

<https://wjla.com/news/local/virginia-military-institute-pentagon-defense-department-war-virginia-state-university-house-bill-1374-military-readiness-board-of-visitors-national-security-legislation-michael-feggans-democrats>
Pentagon officials warn against bill changing control of Virginia Military Institute

by [Jessica James](#)

Tue, February 3, 2026 at 12:10 PM

Updated Tue, February 3, 2026 at 12:13 PM



auto ▼

normal ▼







FILE - This July 15, 2020, file photo shows the barracks at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Va. The Virginia Military Institute will change its student-run honor court to make it more fair to cadets as part of a response to a state-ordered investigation into racism and sexism. The Washington Post reports VMI detailed the reforms in a progress report Friday, Feb. 4, 2022. (AP Photo/Steve Helber, File)

0Comment
Share

TOPICS:

- [VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE](#)
- [PENTAGON](#)
- [VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY](#)
- [HOUSE BILL 1374](#)
- [MILITARY READINESS](#)
- [BOARD OF VISITORS](#)
- [NATIONAL SECURITY](#)
- [LEGISLATION](#)

RICHMOND, Va. (7News) — The U.S. Department of War warned against a proposed bill by Democrats to give Virginia State University control of the [Virginia Military Institute](#) (VMI).

Virginia Beach Democrat Michael Feggans [introduced](#) House Bill 1374 on Jan. 20, 2026. The proposed legislation "repeals provisions of law that establish the board of visitors of Virginia Military Institute and transfers the governance of Virginia Military Institute to the board of visitors of Virginia State University."

[Click here to view the PDF file](#)

Chief Pentagon Spokesman Sean Parnell issued a statement Tuesday after the bill was discussed during the House Higher Education Subcommittee [meeting](#) Monday.

SEE ALSO | [Virginia Democratic leader responds to outrage about tax increase proposals](#)

The department's statement claims handing over VMI's power could have impacts on military readiness.

"For generations, the unique military environment at VMI has made the Institute a vital source of commissioned officers for the Armed Forces. The stability of this proven leadership pipeline is a matter of direct national security interest and any action that could disrupt the ecosystem requires our full attention. DoW reserves the right to take extraordinary measures to protect the integrity of VMI and our commitment to the cadets and midshipmen currently training there remains steadfast. We urge the Virginia General Assembly to consider the broader implications of this bill on military readiness, as well as the

federal government's long-standing investment in this critical institution," the statement reads.

A decision has not been made on the legislation as of now. During Monday's hearing, Democrat Salam Rasoul motioned to set the bill aside for the day, and the committee agreed.

BE THE FIRST TO COMMENT

The legislation will be up for discussion again when the committee meets again next week.