



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
House Bill 721
Uniformed Services Spouses Act
March 3, 2026
Favorable

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill 721. The bill seeks to expand existing Maryland laws that provide priority course registration, support services, and scholarship access so that these benefits also apply to the spouses of active-duty servicemembers and veterans. The bill's intention is to ensure that military spouses receive equitable access to higher-education and employment resources across Maryland.

The University System of Maryland (USM) is composed of twelve distinguished institutions and three regional centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the state. Each of USM's institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes three Historically Black Institutions, comprehensive institutions and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

The USM already demonstrates strong leadership in serving military-connected students and their families, and House Bill 721 further reinforces and expands this support. The University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) is specifically dedicated to serving working adults, military servicemembers, veterans, and their families – [including military spouses](#) – through flexible online, hybrid, and in-person programs designed to accommodate frequent relocations and unpredictable schedules. Likewise, the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) offers award-winning academic programs and targeted [services](#) that address the unique needs of active-duty servicemembers, veterans, and military spouses, including financial-aid guidance, institutional policies aligned with federal protections, and comprehensive support resources.

By extending benefits such as priority registration and scholarship eligibility to military spouses, House Bill 721 builds on these existing institutional commitments and helps standardize support across the USM. With UMGC and UMB already modeling best practices in military-responsive education, this legislation represents a meaningful opportunity to enhance stability, economic mobility, and educational continuity for Maryland's military families.

The USM respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 721.



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of MARYLAND

