

**MCF-FAV-SB263 (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Barbara Zektick

Position: FAV



## **SB263 - Education - Dependent Children of Active Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures**

Position: Support  
Hearing Date: February 25, 2026  
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

**The Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF)** is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides family peer support services at no cost to families who have a child or other loved one with a mental health, substance use, or problem gambling disorder. As experienced caregivers, we provide support, guidance, and hope to people who love or care for someone with a behavioral health challenge and advocate to improve the systems they rely on.

Military families with children who have behavioral health challenges face many obstacles when deploying to a new location. Finding new community healthcare providers and establishing school-based supports takes time, meaning that children risk losing valuable progress toward education and health goals. One parent served by MCF shared “I am the parent of an active-duty service member’s dependent child. He has attended numerous schools since pre-K due to PCS moves. With each relocation, he usually misses up to about 5 weeks of education, and once enrolled, it takes another 2 to 4 months to have an IEP review meeting.”

These types of delays are disruptive to a child and can create new or exacerbate existing behavioral health challenges. Allowing military families to enroll their child in school in advance will facilitate timely access to important school services including Individualized Education Plan and 504 Plan services and provide critical continuity of care. Service members and the families will also have peace of mind knowing that this significant step is completed before they arrive in Maryland, lessening the stress created by deployments.

Advance enrollment also means that schools have the opportunity to review a child’s needs and prepare proactively to ensure the teachers have the resources they need to help student be successful.

For these reasons, MCF fully supports SB263.

Karen L. Duffy, MA  
Executive Director  
Maryland Coalition of Families  
240.885.2549

# **SB263\_Brooks.pdf**

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

**BENJAMIN BROOKS**  
*Legislative District 10*  
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee  
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal  
Service Program Workgroup



**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 263**  
**Education – Dependent Children of Service Members –**  
**Advance Enrollment Procedures**

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
February 27, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on SB 263 – Education – Dependent Children of Service Members – Advance Enrollment Procedures. This legislation provides much-needed support for the families of our nation’s service members by ensuring that the children of active-duty military personnel have seamless access to public education when their families relocate to Maryland due to military orders.

In 2009, Maryland joined the [Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children](#). Specifically, the compact has provisions to facilitate timely transfers of educational records and the continuation of schooling for children dependents of service members. In 2020, the General Assembly [amended](#) the Compact to ensure that dependent children of service members could apply for enrollment in public schools in the same manner and at the same time as individuals domiciled in the county. This change was made to close a loophole which prevented many military dependent children from participating in competitive enrollment and magnet courses.

However, this change still presented a challenge for many military families. To enroll in the “same manner” as other students, military families had to travel to Maryland because many Maryland school districts do not offer a remote enrollment option. Not only does each county have a unique procedure for enrolling students, sometimes each individual school might have their own unique process for enrollment. This reality poses significant challenges for military families moving to Maryland and undermines the goals of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

SB 263 directly addresses this issue by mandating local superintendents to establish a remote enrollment registration process to allow military families to enroll their children in advance of arriving in the state. Enrollment is then finalized within ten days of the family’s arrival. This bill also includes provisions to support children with disabilities, ensuring continuity of special education services without interruption.

Given that there are [approximately 933,000 school aged children in military families](#), SB 263 provides a crucial safeguard to protect their rights to a secure and equitable education. Beyond educational stability, SB 263 enhances Maryland's standing as a military-friendly state and aligns with efforts at the federal level to improve military family quality of life.

Already, states such as [Virginia](#), [South Carolina](#), [Washington](#), [Ohio](#), and [California](#) have enacted similar laws to allow remote enrollment. This bill will reaffirm Maryland's commitment to the men and women who serve our country and ensure that their children do not face unnecessary barriers in their pursuit of academic success.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB 263.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks

# **Testimony SB263 BMartin.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brittany Martin

Position: FAV

Brittany Martin  
4463 Laurel Dr, Unit 3  
JB Andrews, MD 20762  
562-631-3111  
brittjmartin@gmail.com  
19 February 2026

The Honorable Chair and Members of the  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 263 - Education – Dependent Children of Active Service Members – Advance Enrollment Procedures

