

EDITH J. PATTERSON, ED.D.
Legislative District 28
Charles County

Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Gaming

K-12 Education

Chair, Southern Maryland
House Delegation



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 429
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3247
800-492-7122 Ext. 3247
Edith.Patterson@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of
HB0720 - Higher Education - Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq
Conflicts Scholarship - Repeal of Termination Date**

Good afternoon, Chair Barners, Vice Chair Kaiser and Members of the Appropriations Committee. For the record, I am Delegate Edith Patterson, sponsor of HB0720 Higher Education - Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship - Repeal of Termination Date.

This legislation is grounded in Maryland's responsibility to honor the service and sacrifice of veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts by ensuring sustained access to higher education for them and their families.

The Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship was established in 2006 to provide educational assistance to veterans of these conflicts, active-duty service members, activated reserve component members, and their dependents. Since its creation, the General Assembly has repeatedly recognized that the need for this scholarship has not diminished, extending the program's termination date multiple times, most recently to 2030.

Despite these extensions, current law still limits the program by prohibiting new awards after a certain date and restricting renewals for some recipients. This creates uncertainty for service members and families planning for college, often years in advance, as well as for nontraditional students returning to higher education after military service.

HB0720 removes these limitations by repealing the termination date and eliminating statutory barriers to awarding and renewing the scholarship. This ensures continued access without the need for repeated legislative extensions. It also provides stability and continuity for Maryland's veterans and their families. It does not increase funding levels. It simply maintains the commitment the State has already made. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

Edith J. Patterson,
Charles County, District 28