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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 629: Higher Education - Edward T. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program - Surviving Spouses of Service Members

Position: FAVORABLE

Good afternoon Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and my esteemed colleagues on the Appropriations Committee. My name is Delegate Brian Crosby, and I am here to present HB 629: Higher Education - Edward T. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program - Surviving Spouses of Service Members.

This is a simple bill. Currently, among other provisions, the Edward T. and Mary A. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program is available to the children or stepchildren of members of the armed forces who died as a result of military service during WWII or later, or was declared a POW or MIA during the Vietnam conflict, assuming the child was born prior to their parent becoming a POW or MIA. This bill simply adds surviving spouses of these such service members to the list of people who are eligible to apply for this scholarship program.

This bill is a technical fix. The Maryland Higher Education Commission has been mistakenly publicly advertising that surviving spouses are eligible for this scholarship. This bill will update the statute in order to make MHEC's website accurate.

In addition, as a veteran, I strongly believe that surviving spouses of service members who have died as a result of their military service, or who were POW or MIA during the Vietnam conflict, are deserving of eligibility for this scholarship.

As of this writing, the fiscal note is not up yet, but I expect that there will be virtually no administrative or cost burden to the State to make this minor change, which will make a big difference in the lives of surviving spouses of service members.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. I respectfully request a favorable report.