



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

House Bill 720

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

March 3, 2026

Favorable

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to ask for a Favorable Report on House Bill 720. Many will extol Douglas J.J. Peters' long and distinguished leadership in the Maryland Senate, his decorated service in the U.S. military, where his valor during Operation Desert Storm earned him the Bronze Star, and his faithful commitment to his church and his community.

For that legacy of service, he deserves every word of praise.

But, of course, what is especially close to our hearts within the University System of Maryland (USM) is Senator Peters' service as a valued member of the USM Board of Regents. Regent Peters left the Senate actively seeking a way to sustain his enormous impact on the citizens of Maryland and the strength of our state. As a USM regent, he was a steadfast advocate for our students, and in a fitting tribute that made him tremendously proud, the Maryland General Assembly named for him a scholarship awarded to students who served our country during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

His leadership on vitally important Board committees – Education Policy and Student Life; Finance; Advancement; and Intercollegiate Athletics and Student-Athlete Health and Welfare – has shaped how we approach this work and the policies that guide it. While Regent Peters was dedicated to all of our USM universities, he held deep affection for Bowie State University, where he was regent liaison, and for his alma maters, the University of Maryland, College Park, where he earned his bachelor's degree, and the University of Baltimore, where he earned his MBA. Regent Peters' illness somehow did not slow his service. For years following his cancer diagnosis, he was a deeply engaged member of our Board. He was with us in this work – in mind, body, and spirit – to the very end. For that, we cannot adequately express our admiration or our gratitude.

Douglas J. J. Peters was a Maryland State Senator from 2007 to 2021 where he served as Majority Leader and Chair of Capital Budget. He was a Prince George's County Councilmember from 2002 to 2006 and Bowie City Councilmember from 1998 to 2002. He served as a Captain in the United States Army Reserve (1988-1998), served in Operation Desert Storm and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. Peters is a Past Commander of the Bowie American Legion and VFW Posts; a 1985 graduate from the University of Maryland, College Park Smith School of Business majoring in Finance; and 1990 graduate of the University of Baltimore with a Master of Business Administration.

Currently, veterans and active-duty members of the U.S. Armed Forces who served in Afghanistan and Iraq, and members of the reserve or Maryland National Guard who were activated as a result of the conflicts, are eligible for the scholarships, as are their children, stepchildren, and spouses.

The USM is proud to support House Bill 720 and ensure the continued vitality of the Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship by repealing its prior termination date. This enduring commitment makes it all the more fitting to honor former Senator Peters – whose leadership and service inspired the creation of this scholarship – by having it bear his name and continue supporting Maryland’s veterans and their families for generations to come. It is right and proper at this juncture to repeal the termination date.

For his service to the Nation and Maryland, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 720.

