



WES MOORE
GOVERNOR
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

STATE OF MARYLAND
MILITARY DEPARTMENT
FIFTH REGIMENT ARMORY
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201-2288

JANEEN L. BIRCKHEAD
MAJOR GENERAL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

February 17, 2026

Chair Brian Feldman
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Feldman and Members of The Committee:

The Maryland Military Department respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 191 – State Designations – State Song – The Heart of Maryland.

“The Heart of Maryland” was written and performed by Jayla Elise, a singer-songwriter from Dorchester County, Maryland. The song was released in May 2025 as part of the Maryland 250 project, which is part of the broader national commemoration of America’s 250th anniversary this year.

The Maryland Military Department has long recognized the power of heraldry, tradition, and symbol in shaping institutional identity and inspiring collective purpose. Just as our state flag, motto, and military colors carry forward the values of those who came before us, a state song serves as a living expression of who we are as Marylanders. “The Heart of Maryland” captures that spirit with authenticity and pride, and its adoption would mark a meaningful milestone in Maryland’s history as the state commemorates 250 years of American independence.

The Maryland Military Department strongly supports Senate Bill 191 and urges the Committee to report it favorably.

The point of contact for this letter is Dr. Tony Campbell, reachable at (443) 956-0108, or tony.campbell1@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Janeen L. Birckhead in blue ink.

Janeen L. Birckhead
Major General, Maryland National Guard
The Adjutant General