

In Support of **HB 548**, “Defend the Guard.”

**Scott Spaulding**  
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**District 46**

House Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Scott Spaulding; I am a lifelong Marylander, veteran of four combat deployments, Purple Heart recipient, member of the Air National Guard, Baltimore County teacher, and lacrosse coach.

I am strongly in **support of HB548**

- 1) JAMIE RASKIN SPONSORED NEARLY IDENTICAL BILLS IN 2009 and 2010. Most of you would agree that he is knowledgeable of the constitution.
- 2) There is not a threat to funding. The Secretary of Defense supports this legislation; it is not plausible that he would respond to the passage of this bill by cutting the budget.
- 3) This bill **ONLY** effects combat deployments overseas without a declaration of war. If you want the President to go through congress before sending the guard to combat this is the **ONLY** way to make that happen.

This bill does not, interfere in any way with the ability of the Governor or the President to respond to domestic emergencies, in fact it explicitly states that the guard may be called forth to suppress insurrection and provide support to civil authorities. Passing this bill may ensure that Maryland’s guard is more available to serve Maryland. Maryland's Air Guard was nearly sent to Afghanistan in spring 2019, would not have been available for covid response. In 2020 Maryland’s Guard had 3 units deployed to Afghanistan for the better part of a year.

Consider the situation of Louisiana’s guard, after returning from a year in Syria the Louisiana guard was pulled directly into covid response and struggled with burnout. The headline read, “Breakneck Pace of Crises Keeps National Guard Away from Home.” The Louisiana guard was also in Iraq when Katrina hit, there was no consideration by DOD about pulling them away in hurricane season. The delayed response to the crisis was a result of the scramble to get other states guards to respond. This bill would enable the state to keep its guard home when needed.

When Maryland’s Guard is deployed high-needs schools will be deprived of teachers, a sports teams will lose a coaches, do without policemen, volunteer firefighters, and electricians, among other members of the community. If there is a weather emergency, the Guard will be unavailable to help. All of these effects will be dispersed throughout the community, and nothing will be gained. This only scratches the surface of the reasons I favor this bill and I hope that you will too.

Thank you very much,

Scott M. Spaulding