

To:
The Maryland Appropriations Committee
House Office Building
Room 121
Annapolis, MD 21401
Attn: Del. Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Re: HB246

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh,

I am currently an MPP candidate for the University of Maryland School of Public Policy. In 2019, I served as an English co-teacher for grades 4-9 at a rural school in Hua Hin, Thailand, for over 12 months. I am testifying in support of HB246 based on my experience following my service.

In March of 2020, I was evacuated to my home in Maryland due to the pandemic. Upon my unexpected return, I applied and was accepted to the University of Maryland Public Policy program. While reviewing my student information on my portal, I noticed I was identified as an "out of state" student. After inquiring if this was a mistake, the University responded by saying that because I had lived out of state for over one year, I was no longer considered an in-state student. I was given the opportunity to appeal this decision to the Reclassification Evaluator, but because I have never changed my permanent address from my childhood home in Ellicott City, where I have lived for 25 years, I could not provide a deed with my name to verify residency, and was again denied. My out of state status made me ineligible for various state scholarships and grants. Fortunately, I received funding from Delegate Hill and her staff because she was willing to categorize me as a "special circumstance." However, I know those who do not think to contact their state delegates have that same fortune.

I feel strongly that Peace Corps volunteers, whose main objective is to promote a better understanding of American culture and people overseas, deserve to be exempt from this interpretation of residency. It was an honor to serve, and now to be ineligible to receive state aid because of my service feels unjust. While I was able to assemble alternative funding in order to afford my tuition, other Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV's) do not have that luxury and depend on their in-state status to receive their education.

I strongly urge this committee to vote in favor of HB246 for the sake of all Maryland RPCV's.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Emily Maginnis