



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

Testimony – Lynn A Nash

HB 623—Purple Star Schools Program and Purple Star Colleges Program

Request for a **FAVORABLE** Report

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

My name is Lynn Nash, I'm a retired Captain of the U.S. Public Health Service, a 30-year veteran, with three kids, of which the youngest – Natalie - attended eight schools from kindergarten to high school, and then two universities (10 schools) before she went off to med school. So, I'm a bit of an expert on the topic. I'm here today on behalf of the Maryland Military Coalition as their Communications Director.

Today is a bit of a celebration. In 2022, there was ONE Purple Star School, when I testified in support of Delegate Patterson's original legislation. Today, there are 31 Maryland Purple Star Schools—Schools that have gone an extra distance to support our military-connected families; schools that are committed to excellence.

Delegate Patterson's new bill pushes the standard farther. In addition to aligning a definition, she seeks to have Maryland, a state that has more military installations than most – 14 – join the ranks of at least three states that have Collegiate Purple star programs already in place.

Our need is great. We have:

- almost 132 thousand currently serving service members and their spouses and dependents.
- We have over 348 thousand veterans in addition—in total 480 thousand people that would benefit from a Purple Star Colleges Program. (and that doesn't include veteran spouses)

The partners are identified and any cost should be covered with existing resources.

The Maryland Military Coalition ***strongly supports*** this legislation asks you for a **FAVORABLE** report.

Thank you, Delegate Patterson, for sponsoring this important legislation, your leadership and your on-going support of the uniformed services community.