

Elfreth pushing back on Trump policies as DEI programs face cuts



U.S. Rep. Sarah Elfreth responds to questions during a Howard County town hall earlier this month. (Karen Jackson/Freelance)



By **JAMES MATHESON**

UPDATED: March 31, 2025 at 10:34 AM EDT

As the Trump administration moves to strip [diversity, equity and inclusion policies](#) at the U.S. Naval Academy, a freshman congresswoman is pushing for “a Navy and Marine Corps that look like our country.”

U.S. Rep. Sarah Elfreth, a Democrat whose District 3 encompasses parts of Anne Arundel County and the Naval Academy in Annapolis, used some of her House floor time last week to highlight women and women of color who graduated from the Naval Academy and represent the diversity that contributes to the U.S. Armed Forces.

Elfreth's speech was delivered Wednesday — the same day that superintendents from three military academies, including the Naval Academy, were on the other side of Capitol Hill being [questioned by a Senate committee on DEI policies and civilian faculty numbers](#).

"This Women's History Month, I felt that it was important to tell the stories of the women and women of color who are an integral part of the rich history of the United States Naval Academy," Elfreth said in a statement, referring to March being recognized as Women's History Month.

"Their stories are not just the stories of the Naval Academy, but of our military and our nation. As I made clear in my remarks, this Administration's unrelenting and reckless attack on diversity — and furthermore, the stories and history of persistence, diversity and opportunity — only serves to set us back."

As Elfreth fights to slow the [elimination of DEI in the military](#) and its service academies, Anne Arundel County has been in the crosshairs of several other efforts by the Trump Administration and the GOP.



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Anne Arundel County is home to more than 25,000 federal civilian workers, according to the Maryland Department of Labor. Elfreth's constituents are particularly susceptible to cuts in the federal workforce orchestrated by the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency.

Elfreth introduced the "[Protect Our Probationary Employees Act](#)" this month. If passed, it would allow recently fired probationary federal employees to reclaim the seniority they accrued if rehired by the government.

Rep. Andy Harris, the lone Republican in Maryland's congressional delegation, [targeted a Trans Day of Visibility event](#) in the county this week. He used the Trans Pride Party as a reason why public libraries that support LGBTQ+ programming should not receive any federal taxpayer dollars.

Anne Arundel County Executive Steuart Pittman opposed Harris' attack and defended the Anne Arundel County Public Library.

"Events like the Trans Pride Party reflect our library system's mission to promote inclusivity and belonging," Pittman said. "Politicizing or threatening federal funding because a library welcomes and affirms people of all ages in our community does a disservice to the very purpose of public libraries."

When asked for their position, the White House pointed The Baltimore Sun to Trump's executive order, "[Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History](#)." The action targets funding for programs that advance "divisive narratives" and "improper ideology," in an effort to revise programs and exhibits the Trump Administration deems "inherently racist, sexist, oppressive, or otherwise irredeemably flawed."

In her speech on the House floor, Elfreth said the Trump administration's "unrelenting and reckless attack" on America's history of persistence, diversity and opportunity only serves to set the country back.

She has embarked on a mission to delay the administration's efforts at both the Naval Academy and throughout Anne Arundel County.

"I strongly believe that we should have a Navy and Marine Corps that look like our country, where our midshipmen receive an education that teaches the accurate and full history of this nation and where the stories of women and people of color aren't skipped over because they are inconvenient," Elfreth said. "Failing to recognize the diversity and strength of our servicemembers will only weaken our national security and the democratic principles we strive to embody abroad."

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Originally Published: March 31, 2025 at 5:06 AM EDT