



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

February 12, 2025

HB 596: Education – Dependent Children of Service Members – Advance Enrollment Procedures

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to lead the lives they want with the support they need. As a statewide public policy organization led by people with developmental disabilities and their families, we support HB 596 as another way to make sure that happens.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Allow service members to enroll dependent children in advance for school
- Require coordination between the new school, sending school, and family for children with disabilities when a service member advance enrolls a dependent child with a disability

WHY is it important?

- **There are over 62,000 active duty, National Guard, and reserve members in Maryland.**
- **Those active duty, National Guard, and reserve members have almost 44,000 children.ⁱ**
- The CDC estimates that nearly 9% of children ages 3-17 years old has one or more developmental disability.ⁱⁱ In Maryland, that possibly means about **5,400 of the children of active duty, National Guard, and reserve members of the military have a developmental disability.**
- At least one study of the effects of military deployment on children suggests that **there is a relationship between parent deployment and adverse risk for developmental delays and disabilities in children.**ⁱⁱⁱ The sooner, and more often families work with their child's school, the more likely they are to learn and succeed in Maryland schools.

The Need to Focus on Military Families

- Our work includes outreach and connections to groups related to our priorities and mission, such as supporting families of people with developmental disabilities. That led us to partner with the Department of Veterans and Military Families in a formal Memorandum of Understanding. We are collaborating because **military families of children and adults with developmental disabilities have unique needs. HB 596 addresses some of the unique needs of military families.** For these reasons, the Council supports HB 596.

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ⁱ December 2023, Military State Policy Source. <<https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/state/MD>>

ⁱⁱ July 2023, NCHS Data Brief No. 473 < <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db473.pdf>>

ⁱⁱⁱ Nguyen, et al. The Effects of Military Deployment on Early Childhood Development. The US Army Medical Department Journal. Oct-Dec 2014, pgs. 81-86.