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brittany Martin, and I am a resident of Joint Base Andrews/Prince George's, Maryland. I am sharing with you today as a military spouse, a mother of two, with one child in school and another currently navigating the enrollment process. I am a strong supporter of Senate Bill 263. My husband is an active-duty member of the United States Air Force, and our family recently faced significant challenges with school enrollment during a local move, which is why this bill is so important to us, and countless other military families like ours.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB 263. The life of a military family is defined by frequent moves, often with little notice. One of the most stressful aspects of relocating is ensuring our children have a smooth transition into a new school. We have personally struggled with the enrollment process, facing uncertainty and delays that directly impact our children's education and well-being. This bill addresses the specific hurdles that military families encounter when trying to register their children for school in Maryland.

This issue is deeply personal for my family. In August of 2025, we undertook a local move while stationed at Joint Base Andrews. As both my husband, an active-duty service member, and I, a federal civilian employee, work on the base, we decided to relocate from Charles County to Prince George's County to shorten both of our commutes. Although we were already local, we faced an immediate bureaucratic nightmare. Our move-in date for our new house was one week after school started, and the school district would not accept our official military orders or housing contract as sufficient proof of residency. My husband and I were forced to repeatedly leave work to obtain different documents, hoping one would finally be accepted. The process was a moving target.

The consequences were immediate and stressful. Our daughter, who had secured a spot through the school lottery, was at risk of losing it. She ultimately missed the first day of school, feeling anxious and confused as she watched her new peers start without her. As a mother, it was

heartbreaking to see her first impression of a new school being one of exclusion, and I felt frustrated that we had to jump through so many hurdles despite having done everything right.

For us, the main obstacle was the inflexible proof of residency requirement. But I can only imagine the difficulty for families trying to navigate this from out of state. That is why the remote registration provision in this bill is also critically important. It provides a lifeline for those who can't physically be here to deal with these issues. This bill fixes the problem for families like mine, and for hundreds of others moving to Maryland from across the country.

Furthermore, the requirement for a remote registration process is a critical and commonsense measure. It is often impossible for a military spouse to travel to a new state simply to fill out paperwork, especially when our active-duty partner is occupied with their military obligations. SB 263 removes this logistical and financial burden by allowing us to complete the enrollment process from our current duty station.

Finally, this bill recognizes the realities of military life by allowing for flexible proof of residence, such as temporary lodging or a housing assignment letter. This provision alone would have saved my family significant anxiety during our last move.

Military children serve our country, too, by enduring the challenges that come with their parents' service. They face repeated disruptions to their education, friendships, and support systems. By passing SB 263, you will alleviate a major source of stress for these resilient children and their families, ensuring they have the stable and supportive educational environment they deserve.

Thank you for your time and for considering this vital piece of legislation. I strongly encourage you to support Senate Bill 263 for the benefit of all active-duty military families serving in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Brittany Martin

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Uploaded by: Christopher Arnold

Position: FAV



MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR**  
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

**February 27, 2026**

**Maryland General Assembly**  
**Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment**  
**2 West**  
**Miller Senate Office Building**  
**Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

**Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chairperson**

**Remarks of**  
**Christopher R. Arnold**  
**Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison**  
**United States Department of War, Defense-State Liaison Office**

**Support of: Senate Bill 263**

**Testimony**

Madame chair and honorable members of the Ways and Means Committee, the Department of War is grateful for the opportunity to support the policies reflected in Senate Bill 263, relating to various military family education requirements. The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children provides opportunities for assistance during transition, but does not address advance enrollment timing or procedures, or school placement stability, necessitating this important legislation.<sup>1</sup>

I am Christopher Arnold, the Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison at the United States Department of War's Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness. I thank you for the opportunity to address you today and for your support of our service members and their families.

