HB220 - Public Safety - Militia - Active Duty Combat (Maryland Defend Our Guard Act)

Alexandra Rak

SUPPORT

Dear Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

I vigorously support the enactment of House Bill 220 – Maryland Defend Our Guard Act because it restores the correct balance of power as it pertains to our military. Congress has a duty to declare war, not the President and our Governor has the right to protect our National Guard when Congress continues to neglect that duty.

War is horrible. It maims, tortures, and kills thousands of innocent civilians and forever changes the young men and women we send from our country to be the world's police force. The young Marylanders who join the Maryland National Guard may be doing so because they have a sense of duty to country and community, but with the expectation that it will be part-time and mostly local service. Being sent to undeclared wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, or Yemen is not what they had in mind when they made their oath.

Furthermore, the Maryland Defense Force and National Guard are supposed to be here to help *Maryland* when disaster strikes. In 2020, Governor Larry Hogan needed to activate the Maryland National Guard to assist with building temporary hospitals, setting up massive COVID-19 testing sites, and being ready for a potential surge event. Thankfully, we had enough Guardsmen and Guardswomen for the task at hand (and thankfully the first surge event was manageable). Imagine, however, that the surge was worse and we had depleted our militia due to Congress's failure to declare war in Syria. It would be a disaster for our local community.

Maryland has a long and proud history of defending our sovereignty and freedom as the Old Line State. It is time we honor the legacy of those who have gone before and those who will come later by defending the separation of powers of the United States Constitution and defending Our Guard. I urge a favorable report on HB 220 from this committee.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Rak

Charles County Resident