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Education, Energy, and
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Executive Nominations Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The House Appropriations Committee

**SB 709 – Education – Purple Star Schools Program and Purple Star Colleges
Program**

Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and members of the distinguished House Appropriations Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 709 – Education – Purple Star Schools Program and Purple Star Colleges Program and ask for a favorable report. The House crossfile, House Bill 623, unanimously passed the House floor on February 26. There are no amendments.

I want to thank the House crossfile, fellow Veterans Caucus member Edith Patterson, as well as Senator Bryan Simonaire for their leadership on the Purple Star Program.

Students whose families serve our nation in the military have a distinct set of needs and require differentiated support to succeed. The Purple Star Program recognizes the schools that provide more services for our veterans, service members, and their families. SB 709 would simply expand the current Purple Star Program to include institutions of higher education.

By way of background, the Maryland Purple Star Program is a state-sponsored K-12 initiative designed to recognize and support schools that excel in providing resources and a welcoming environment for students from military families. The program is completely voluntary and was established by House Bill 1026 and Senate Bill 707 of 2024, both of which unanimously passed the Maryland General Assembly and were signed into law. SB 709 would build on this previous legislative work by allowing colleges to highlight their commitment to serving the military community, creating a clear benefit for both institutions and students.

This legislation is supported by the Maryland Military Coalition, the Maryland General Assembly Veterans Caucus, the University System of Maryland, Maryland Independent College and University Association, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

I thank you for your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 709.