Maryland's current advance enrollment law helps minimize disruptions in education during transitions. However, a recent study published by the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Pennsylvania State University as part of the DOD's efforts to identify and assess the educational experiences and achievement of K-12 military-connected children found not every school district allowed for remote registration.<sup>2</sup> Parents of students with special needs also reported facing various challenges relating to their enrollment options and placement stability.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sharmila Mann. Ben Erwin. "Response to Information Request." *Education Commission of the States*. December 2020. Retrieved from [https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Information-Request\\_Military-Child-Enrollment-1.pdf](https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Information-Request_Military-Child-Enrollment-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Karre, Jennifer, Kristin K. Brawley, Meghan Baker, Keith Aronson, and Daniel F. Perkins. "State Implementation of Four Initiatives to Support Military-Connected Students." (2023). [https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/clearinghouse\\_report\\_speakmc\\_initiatives\\_20240220rev.pdf](https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/clearinghouse_report_speakmc_initiatives_20240220rev.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Study participants recognized that advance enrollment overwhelmingly reduces stress on families, helps schools be more prepared, decreases out-of-school time, and increases student access to courses they need or want.<sup>4</sup> Most acknowledged improvements are necessary to enforce policies, and increase parent and school awareness.<sup>5</sup>

As with most statewide K-12 education policies that set a baseline level of support, specific guidelines not prescribed within the language of the state policy are left up to districts for local implementation. The policies reflected in House Bill 596 address this challenge by allowing the military orders that are accepted as proof of residency for the purpose of enrollment in a public school by children of members of the armed forces to be transmitted remotely, rather than requiring a military family to travel to the school district in person, which disrupts the military mission.<sup>6</sup>

Military families are at a disadvantage when it comes to the enrollment options available to their children due to military-directed reassignments. Uniformed service members and their families have limited housing options when moving to a new location as part of a permanent change of station. As a result, school and district options for military children can also be limited. Many military families must move from temporary to permanent housing at some point after school has started, or move from permanent to temporary housing prior to moving out of state on military orders. The policies in House Bill 596 guarantee school placement stability, allowing military students to remain in their school placement for the duration of the school year despite a change of residence.

Maryland has already demonstrated leadership in supporting military families by being the first state to create a Department of Veterans and Military Families and include its Military Interstate Children's Compact (MIC3) State Council leadership on the state's military affairs coordinating body, the Maryland Military Installation Council. This representation has helped ensure military family perspectives are considered in education policy implementation.

Senate Bill 263 builds on this foundation by codifying specific protections for military children with special needs. The policies in the bill are also made accessible for all military families, in accordance with the DoW's recommendations stemming from the Penn State report.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Approximately 185,000 U.S. military children move between schools annually. Military service members are routinely reassigned to new duty stations in the summer, due to mission and training requirements. As a result of these summer moves, they may potentially miss their child's school registration and other important application dates that occur in the spring. Long-term negative impacts include having to shift their planned courses of study, which may require them to take courses in summer school, or even force them to graduate later than their peers.

Service members typically receive official military orders detailing their upcoming assignment 90 days to 6 months prior to their move. Allowing military families to enroll their children in school, register for classes and apply for specialized programs at the same time as their peers, prior to physically arriving to their location, will help to facilitate their uninterrupted educational progress and smooth integration into their new communities, and relieve unneeded stress during their transition between locations.

<sup>7</sup> This bill clarifies that military-connected students with special needs are included in the already-existing advance enrollment policy in Maryland. It does not change the law, it simply clarifies it.

Military children are largely adaptable and demonstrate both flexibility and resilience during permanent change of station (PCS) transitions.<sup>8</sup> However, for children with disabilities, such moves can be difficult, not only because of the importance of routine and stability in treatment, but also because they often have coordinated care teams (e.g., therapists, specialists, educators) that need to be reestablished by their family with every relocation.<sup>9</sup>

Military children will change schools an average of 6–9 times between kindergarten and 12th grade.<sup>10</sup> For military families of children with disabilities, this cycle can be especially overwhelming as the burden to ensure continuity of care tends to fall on the family, at a time when those service members may be dealing with a variety of other military-connected stressors.<sup>11</sup>

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) sets the minimum special education requirements that all states must follow to provide a free and appropriate education while allowing states flexibility to determine many specifics. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability, including students in public education, who must have reasonable accommodations in place.

