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Lindsay Livingston, DVMF Director of Veteran and Military Family Programs  
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF House Bill 596  
House Ways & Means Committee  
February 12, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 596. My name is Lindsay Livingston, I serve as the Director of Veteran and Military Family Programs for the Department of Veterans and Military Families. Our mission is to guide veterans and their families through life's transitions and to position Maryland as the premier state for veterans and their loved ones.

I am also a proud military spouse of over 17 years. My husband has faithfully served in the U.S. Navy for over 22 years, of which he served 15 consecutive years of sea duty. Together, we have raised three boys who, like so many military children, have had to navigate the challenges of frequent relocations.

On average, a military child moves 6-9 times during their K-12 career. **My oldest son, now in eighth grade, is in his sixth school.** Every move brings a new set of challenges—enrolling in a new school, transferring transcripts, ensuring continued access to support services, and adjusting to different state policies and requirements. As a mother, these transitions are not just logistically difficult but emotionally exhausting. **The burden of advocating for my children's education while managing the stress of relocation should not fall so heavily on military families.**

House Bill 596 provides a vital solution. By allowing military families to advance enroll their children remotely before arriving in Maryland, this bill removes a significant barrier to educational continuity. **It ensures that military children are not left behind waiting for paperwork to process or seats to become available. For families with children who need special education services, this bill also facilitates coordination between school districts, preventing unnecessary delays in receiving essential support.**

Maryland is home to thousands of military families, and we must remain competitive in attracting and retaining them. **Twenty states have already passed legislation to make school enrollment easier for military-connected families.** When service members receive orders to move, they are not just looking for a place to live—they are looking for communities to thrive in—they are looking for employment and the best schools for their children. This bill sends a strong message that Maryland values its military community and is committed to making their transition here as smooth as possible.

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By passing House Bill 596, Maryland can ensure that military children have the stability they need to succeed and show that we are a state that truly supports those who serve. I urge you to support this bill and remove unnecessary obstacles for the families who sacrifice so much for our nation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.