

In **Support** of **HB 0548(FAV)**, "Defend the Guard,"

Mr. Christian Mears

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District 3

House Health and Government Operations Committee,

House Health and Government Operations Committee, I am writing to express my support of **HB 0548** "Defend the Guard". I am writing as a Veteran (1990-96), concerned citizen, and as a voter. Maryland's National Guard, like many state Guard units, is being overused and used in a way that is contrary to its constitutional purpose. Our men and women in the Guard join to serve their communities, the State of Maryland, and provide for National Defense in times of crisis or attack. The current abuse of the intent and purpose of our nation's Reserve Component is both immoral and unconstitutional.

During the latter half of my military service, I witnessed a decline in the quality of training, equipment, and preparedness because of the poorly executed reduction in force of our military. This resulted in low morale, inadequate training, loss of skilled and experienced personnel, and a significant amount of unserviceable equipment, thereby reducing the Readiness level of our Armed Forces. Recall that, when we began our "War on Terror" and entered into Afghanistan, and again into Iraq, our Active Duty forces were woefully unprepared, thereby requiring a sudden and demanding sacrifice of the National Guard units of the states to alleviate years of poor decisions by military and political leaders. This has not abated, instead resulting in an increasing number of Guard deployments overseas, both into Combat Zones and hostile territory over the past 20 years. This bill is a positive step towards correcting this because:

- It does not inhibit the Governor from activating the Guard for purposes within the State of Maryland and under current law.
- It does not prevent the Guard from operating under Title 10 or Title 32 Status, or from deploying overseas for training purposes.
- It does not change the purpose or mission of the Maryland National Guard.
- The **only** restriction this bill would place upon the Governor is to align with the US Constitution and restrict the Federal use of our Guard for deployment to areas of combat without a Congressional declaration of war.

The outcome of **HB 548** that makes this so important to me, and many other veterans and Marylanders, is that it protects these members of our communities from being unnecessarily placed into harm's way overseas to merely compensate for deficiencies in our Regular services, while also holding our Congress to abide by their Constitutional duties. I am happy to discuss further if there are questions or details you would like for me to explain further.

Sincerely,



Christian Mears