



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

March 4, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: Request for a **FAVORABLE Report** – SB 709 – Education—Purple Star Schools Program and Purple Star Colleges Program

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition, I write to request a **Favorable Report** by the Committee on **SB 709 – Education—Purple Star Schools Program and Purple Star Colleges Program** sponsored by Senator Carozza. This bill expands the definition of “military-connected student” to include children of reserve component service members, already part of Maryland statute; and, it creates a Purple Star Colleges Program that will provide support services to service members, veterans and their spouses and dependents. These services will include a uniformed services liaison; a website with resources targeted to their needs (e.g. such as how to transfer to another school); and, a peer-led transition program. The collegiate program, like the school program, also requires training to acquaint staff to the “culture” of the military and providing an understanding of unique challenges faced by military-connected students so they might provide support.

According to the Department of Veterans and Military Families publication “*2025 DVMF Updates and Best Practices*”, Maryland is home to:

63,100 Service members 24,495 Spouses 43,934 Children of Service members

The average military family moves every [2.5 years](#). Every permanent change of station (PCS) move brings great challenges and the need for every family member to “start fresh”. Frequent moves cause significant strain, including financial burdens, disruption of spousal careers, and the need to constantly rebuild support systems including community, healthcare, and most significantly, ***schools***.

The Maryland Purple Star School Program, one of 43 state programs nationwide, has grown from a single school in 2022, to 31 schools today. In our state with [14 major military installations](#), the award of a Purple Star School designation recognizes a voluntary effort by the school system to create a supportive environment for military-connected students, which transferring in service members use to assess whether a school is a good fit for their children—where they will be welcomed and well-supported. The Purple Star designation demonstrates a ***commitment to excellence***.

Our military-connected students at the college level ***deserve no less***. Since 2022, [19 colleges and two technical schools](#) in the Florida Collegiate Purple Star Program, [51 schools](#) in the Ohio Collegiate Purple

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Star Program and [9 universities and 19 technical community colleges](#) in the Indiana Collegiate Purple Star Program have already earned the collegiate designation.

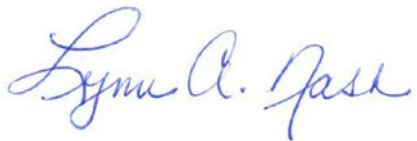
It is a common fact that college is already a difficult transition for students who have attended [six to nine schools](#), the average for military-connected children, between kindergarten and high school graduation. This includes having credits from several schools collected through years of PCS moves. Having a navigator, a dedicated website of resources, a peer-led transition program, and supportive faculty will greatly assist military-connected students, who are our service members, veterans, their spouses and their dependents, have a successful college experience. To have already given up so much for us, they deserve no less than the creation of a Purple Star College Program.

The Maryland Military Coalition ***strongly supports SB 709 – Education—Purple Star Schools Program and Purple Star Colleges Program*** and asks the Committee for a ***FAVORABLE report***.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 22 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors. To learn more about our organization, please visit our [website](#).

The Coalition thanks Senator Carozza for sponsoring this important legislation and for her continuing support of the Maryland uniformed services community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn A. Nash". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Lynn A. Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN
CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service
Communications Director

1 Attachment – Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition



Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Platoon 22

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars