

House Appropriations Committee

March 3, 2026

**HB 720 - Higher Education - Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq
Conflicts Scholarship - Repeal of Termination Date****Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **HB 720**. This bill repeals the termination date for the Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship, ensuring that eligible veterans and their family members may continue to access this important educational benefit beyond the current statutory deadline.

Maryland's community colleges enroll a substantial number of veterans, active-duty service members, and military-connected students who often balance their education with work, family responsibilities, and ongoing service commitments. These students rely on stable, predictable financial aid to pursue certificates and degrees that lead to meaningful employment and career advancement. The Douglas J. J. Peters Scholarship provides critical support for tuition, fees, and other educational expenses, helping reduce financial barriers that can otherwise delay or prevent completion.

Maintaining this scholarship program without an artificial expiration date supports long-term planning for students and institutions alike and reinforces the State's commitment to supporting those who have served in the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts and their families. This bill ensures continuity of this assistance for future cohorts of eligible students and avoids unnecessary disruption to an established and effective program. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **HB 720**.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.