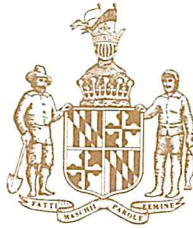


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January 19, 2022

SB050 - SUPPORT

Higher Education - Returned Peace Corps Volunteers - In-State Tuition

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

SB050 allows Marylanders serving in the Peace Corps to retain or automatically restore their in-state status upon returning to Maryland from deployment overseas while pursuing higher education pursuits. In doing so, this bill provides these Marylanders in-state tuition and State Senatorial and Delegate Scholarships, similar to Marylanders returning from military deployment or AmeriCorps after separation.

In 2019, Maryland ranked tenth among the US States for the number of Peace Corps volunteers per capita, with 259 serving worldwide.² Of the 240,000 volunteers who have served since 1961 over 6,500 have been Maryland residents. In 2020, 66 University of Maryland College Park alumni joined the Peace Corps, and increased Maryland's ranking among states to fifth in the nation for Volunteer-producing States per Capita.

In March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread world-wide, the international Peace Corps operations were suspended and personnel were ordered home. "Volunteers who had planned on being out of the county for more than two years have suddenly been thrown back into America, without jobs and with little chance of getting one, many without health insurance or a permanent place to live."³

Unsure if the Peace Corps would reassign them, some applied to graduate programs. Much to their surprise they were required to submit a residency petition, despite having never changed their permanent address. This is due to an inconsistency in current Maryland law that does not recognize Marylander Peace Corps volunteers as Maryland residents. And yet Maryland law provides in-state tuition exemptions for Marylanders who are AmeriCorps volunteers and military personnel (in certain circumstances their spouses and dependents). The law also provides exemptions for Out-of-State residents who work in Maryland as public school teachers (if the courses are related to or needed for their employment), state and local public safety personnel and their families, as well as certain undocumented immigrants who have resided in the state in certain circumstances.

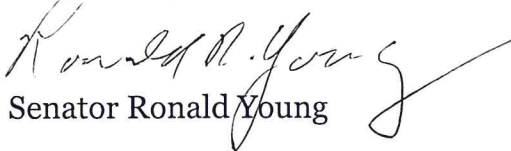
The time spent in the Peace Corp is transformation, shaping the direction of their professional, personal, and communal life for years to come. It is also one of limited income during their

service, making the loss of in-state status even more impactful. This impact is further magnified by the ineligibility for Senatorial and Delegate scholarships. Service in the Peace Corps should not be a discouragement to the advancement of Marylanders' educational and professional goals.

I offer an amendment to add Senators Lee, Lam, and West as Co-sponsors of the bill.

I ask that you vote favorably on **SB050** to correct this oversight and demonstrate that we value the Peace Corps members service and continue to support all forms of service to our country.

Respectfully,


Senator Ronald Young

References:

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