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Vice Chair  
Economic Matters Committee



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Good afternoon Madam Chairwoman, Vice Chair, and distinguished members of the committee. I am Vice Chair Crosby and it's an honor to present HB98 entitled **Military Installations - Expansion and Development.**

This bill would expand funding opportunities for Maryland's 11 military installations and their surrounding communities by allowing them to access \$177 million in general bond obligations for mission improvements such as construction, renovation, and transportation improvements on the installations; and economic development, workforce development, and housing improvements surrounding the installations. The Maryland Military Installation Council would work in conjunction with base leaders and other community stakeholders to make recommendations to the Governor for the issuance of bonds, by the Treasurer, for the purposes I previously listed. Massachusetts passed a similar bill in 2014 to support their 6 military installations, and with this bill, we will make the same commitment to our 15 military installations and the 410,219 people who are employed by those installations. The economic impact of Maryland's military installations can not be understated. It was estimated in 2016 that they generated \$57.4 billion dollars in total economic output.

I am sure that you all are familiar with Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). BRAC assesses the necessity and strategic advantage of the hundreds of military bases in the U.S. and abroad. The process is, frankly, ongoing and with the scale down of operations in Afghanistan, the military is pivoting to a focus more on west coast bases for strategic reasons. BRAC essentially has a checklist for bases that determine whether they stay open, are combined with other bases, or shut down entirely. The closure of even one base in Maryland would have a devastating ripple effect on the economy. This bill would declare Maryland's intent to support the military's mission and keep jobs in Maryland. Growing the bases would increase the economic output by bringing in more property taxes from homeowners employed on the bases, bringing more military and civilian workers to the state, and more military contractors will set up shop surrounding these bases. Our installations must remain competitive, and this bill puts Maryland on better footing for our federal legislators as they lobby in Washington.

I ask for a favorable report on HB98.