Delays in implementation of the support to military children can create a loss of educational opportunity and contribute to learning gaps. These losses can be magnified with each military move, greatly impacting child identification, eligibility determinations and receipt of services under IDEA or Section 504.

States can ameliorate this issue in the education arena by ensuring policies are in place to support military children who need access to special education or accommodations for their disabilities in the public education setting.

Another study conducted in 2020 found that 51% of active-duty families with a child in special education had trouble transferring their child's IEP to their new school.<sup>12</sup> Another study conducted in 2021 found 31% of military families indicated that their children with disabilities went without services for more than 60 days following a military move.<sup>13</sup> And 42% reported that

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<sup>8</sup> Masten, A. S. (2013). Afterword: What we can learn from military children and families. *The Future of Children*, 23(2), 199-212. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23595627>.

<sup>9</sup> Rous, B. S., & Hallam, R. A. (2012). Transition services for young children with disabilities: Research and future directions. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 31(4), 232-240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121411428087>.

<sup>10</sup> Bradshaw, C. P., Sudhinaraset, M., Mmari, K., & Blum, R. W. (2010). School transitions among military adolescents: A qualitative study of stress and coping. *School Psychology Review*, 39(1), 84–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.2010.12087792>.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2022). *Special education: DOD programs and services for military-dependent students with disabilities*. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105015.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Blue Star Families. (2020). 2020 Military family lifestyle survey: Comprehensive report. [https://bluestarfam.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/BSF\\_MFLS\\_CompReport\\_FULLL.pdf](https://bluestarfam.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/BSF_MFLS_CompReport_FULLL.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Barnhill, J., Picchini Schaffer, A., Consedine, M., DeVoss Mahany, C., & Shuman, A. (2022). Military children in special education: The real, perceived, and unknown barriers to accessing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Partners in Promise. <https://thepromiseact.org/wp-content/uploads/Partners-in-PROMISE-2022-Survey-Findings-FINAL.pdf>.

their Individualized Education Plan was not implemented once they arrived at their new duty location.

Recent Department of War analysis of military family support programs has particular relevance for Maryland's military families. A 2025 report to Congress found that without consistent implementation of the Military Student Identifier (MSI) across all State Education Agencies and Local Education Agencies, it is not feasible to collect reliable information about military children with special education needs in public schools.<sup>14</sup> The Department's analysis also highlighted that school districts often postpone special education evaluations until their own response to intervention process has been implemented, even when children transfer with an existing evaluation in progress.<sup>15</sup>

Senate Bill 263 clarifies in statute that evaluations must be conducted expeditiously, even when they occur during summer recess or intermediate periods. This is consistent with a November 2022 letter issued to all state directors of special education by the U.S. Department of Education, strongly encouraging school districts to expedite their evaluations of "highly mobile children", which included military connected children.<sup>16</sup>

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss the policies reflected in Senate Bill 263, and are especially grateful to the bill patron, Senator Brooks, the Veterans Caucus, as well as to the members of Committee for considering this important issue.

As always, as liaison to the Mid-Atlantic region, I stand ready to answer whatever questions you may have.

Yours etc.,

**CHRISTOPHER R. ARNOLD**  
Mid-Atlantic Region Liaison  
Defense-State Liaison Office

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of War, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2025). *Recommendations for the Improvement of the Military Interstate Children's Compact*. Forthcoming.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Education. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/Letter-to-State-Directors-of-Special-Education-on-Ensuring-a-High-Quality-Education-for-Highly-Mobile-Children-11-10-2022.pdf>

# **Maryland Military Coalition SB0263 Written Testimo**

Uploaded by: DAVID Dragics

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

*Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy*

February 23, 2026

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

Subject: Request for **FAVORABLE Report** – SB0263 – Education – Dependent Children of Service Members – Advance Enrollment Procedures

Dear Chair Feldman and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition<sup>1</sup> (MMC) and as its Legislative Director, I write to recommend a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on ***SB0263 – Education – Dependent Children of Service Members – Advance Enrollment Procedures***, sponsored by Senator Benjamin Brooks. This bill would require a county superintendent of schools to allow a certain 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 a service member or other parent or guardian who has a child with a disability, the bill requires that the registration process include a note indicating whether the child has an individualized education program or a 504 plan in the sending state, and requires that the county board ensure that that child shall receive an appropriate education without undue delay in the county in which the child is enrolled. This bill was introduced as SB0601 in the 2025 Regular Session and passed unanimously by the Senate.

