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SB 243 – Uniformed Services Spouses Act
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 12, 2026
FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 243. My name is Jim Campbell, president emeritus for AARP Maryland, chair of the AARP Maryland Veterans Committee, and a former state delegate.

AARP Maryland represents more than 850,000 members statewide and is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization advocating for Marylanders age 50 and over and their families. We thank Senators Simonaire, Brooks, Carozza, Ellis, Gallion, Gile, Smith, West, and Watson for sponsoring this legislation.

AARP has four areas of focus in serving military families, including fighting fraud, helping with career and employment opportunities through the Military Service Job Center, caregiving, and access to benefits.

What does SB 243 do?

This bill helps fill gaps and provides clarification to legislation passed last year that updated the Maryland code to be more in line with the federal code. These new provisions for spouses of veterans apply to priority registration at public institutions of higher education, resources and support at community colleges, senatorial and delegate scholarships, and preferences in hiring by the Public Service Commission to the spouses of active service members and veterans.

How will it help veterans?

Last year, Senator Simonaire sponsored a package of bills to have state officials recognize military service and to help ensure that members of the military and their families are aware of the benefits they are eligible to receive. This bill clarifies that those benefits also apply to spouses of veterans. AARP believes we must ensure that our veterans and their spouses have the most efficient access to the benefits they are entitled to receive.

For these reasons, we recommend a favorable report for SB 243.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick, AARP Maryland Advocacy Director, at swestrick@aarp.org or by calling 410-310-0374.

