

Statement of Jayson L. Spiegel
In Support of SB0283
Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act
January 26, 2021

My name is Jayson Spiegel. I am a Gaithersburg resident and retired after 28 years commissioned service in the Army and Army Reserve. I am a former Executive Director of the Reserve Officers Association of America and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. I am responsible for social media activities of the Maryland Democratic Party Veterans Leadership Council. I am speaking in my personal capacity.

I urge the House of Delegates to pass SB0283, the Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act. I start with the proposition that any action that increases access to the ballot box should be enacted.

To that end, SB0283 makes it easier for military members to register to vote online by using their Common Access Card (CAC) instead of a wet signature. This provision addresses the Department of Defense Federal Voter Assistance Program concern that it can be difficult for Service Members overseas to print out, sign and scan the necessary documents to register to vote. Many military voters do not serve near a Post Office or Embassy and, therefore, cannot easily register to vote in Maryland.

This legislation is particularly important now because a substantial number of Maryland National Guard Soldiers will deploy to the Middle East this spring and will remain overseas until well into 2022.

I want to thank Senator Elfreth for her leadership on this important issue and urge prompt passage of the bill.

This bill represents an important step in enhancing voter registration. In future legislation or legislative sessions, I urge you also to study and consider mechanisms to enhance the ability of overseas military personnel to vote, including electronic voting.

Thank you.