The Maryland Military Coalition supports this bill. Military families can be disadvantaged in school enrollment options for their children due to military-directed moves. Enactment of this legislation can assist by increasing military-connected students' access to this option, allowing them to remain in their current school placement despite a relocation, and including them within existing enrollment prioritization systems. It is one of the state policy priorities for military families by the Department of Defense.

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports** SB0263 and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> See attached list of member organizations.

Subject: Request for FAVORABLE Report – SB0263 – Education – Dependent Children of Service Members – Advance Enrollment Procedures

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups. It represents over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers and survivors. For further information, please visit our website at <https://mdmilcoalition.org/>.

We want to thank Senator Brooks for reintroducing and sponsoring this legislation and supporting the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Dragics". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David L. Dragics  
COL (Ret), U.S. Army  
Legislative Director



## **Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition**

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars

# **Jacob Livingston Testimony SB263.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jacob Livingston

Position: FAV

## **Jacob Livingston Favorable Testimony**

Senate Bill 263 | Education - Dependent Children of Active Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures

Good afternoon Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 263. My name is Jacob Livingston. I am a ninth grader at South River High School.

I am a military kid. My dad has served in the U.S. Navy for more than 23 years, and because of his service, my family has moved a lot. I am currently in my sixth school, and I'm only in ninth grade.

Every time we move, school is the hardest part. You're the new kid again. You don't know the teachers, the rules are different, and sometimes you're not even sure what classes you'll be able to take until after school starts. That can be really stressful, especially when you're already leaving friends behind.

One of the hardest parts is the waiting. Waiting for paperwork. Waiting to find out where you'll go to school. Waiting to see if there's space for you. And if you need extra support—like special education services—that waiting can feel even longer.

Senate Bill 263 would make a real difference for kids like me. By allowing military families to enroll their children in school before they arrive in Maryland, it gives us one less thing to worry about during a move. It means we can show up on day one knowing where we belong, what classes we'll be in, and that support will be there when we need it.

Military kids don't choose to move—but we do our best to adapt. This bill helps make sure we don't fall behind just because our parents serve our country.

Maryland has the chance to show that it understands military families and values military children. Supporting this bill tells kids like me that our education matters too.

Thank you for listening, and I respectfully ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 263.

**Testimony\_SB0263\_Col Jun S. Oh.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jun Oh

Position: FAV



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS, 316TH WING (AFDW)  
JOINT BASE ANDREWS, MD**

25 February 2026

**TESTIMONY REGARDING SB0263**

**From: Jun S. Oh, Colonel, USAF  
1500 W. Perimeter Rd  
Joint Base Andrews, MD 20762  
Email: jun.oh@us.af.mil  
Office Number: 240-612-5820**

**Recipient: To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**Re: SB0263 and Military Families**

**Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and distinguished members of the committee,**

**Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. My name is Colonel Jun Oh, and I am an active-duty service member stationed here in the state of Maryland and the installation commander at Joint Base Andrews. I am writing today as a representative of the 7,500 service members and families on Joint Base Andrews.**

**Military families live with a level of uncertainty and mobility that many families never have to navigate. Every set of orders means uprooting our children from their schools, their friends, and their support systems. Each move brings new challenges, but one of the most stressful is ensuring that our children can enroll in school quickly, smoothly, and without disruption to their education. Senate Bill 0263 addresses that challenge head-on.**

**When military families receive orders, we often have only weeks—sometimes days—to coordinate a move. Yet school enrollment processes are built around residency requirements that assume stability. Without advance enrollment, our children are left waiting on the sidelines: unable to register for classes, missing out on course selections, and sometimes losing access to specialized programs or extracurricular opportunities simply because we could not prove residency early enough.**

