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Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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The Senate of Maryland ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 243 – Uniformed Services Spouse Act

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 243.

I worked and coordinated with the:

- *Department of Veterans and Military Families,*
- *University System of Maryland,*
- *Maryland Association of Community Colleges,*
- *Maryland Higher Education Commission and*
- *Military advocates on this consensus legislation.*

This bill also lines up with the mission of *the Department of Veterans and Military Families.*

The overall objective of this bill is to include Uniformed Services' spouses where:

1. Veterans or Service members already are receiving these benefits, and
2. It is appropriate and good state policy recognizing their contribution to the state and nation.

The goal is to honor military spouses and build on making Maryland a *Military Family friendly* state.

Specifically, this bill does 4 main things:

1. Current law allows legislative scholarships to Maryland active-duty service members while deployed outside the state – this bill would allow the accompanying spouse to also be eligible for a legislative scholarship.

2. Current law provides higher education priority course registration for active-duty service members – this bill would allow their spouse priority course registration as well.
3. Current law requires community colleges to assist veterans with enrollment, available services and use of the resource center – this bill would include assistance for veteran’s spouses, and
4. Current law provides enabling authority for hiring preference to veterans, service members and their spouses in state and local government. This bill standardizes the language in these sections including adding spouses in one section that was missing the spouse provision.

That is the bill and for all these reasons, I ask for your favorable consideration.