



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

January 26, 2024

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report** – HB0140 – State Personnel – Spouses of Active Duty Service Members – Hiring Preferences

Dear Chair Barnes and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) and as its President, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on ***HB0140 – State Personnel – Spouses of Active Duty Service Members – Hiring Preferences***, sponsored by Delegate Mike Rogers. This legislation will require an appointing authority to apply a credit on a selection test in the State Personnel Management System for the spouse of an active-duty service member. The bill clearly defines “active duty spouse,” defines an eligible veteran as one who has served honorably in any branch of the uniformed services and defines “uniformed services” consistent with 38 U.S. Code § 4303 and 20 C.F.R. § 1002.5 (o).

This bill is a positive step in aligning the State Personnel Management System with not only the Maryland Joins Forces focus area of Employment but also the White House Joining Forces initiative to reduce underemployment of active duty spouses. According to the latest Department of Defense data, the active duty military spouse unemployment rate is about 21 percent¹ compared to the national unemployment rate of 3.7 percent² and Maryland’s unemployment rate of 1.9 percent.³

There are currently 14,292 active-duty spouses in Maryland.⁴ These spouses represent a pool of talented personnel who may be available to fill vacancies in state government. A spousal

¹ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/3558394/military-spouses-to-gain-more-job-ops-thanks-to-growing-employment-partnership/#:~:text=More%20partners%20mean%20more%20job,spouses%20is%20at%20about%2021%25.>

² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf>

³ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.nr0.htm>

⁴ <https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/state/MD>

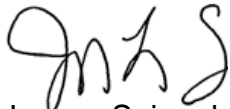
preference would not only facilitate hiring them but also recognize the sacrifices they make to support active-duty personnel and national security.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports** HB0140 and asks for a ***FAVORABLE*** report from the Appropriations Committee. This bill supports the Moore-Miller Administration's Year of the Military Families, helping to move Maryland to the forefront of supporting active-duty spouses in the United States.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

We want to thank Delegate Mike Rogers for sponsoring this legislation and his continued strong support of the uniformed services community, in particular, active-duty spouses, in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Spiegel', written in a cursive style.

Jayson Spiegel
LTC USAR (Ret)
President

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition

James P. Monahan
Air Force Sergeants Association

Steve P. May
American Military Society

Elwood R. Raphael Gray
American Minority Veterans Research Project

W. W. W.
Association of the United States Navy

Lynn A. Gask
Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service

Wilbur B. Fisher
Disabled American Veterans

Seldon H. Freedy
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

Phyllis J. Collins
Fleet Reserve Association

Seldon H. Freedy
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Steve L. Brooker
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association

Emmett R. Robert
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Robert F. Winton
Military Officers Association of America

Charles E. Spahr
Military Order of the Purple Heart

E. J.
Montford Point Marines of America

M. L. Meese
National Association for Black Veterans

Michael P. Hays
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

Christian Andreasen
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

John S.
Reserve Organization of America

Catherine L. McGraw
Society of Military Widows

E. J.
National Active and Retired Federal Employees
Veterans Affairs Directorate, NARFE MD

M. Blackwell
Veterans of Foreign Wars