**This bill recognizes the reality of military life by allowing dependent children to advance enroll remotely, using official orders as proof of their upcoming move. This is not a special privilege—it is a practical accommodation that ensures our children can start school on equal footing with their peers.**

**The bill explicitly protects children with disabilities. For families that are part of the military's Exceptional Family Member Program navigating IEPs or 504 plans, delays in**

**AMERICA'S AIRFIELD**

enrollment can mean weeks without essential services. I have observed a growing number of these families struggling to enroll their children due to the requirement to wait until arrival and provide proof of residency. This often creates additional stress for service members who are already navigating the challenges of relocation. Senate Bill 0263 ensures that school systems coordinate with the sending state and continue providing needed public education and support without undue delay. That continuity is not just helpful, it is life-changing for the children who rely on it.

The provision allowing a student to remain enrolled through the end of the school year—even if residency changes—is a compassionate and practical measure. Military children already cope with frequent transitions. Allowing them to finish the year with their teachers, classmates, and routines provides stability at a time when everything else in their lives may be shifting.

In closing, our military children serve alongside us. They endure the moves, the separations, and the constant adjustments. Senate Bill 0263 honors their resilience by ensuring that Maryland's education system meets them with flexibility, fairness, and understanding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Oh', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JUN S. OH, Colonel, USAF  
Commander, Joint Base Andrews

**eactestimony2026.SB263.pdf**

Uploaded by: Leslie Margolis

Position: FAV

# **EDUCATION ADVOCACY COALITION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## **SENATE BILL 263**

### **EDUCATION—DEPENDENT CHILDREN OF ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBERS— ADVANCE ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

February 27, 2026

#### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC) is a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland. The EAC supports Senate Bill 263 because it addresses a significant barrier faced by children with disabilities whose parents are active service members relocating to a Maryland school district.

Senate Bill 263 allows active service members who are relocating to a Maryland school district to enroll their dependent children in advance by requiring school districts to establish a remote registration process. The bill also requires that the remote registration process provides an opportunity for parents or guardians to indicate whether a child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan. In addition, SB 263 requires receiving school districts to coordinate with a child's parents and the sending school district to ensure that the child receives an appropriate education without undue delay, including services and accommodations provided in accordance with the child's IEP or Section 504 Plan.

Students with disabilities face significant barriers when transferring between school districts, as they often rely on specialized instruction, accommodations, related services, and assistive technology to meaningfully access their education. Advance enrollment provides receiving school districts with critical time to plan for a student's needs, including securing appropriately trained staff, arranging necessary services, obtaining assistive technology and accessible materials, and identifying an appropriate placement. By allowing for this advance planning, SB 263 helps reduce service gaps, prevent regression, and ensure that children with disabilities are able to access a free appropriate public education (FAPE) from the first day of school.

For these reasons, the EAC supports Senate Bill 263.

Contact: Leslie Seid Margolis at [lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org](mailto:lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org) or 443-692-2505.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Almazan, Attorney

Rene Averitt-Sanzone, Parents Place of Maryland

Linda Barton, Education Consultant

Beth Benevides, Autism Society of Maryland; Co-Chair, Education Advocacy Coalition

Melanie Carlos, Partnership for Extraordinary Minds (xMinds)

Stephanie Carr, SL Carr Education Consultants

Rich Cerulo, Parent and Advocate

Michelle Davis, ABCs for Life Success

Jennifer Engel Fisher, JEF Consultants

Lisa Frank, Special Kids Company

Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course

Leilani Hardy, Maryland Coalition of Families

Morgan Durand Horvath, Abilities Network

Rosemary Kitzinger, Bright Futures

Ande Kolp, The Arc Maryland

Mallory Legg, Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger Institute

Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland

Monica Martinez, Martinez Advocacy

Beth Nolan, Education Team Allies

Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

Rebecca Rienzi, Pathfinders for Autism

Ronnetta Stanley, Loud Voices Together Educational Advocacy Group

Wayne Steedman, The Steedman Law Group

Guy Stephens, Alliance Against Restraint and Seclusion

**Lindsay Testimony SB263.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lindsay Livingston

Position: FAV

## Lindsay Livingston Favorable Testimony

Senate Bill 263 | Education - Dependent Children of Active Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures

Good afternoon Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 263. My name is Lindsay Livingston, I serve as the Director of Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy for the Department of Veterans and Military Families.

