

**Maryland Higher Education Commission Testimony
House Bill 529**

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

Appropriations Committee

House Office Building Building, Room 120, Annapolis, MD

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair

February 20, 2024

12:00 Noon

Good afternoon Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and committee members. My name is Al Dorsett and I serve as the Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance at the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Chair Barnes, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 529, “Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program - Veterans - Number of Eligible Recipients”. I also want to thank Delegate Brian Crosby, the sponsor of this legislation for his strong support of veterans and military families.

House Bill 529 seeks to remove the cap on awarding the Conroy-Cryor scholarship to up to 15 veterans who are 25% disabled or greater. This legislation would allow for the cap removal for disabled veterans who may benefit from this scholarship. The Maryland Higher Education Commission recognizes the importance of meeting the educational needs of disabled veterans. House Bill 529 removes restrictions on the number of eligible recipients that may receive the award funds under subsection (d)(2)(iii) of subtitle 6. Currently, the proposed annual budget for FY 2025 is \$7 million, whereas for the past two fiscal years, the Conroy/Cryor Memorial Scholarship Program has expended over \$6 million, the current budget allocation should cover additional recipients if the cap is removed.

In closing, I am asking for a favorable report in support of House Bill 529. Thank you.