



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 529: Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program - Veterans - Number of Eligible Recipients

Position: FAVORABLE

Good afternoon Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and my esteemed colleagues on the Appropriations Committee. My name is Delegate Brian Crosby, and I am here to present HB 529: Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program - Veterans - Number of Eligible Recipients.

The Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program awards scholarships to certain veterans and their families. Eligible recipients include the children, stepchildren, and surviving spouses of a member of the United States Armed Forces who died as a result of military service or who suffered a service-connected 100% permanent disability as a result of military service, and veterans who have suffered a service-connected disability of 25% or greater and has exhausted or is no longer eligible for Federal veterans' educational benefits.

You may recall that last year, I brought a bill to add widows of service members who have died as a result of their service, to the list of parties eligible for this scholarship. The General Assembly passed that bill last year, and the Governor signed it into law.

Under current law, the number of such disabled veterans who are eligible to receive this scholarship is capped at 15 individuals per year. There is no such cap for their spouses, children, or stepchildren. This bill would simply remove the cap for veterans. This bill will offer more disabled veterans the ability to benefit from this scholarship.

This bill was a request from a constituent. My office has spoken with MHEC, and they have indicated to us that they support the bill. They have also indicated to us that they do not believe that surviving spouses and children would be negatively impacted by removing this cap.

The Conroy and Cryor scholarships share the same pot of money, but different parties are eligible for each scholarship program. In 2022, MHEC awarded 454 Conroy and Cryor scholarships. Fifteen out of 454 is such a small number. I am requesting that we remove this cap so that more disabled veterans, who have exhausted all of their Federal veterans' educational benefits, will have this opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. I respectfully request a favorable report.