I am also a seasoned military spouse. My husband has served in the Navy for over 23 years. 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. In just a moment you will hear from **my oldest son, who is in ninth grade, and 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.**

This bill provides a vital solution. By allowing military families to advance enroll their children remotely before arriving in Maryland, it 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. This bill also facilitates coordination between school districts, for families with children who need special education services (like my own), 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-three 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. I urge you to support this bill and remove unnecessary obstacles for the families who sacrifice so much for our nation. I respectfully ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 263.

# **DVMF SB263 Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Morgan Murphy

Position: FAV



Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families  
Office of the Secretary

WES MOORE  
GOVERNOR  
ARUNA MILLER  
LT. GOVERNOR  
ED ROTHSTEIN  
SECRETARY

Senate Bill 263 - Education - Dependent Children of Active Service Members -  
Advance Enrollment Procedures  
SUPPORT

February 27, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF) is committed to leading veterans and their families through life's transitions, making Maryland the best state for the military-connected communities. We proudly support Senate Bill 263, which establishes advance enrollment procedures for the dependent children of service members relocating to Maryland under military orders.

SB 263 is a critical step in ensuring that Maryland remains a military-friendly state, easing the educational transition for military-connected families who already face unique challenges due to frequent relocations. Twenty-three states have already passed similar legislation, and it is currently before nine other state legislatures.

Military-connected children move an average of six to nine times during their K-12 education, often encountering delays in school enrollment, disrupted coursework, and difficulty accessing specialized programs. SB 263 directly addresses these challenges by:

- **Ensuring Military-Connected Students Can Enroll in Advance:** This bill requires local superintendents to allow military families with dependent K-12 children to enroll in school in advance, providing them with equitable access to school placement, course registration, and charter school lotteries before physically relocating to the state.
- **Preventing Disruptions for Students with Disabilities:** The bill mandates local school systems to coordinate with parents and the sending state's school district to ensure the seamless transfer of students with disabilities, preventing delays in receiving special education services.
- **Facilitating a Remote Registration Process:** By establishing a no-cost, remote enrollment option, this bill removes unnecessary barriers and prevents service members from having to appear in person to complete their child's school registration.

- **Providing Long-Term Educational Stability:** The bill guarantees that military-dependent K-12 students who utilize advance enrollment will be able to remain in their chosen school throughout the school year, ensuring educational consistency despite future relocations.
- **Improving Access to Educational Programs:** Military-connected students will have the same rights as their peers to participate in academic programs, extracurricular activities, and athletic and social programs from the moment they are enrolled.

By passing Senate Bill 263, Maryland will demonstrate its commitment to supporting military families and honoring their sacrifices. The ability to enroll in school without unnecessary delays significantly eases the burden on service members and their families, ensuring their children can transition smoothly into new educational environments without disruption to their academic progress. This bill has no fiscal impact.

Thank you for your attention to this important proposal and I ask the committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward C. Rothstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "E".

Ed Rothstein  
Secretary

# **SB263.Council.Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

### Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 27, 2026

### **SB 263: 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 SB 263 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.<sup>i</sup>**
- The CDC estimates that nearly 9% of children ages 3-17 years old has one or more developmental disability.<sup>ii</sup> 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.**<sup>iii</sup> 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, like 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. SB 263 addresses some of the unique needs of military families.** For these reasons, the Council supports SB 263.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director. [RLondon@md-council.org](mailto:RLondon@md-council.org)

<sup>i</sup> December 2024, Military State Policy Source. <<https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/state/MD>>

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

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

# **SB 263 - Education - Dependent Children of Active**

Uploaded by: Zaniah Anderson

Position: FAV



**Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director**  
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**BILL:** SB 263  
**TITLE:** Education - Dependent Children of Active Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures  
**DATE:** February 27, 2026  
**POSITION:** Favorable  
**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**CONTACT:** Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 263.

