

# HOUSE BILL 720

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CF SB 7

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By: **Delegates Patterson, Allen, Arentz, Behler, Buckel, Cardin, Coley, Crutchfield, Griffith, Hartman, Hornberger, Howard, Ivey, A. Johnson, Kipke, Lewis, J. Long, McComas, Miller, T. Morgan, Odom, Pasteur, Pruski, Reilly, Roberson, Roberts, Rose, Sample-Hughes, Schmidt, Simmons, Solomon, Spiegel, Stinnett, Taveras, Taylor, Turner, Wims, Wolek, and Woods**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2026

Assigned to: Appropriations

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Higher Education – Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq**  
3 **Conflicts Scholarship – Repeal of Termination Date**

4 FOR the purpose of repealing the prohibition on awarding the Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans  
5 of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship after a certain date; repealing the  
6 limitation on renewing the Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq  
7 Conflicts Scholarship if the scholarship recipient received an initial scholarship  
8 before a certain date; and generally relating to the Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of  
9 the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
11 Article – Education  
12 Section 18–604  
13 Annotated Code of Maryland  
14 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

17 **Article – Education**

18 18–604.

19 (a) For purposes of this section, an individual served in the Afghanistan or Iraq  
20 conflict if the individual was an active service member who served in:

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (1) Afghanistan or contiguous air space, as defined in federal regulations,  
2 on or after October 24, 2001; or

3 (2) Iraq or contiguous waters or air space, as defined in federal regulations,  
4 on or after March 19, 2003.

5 (b) There is a Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts  
6 Scholarship.

7 (c) An individual may apply to the Office for a scholarship under this section if  
8 the individual:

9 (1) Is a resident of Maryland;

10 (2) (i) Is accepted for admission or enrolled in the regular  
11 undergraduate program at an eligible institution; or

12 (ii) Is accepted for admission or enrolled in a 2-year terminal  
13 certificate program in which the course work is acceptable for transfer credit for an  
14 accredited baccalaureate program in an eligible institution; and

15 (3) (i) 1. Is a veteran who served in the Afghanistan or Iraq conflict;  
16 2. Is an active service member who served in the Afghanistan  
17 or Iraq conflict; or

18 3. Is a member of a reserve component who was activated as  
19 a result of the Afghanistan or Iraq conflict described in subsection (a) of this section; or

20 (ii) Is a son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, or spouse of:

21 1. A veteran or an active service member who is serving or  
22 has served in the Afghanistan or Iraq conflict; or

23 2. A member of the reserve component who was activated as  
24 a result of the Afghanistan or Iraq conflict described in subsection (a) of this section.

25 (d) A scholarship awarded under this section may supplement, but is not  
26 contingent on, any federal education benefits for which a recipient qualifies as a result of  
27 an individual's service or status as a dependent of an active service member or of a veteran.

28 (e) (1) Each scholarship may be used, at any eligible institution, to pay for  
29 educational expenses as defined by the Office, including:

30 (i) Tuition and mandatory fees; and

31 (ii) Room and board.

1           (2)    The annual amount of a scholarship may not exceed 50% of the  
2 equivalent annual tuition, mandatory fees, and room and board of a resident  
3 undergraduate student at the 4-year public institution of higher education within the  
4 University System of Maryland, other than the University of Maryland Global Campus and  
5 University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus, with the highest annual expenses for a  
6 full-time resident undergraduate.

7           (f)    A scholarship recipient shall maintain a grade point average of at least 2.5 on  
8 a 4.0 scale.

9           (g)    Each recipient of a scholarship under this section may hold the award for 5  
10 years of full-time study or 8 years of part-time study.

11          (h)    (1)   A scholarship recipient is not required to submit an application for  
12 federal or State financial aid.

13          (2)    Scholarship recipients who file for financial aid must file by March 1 of  
14 each year.

15          [(i)   (1)   The Office may not award an initial scholarship to an individual after  
16 June 30, 2030.

17          (2)    The Office may renew a scholarship after June 30, 2030, if the  
18 individual received an initial scholarship before that date.]

19          [(j)] (I)    A Senator or Delegate may authorize the Office to award all or a portion  
20 of the funds authorized under Subtitles 4 and 5 of this title to eligible recipients of  
21 scholarships awarded under this section.

22          [(k)] (J)    (1)   Funds for the Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan  
23 and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship shall be as provided in the annual budget of the Commission  
24 by the Governor.

25          (2)    (i)    In this subsection, "Fund" means the Douglas J. J. Peters  
26 Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship Fund.

27          (ii)    There is a Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and  
28 Iraq Conflicts Scholarship Fund in the Commission.

29          (iii)   The Commission shall administer the Fund.

30          (iv)    The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to §  
31 7-302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

32          (v)    The State Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately and the  
33 Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

1 (vi) The Commission:

2 1. May accept any gift or grant from any person or  
3 corporation for the Fund;

4 2. Shall use any gift or grant that it receives for a scholarship  
5 from the Fund; and

6 3. Shall deposit any gift or grant that it receives for the Fund  
7 with the State Treasurer.

8 (3) (i) At the end of the fiscal year, the Commission shall prepare an  
9 annual report on the Fund that includes an accounting of all financial receipts and  
10 expenditures to and from the Fund.

11 (ii) The Commission shall submit a copy of the report to the General  
12 Assembly as provided under § 2-1257 of the State Government Article.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
14 1, 2026.