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January 28, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the Honorable Members of the
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

The Maryland Higher Education Commission respectfully requests a
favorable report on SB 7 - Higher Education – Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans
of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship – Repeal of Termination
Date, sponsored by Senator Simonaire.

SB 7 ensures that Maryland's veterans and their families continue to have
access to critical educational support. The scholarship was established to
honor those who have served in the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts — and
to provide meaningful assistance for higher education costs, including
tuition, fees, room, and board. By eliminating the sunset date and the
renewal limitation, this bill will allow future generations of eligible
veterans and their dependents to pursue postsecondary education without
being constrained by arbitrary time limits.

Maryland should be a leader in honoring the service and sacrifice of our
veterans. Removing the termination date aligns with our State's long-
standing commitment to supporting military families and reinforcing
opportunities for economic mobility through education. Extending this
scholarship indefinitely will help:

- **Increase access to higher education** for veterans and their dependents statewide;
- **Enhance workforce readiness** by helping veterans transition into civilian careers with the credentials needed for success;
- **Honor the service of Maryland's military community** by offering sustained support rather than temporary programs.

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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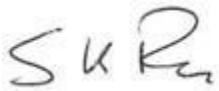
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This legislation also ensures clarity and fairness. Veterans currently serving and those who have not yet begun their educational journeys deserve certainty that this benefit remains available throughout their academic careers. Removing the renewal limitation ensures recipients are not penalized solely because of timing within the award period.

Despite these systemic limitations, the passage of SB 7 remains a priority to ensure that the baseline promise of support to our veterans does not expire. In conclusion, Senate Bill 7 is a thoughtful, equity-focused policy that supports both veterans and the State's economic future. I respectfully urge the committee to give SB 7 a favorable report.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Meghan Music, Executive Director of External and Legislative Affairs.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S K Rai".

Sanjay Rai

Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission