements for attendance at post-secondary public institutions for the purpose of tuition.

My name is Harold Cooney and I am the Northeast Regional Liaison for the Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military Community and Family Policy. Our mission is to serve as a resource to state policymakers as they work to address quality of life issues for military families.

In many states, students with a military sponsor stationed in a state are considered in-state residents, for tuition purposes, based on when the student was “enrolled”, rather than when the student was “accepted” to the university or college. Thus, if the sponsor retires, leaves the service, or transfers out-of-state between the time that the student receives the letter of acceptance and enrolls to start classes, the student can lose their in-state status. It is the current terminology within Maryland policy that confuses the issue by limiting the policy benefit to the time of enrollment versus the time of acceptance. This bill simply alleviates that confusion.

Approximately 185,000 U.S. military children move between schools annually and are routinely reassigned with their military sponsors to new duty stations in the summer, due to mission and training requirements. As a result of these summer moves, students typically miss important education application dates that occur in the spring. We believe that a spouse or child of an active member of the armed forces assigned to duty in a state at the time of the dependent receiving a letter of acceptance should be deemed an in-state resident for purposes of determining tuition and fees, regardless of the service member’s follow-on status.

Considering there are over 90,000 college aged military children, we have placed this issue in our “Top Ten” list of prioritized Personnel and Readiness issues. Currently 16 states have incorporated language and 7 states have introduced bills with policy language to address this issue. We ask that Maryland consider this helpful policy language change, as well.

We are grateful for the tremendous efforts that Maryland has historically made to support our military members and their families. We appreciate the opportunity to support the policy reflected in SB 458, and are especially grateful to Senator Elfreth for introducing this important piece of legislation. Thank you for taking the time to consider this issue. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,



Harold E. Cooney  
Northeast Regional Liaison  
Defense-State Liaison Office  
Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
(Military Community and Family Policy)

CC: Senator Sarah Elfreth