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*Legislative District 32*  
Anne Arundel County

Economic Matters Committee

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Banking, Consumer Protection,  
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Workers' Compensation

Chair, Veterans Caucus



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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Testimony in Favor of HB0140**  
**State Personnel - Spouses of Active Duty Service Members - Hiring Preferences**

**Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Appropriations Committee,**

I respectfully request a favorable report of HB0140. This bill requires all appointing authorities in the State Personnel Management System (SPMS) to apply a credit of 10 points on a selection test for an applicant who is the spouse of an active-duty service member of any branch of the uniformed services who is relocating to the State on military orders.

The bill also expands the definition of an eligible veteran to mean a veteran of any branch of the uniformed services, as opposed to a veteran of any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States for hiring preferences on selection tests. In both cases, "uniformed services" is defined by reference to another section of State law, which in turn references the federal law definition.

According to the Department of Defense Active Duty Spouses Survey, even pre-pandemic, military spouses had an unemployment rate of approximately 22%. One of the main and initial contributors to the exceptionally high military spouse unemployment rate is frequent moves and transfers. This highlights the negative impact that military spouses face in establishing and sustaining professional Maryland law currently provides a ten point preference for spouses of veterans who have a 30% service-connected disability. Unlike federal law, Maryland does not provide an employment preference for currently serving military spouses who follow their sponsor when they are ordered to move from another state to an assignment in Maryland. Maryland state government currently has significant staffing shortages. Some state agencies have anywhere from 10% to 30% vacancies. According to the Maryland of Budget and Management, the state has 10,000 open positions to fill, which includes budgeted and unbudgeted positions. According to the Military One Source website run by the DoD, there were 14,292 military spouses in Maryland as of December 31, 2022. By expanding the coverage of the point preference to Active-duty military spouses we could improve career retention and finances for spouses and ultimately military families as well as benefit the Maryland workforce.

As stated on the fiscal notes, the bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues. I respectfully request a favorable report on HB0140.

Sincerely,

*Mike Rogers*

Mike Rogers  
Maryland Delegate, 32<sup>nd</sup> District