

SENATE BILL 243

P1, F2, K3

6lr0724
CF 6lr2448

By: Senators Simonaire, Brooks, Carozza, Ellis, Gallion, Gile, Smith, West, and Watson

Introduced and read first time: January 15, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

Uniformed Services Spouses Act

2 FOR the purpose of applying certain provisions of law regarding priority registration at
3 public institutions of higher education, resources and support at community colleges,
4 senatorial and Delegate scholarships, and preferences in hiring by the Public Service
5 Commission to the spouses of active service members and veterans; altering the
6 veterans to whom certain provisions of law regarding priority registration at public
7 institutions of higher education, resources and support at community colleges,
8 senatorial and Delegate scholarships, preferences in hiring by private employers,
9 and credits on selection tests for State personnel apply; and generally relating to
10 active service members, veterans, and the spouses of veterans and service members.
11

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
13 Article – Education
14 Section 15–124, 16–109, 18–405(d)(3), 18–406(g), and 18–501(b)(2)(iii)
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
18 Article – Education
19 Section 18–401 and 18–501(a)
20 Annotated Code of Maryland
21 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

22 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
23 Article – Labor and Employment
24 Section 3–714(a) and (b)
25 Annotated Code of Maryland
26 (2025 Replacement Volume)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
2 Article – Public Utilities
3 Section 18–111(a) and (b)
4 Annotated Code of Maryland
5 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

6 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
7 Article – State Personnel and Pensions
8 Section 7–207(c)(1)(i), (2), and (3)
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2024 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
12 Article – State Personnel and Pensions
13 Section 7–207(c)(1)(iii)
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2024 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
17 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article – Education**

19 15–124.

20 (a) (1) In this section[, “eligible] **THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE**
21 **MEANINGS INDICATED.**

22 (2) “**ELIGIBLE** service member” means:

23 [(1)] (I) An active service member; and

24 [(2)] (II) A veteran who has received an [honorable] **OTHER THAN**
25 **DISHONORABLE** discharge or a certificate of satisfactory completion of service.

26 (3) “**ELIGIBLE SPOUSE**” MEANS THE SPOUSE OF AN **ELIGIBLE**
27 **SERVICE MEMBER.**

28 (b) Subject to subsection (c) of this section, a public institution of higher education
29 shall grant priority registration for courses to an eligible service member **OR ELIGIBLE**
30 **SPOUSE.**

31 (c) The priority registration requirement under subsection (b) of this section:

1 (1) Applies only within 15 years after the eligible service member **WHO**
2 **WOULD RECEIVE OR WHOSE ELIGIBLE SPOUSE WOULD RECEIVE PRIORITY**
3 **REGISTRATION** was last on active duty; and

4 (2) Does not apply after an eligible service member's **OR ELIGIBLE**
5 **SPOUSE'S** fourth academic year.

6 (d) Each public institution of higher education shall adopt policies necessary to
7 implement this section.

8 16–109.

9 Each community college shall:

10 (1) Ensure all student advisors are trained on the unique needs and
11 resources available for students who are [veterans]:

12 (I) **VETERANS; OR**

13 (II) **SPOUSES OF VETERANS;**

14 (2) Employ at least one employee who, as a component of the employee's
15 job duties and responsibilities, provides comprehensive and intensive enrollment and
16 advising services to current and prospective students who are [veterans]:

17 (I) **VETERANS; OR**

18 (II) **SPOUSES OF VETERANS; and**

19 (3) Establish a veterans resource center on campus to:

20 (i) Provide access to federal and State veterans **AND SPOUSES OF**
21 **VETERANS** resources;

22 (ii) Serve as a quiet place for veterans **AND SPOUSES OF VETERANS**
23 to study;

24 (iii) Enable veterans **AND SPOUSES OF VETERANS** to connect to
25 other veterans **AND SPOUSES OF VETERANS**, helping them renew the bonds of service;
26 and

27 (iv) Be the central hub for all activities on campus related to veterans
28 **AND SPOUSES OF VETERANS.**

29 18–401.

1 There is a program of senatorial scholarships in this State that are awarded under
2 this subtitle.

3 18–405.

4 (d) Each Senator may award not more than 10% of the funds available under this
5 subtitle to applicants planning to attend accredited undergraduate, graduate, or
6 professional institutions outside the State, provided the applicant:

7 (3) Is an active service member **OR THE SPOUSE OF AN ACTIVE SERVICE**
8 **MEMBER** who is domiciled in this State.

9 18–406.

10 (g) A recipient of a senatorial scholarship who is an active service member **OR**
11 **THE SPOUSE OF AN ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER** and otherwise meets the conditions of
12 subsection (a) or (b) of this section may be domiciled in this State rather than eligible for
13 in-State tuition under this article.

14 18–501.

15 (a) There is a program of Delegate Scholarships in this State that are awarded
16 under this subtitle.

17 (b) A scholarship awarded under this subtitle may be used at:

18 (2) An accredited undergraduate, graduate, or professional institution
19 outside the State, if the applicant:

20 (iii) Is an active service member **OR THE SPOUSE OF AN ACTIVE**
21 **SERVICE MEMBER** who is domiciled in this State; and

22 Article – Labor and Employment

23 3–714.

24 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

25 (2) “Eligible veteran” means a veteran, as defined in § 9–901 of the State
26 Government Article, who has received an [honorable] **OTHER THAN DISHONORABLE**
27 discharge or a certificate of satisfactory completion of service, including:

28 (i) a reserve component;

29 (ii) the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service; and

(iii) the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

4 (b) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, an employer may grant a preference
5 in hiring and promotion to:

6 (1) an eligible veteran;

(4) the surviving spouse of a deceased eligible veteran.

Article – Public Utilities

11 18-111.

12 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) "ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9-901 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

(3) "Eligible veteran" means a veteran [of any branch of the uniformed services] who has received an [honorable] **OTHER THAN DISHONORABLE** discharge or a certificate of satisfactory completion of service, including:

(i) a reserve component;

19 (ii) the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service; and

(iii) the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

22 [(3)] (4) “Reserve component” has the meaning stated in § 9–901 of the
23 State Government Article.

24 [4] (5) "Veteran" has the meaning stated in § 9-901 of the State
25 Government Article.

26 (b) The Commission may grant a preference in hiring and promotion to:

27 (1) an eligible veteran;

- (2) the spouse of an eligible veteran who has a service-connected disability;
 - (3) **THE SPOUSE OF AN ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER; OR**
 - (4) the surviving spouse of a deceased eligible veteran.

Article – State Personnel and Pensions

6 7-207.

7 (c) (1) (i) In this subsection the following words have the meanings
8 indicated.

- ### **1. a reserve component;**

2. THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH

15 **3. THE COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE NATIONAL**
16 **OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION.**

1. an eligible spouse;

2. an eligible veteran;

3. the spouse of an eligible veteran who has a service

4. the surviving spouse of a deceased eligible veteran.

(ii) An appointing authority shall apply a credit of two additional points on any selection test for a former prisoner of war.

- (i) a current State employee; and

(ii) an eligible veteran who is convicted of a crime after being discharged from or completing military service.

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
4 October 1, 2026.