



Commissioned Officers Association of the United States Public Health Service

Protecting the interests of the USPHS Commissioned Corps since 1951

February 19, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report – SB 601 – Education - Dependent Children of Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the Commissioned Officers Association, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB 601 – Education - Dependent Children of Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures**.

This bill would require a county superintendent of schools to allow the dependent child of a service member to be enrolled in a county school upon the receipt of orders for a permanent change of station or reassignment through a remote enrollment process. For children who have a disability, the school system will initiate the transfer and reevaluation of the individualized education plan. The enrollment must be finalized within 10 days of receipt of the request for enrollment. This bill also allows the child to remain enrolled in the school until completion of the highest grade level available in the school.

Military families move every two -three years. For children, changing schools frequently can be traumatic if things don't go well, or amazingly simple if policies allow parents to do things remotely. For High School Juniors, this bill allows them to stay behind and finish high school with their friends—a major issue for families who move so frequently.

For children who have IEPs, transfers can become difficult. Each specialist of the appropriate team must review the plans, determine what services are available; what services need to be secured; and what additional testing is necessary to ensure that when the child arrives, that services are in

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place. For children with significant issues, service members generally rotate around **EIGHT** major medical centers, where children can get the appropriate medical care. These include:

1. Naval Medical Center, San Diego, California;
2. Eisenhower Medical Center, Georgia;
3. Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii; and
4. O’Callaghan Military Medical Center, Nevada;
5. Womack Army Medical Center, North Carolina;
6. Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio Texas;
7. Madigan Army Medical Center, Washington;
8. and **Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland.**

This bill goes a long way toward making school transfers timely and efficient, especially for children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Because we have a medical center in the state, **SB 601 – Education - Dependent Children of Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures** is especially important to service families arriving in Maryland.

The Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service as well as the Maryland Military Coalition ***strongly support SB 601*** and asks the Committee for a **FAVORABLE report**.

The mission of the Commissioned Officers Association (COA) is to protect and enhance the public health and safety of the United States by supporting and advancing the interests of the Commissioned Corps and its officers through advocacy, education, training and dissemination of professional information. This includes the 1398 officers, 8 Ready Reservists and over 7,000 retirees living in Maryland.

We want to thank Senator Brooks for his continued commitment to our veterans and the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,



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