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House Health and Government Operations Committee:

My name is Staci Wolfson, and I am writing to you today in support of HB 1319, “Defend the Guard.” I am a Baltimore native and a passionate Democrat in favor of peace.

I’ll admit that until Donald Trump’s election in 2016, I was fairly ambivalent about political matters overall. I was even more apathetic when it came to foreign policy. But after Trump’s first presidency, I knew I needed to testify in support of this bill, so I did for the last three years. I did so because I knew it was urgent that Congress step up to ensure that our country stay on the right path. Unfortunately, my fears have come to pass and Trump is once again President and currently threatening annexation of other sovereign countries. He is causing chaos around the world and putting American lives at risk. As a Marylander, I am disappointed our state, in particular our elected Democrats, did not take the opportunity to take a step in the direction of ensuring our Guard isn’t used for such purposes.

For the last three years, I told you my worst fear as the wife of a Purple Heart Marine veteran who is finishing his service in the National Guard is that someone in the oval office will send my husband overseas to fight in a war I do not support. Growing up, my understanding was always that Congress declared wars, the national military fought them, and states’ National Guards were at home to protect the people of their states. I have since learned this has not been the reality for many years. I am in favor of HB 1319 because it pushes Congress to once again take on this role, which makes me feel that my wishes as a citizen regarding entry into war will be better represented than they would be by any given President. If Congress is not willing to declare war, then I do not think it is right that the National Guard should be deployed in support of a war it does not endorse on my behalf.

Now that Trump has deposed two leaders in as many months in 2026, I think this is more relevant than ever. I fear what disasters may continue without the support of the federal government. If another disaster overwhelms our state resources, I want to know the National Guard is here to support us – not overseas fighting in a war only one man may support. As a Democrat and a Marylander, to me, voting for HB 1319 is a no-brainer. I hope you recognize this now too.

Thanks for your consideration,

Staci Wolfson