This bill requires local school systems to allow a dependent child of a service member to apply for advance enrollment in a public school and specifies requirements for advance enrollment procedures. The Secretary of Veterans and Military Families, in consultation with specified entities, must publish and maintain information on (1) advance enrollment procedures and (2) any assistance and services available to service members regarding advance enrollment. The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

Maryland is home to approximately 100,000 active-duty service members, and we recognize the important role military families play in our communities. Children in military families often face unique challenges due to frequent relocations, including disruptions in coursework, credit transfers, and social adjustment when enrolling in a new school. Supporting policies that streamline enrollment processes, ensure timely credit recognition, and provide consistent transitions across school systems helps reduce unnecessary stress on families who already shoulder significant sacrifice. This bill facilitates smoother school transitions and reflects Maryland's commitment to supporting its service members.

PSSAM appreciates the intent of Senate Bill 263 in addressing the challenges faced by current enrollment procedures for dependent students of service members. Last year PSSAM supported this legislation with amendments that have been incorporated into this year's version of the bill.

Therefore, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 263.

# **SB 263 - SWA - Military Connected Students Advance**

Uploaded by: Jessica Goff

Position: FWA



621 Ridgely Avenue, Suite 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-5414 · 800-841-8197 · Fax: 410-841-6580 · MABE.org

**BILL:** Senate Bill 263  
**TITLE:** Education - Dependent Children of Active Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures  
**HEARING DATE:** February 27, 2026  
**POSITION:** FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**CONTACT:** Jessica Goff, Governmental Affairs Associate (jgoff@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, **supports with amendments Senate Bill 263 Education - Dependent Children of Active Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures**, and appreciates the General Assembly's commitment to promoting educational stability and success for military-connected students. MABE supports policies that promote educational stability, equity, and student success while preserving local governance and operational flexibility. MABE supports military families and military-connected students and recognizes the unique challenges these students face as a result of frequent relocations and transitions between school systems.

Senate Bill 263 intends to reduce educational disruption for military-connected students by requiring local school systems to provide an advance remote enrollment option for the dependents of active service members, prior to their relocation to Maryland. Senate Bill 263 also requires that the advance remote registration process include an opportunity to note whether the student has an individualized education program (IEP) or a 504 plan, and states that the county board must ensure that if the student has an IEP or a 504 plan, the student receives an appropriate education without delay. MABE supports the intent of this legislation and appreciates the sponsor's focus on ensuring that military-connected students experience a smooth transition into Maryland public schools. To ensure clarity and effective implementation at the local level, MABE respectfully requests several amendments.

MABE recommends clarifying the bill text to distinguish that advance enrollment does not include advance services. Local school systems can appropriately process enrollment paperwork in advance of a student's arrival; however, the bill should expressly clarify that advance enrollment does not require the provision of educational services prior to the student's physical presence in the school system and official start of attendance. This distinction is important to ensure consistency with existing funding, staffing, accountability, and service delivery requirements.

Second, MABE recommends clarifying that the bill applies to advance enrollment in a local school system, rather than a specific school assignment. School placement decisions are dependent on finalized residency, attendance boundaries, and school capacity. MABE recommends that the bill specify that advance enrollment does not guarantee placement in a particular school unless the military family has already purchased a home or executed a signed lease within the school system. This clarification preserves local boards' ability to make appropriate and lawful school assignment decisions once residency is confirmed.

Third, MABE supports the provision allowing a military-connected student to remain in the assigned school for the duration of the school year if their family moves again during that year. Educational continuity is critically important, particularly for students experiencing repeated transitions. However, MABE recommends that the bill clarify that transportation is not guaranteed when a student resides outside the school's attendance boundary. This clarification is necessary to avoid unintended operational and fiscal impacts on local school systems.

Local boards of education are best positioned to balance the needs of individual students with systemwide considerations, including capacity, staffing, and transportation logistics. The amendments proposed by MABE are intended to preserve local flexibility while advancing the bill's underlying goal of supporting military-connected students. For these reasons, **MABE supports Senate Bill 263 with amendments** and looks forward to continuing to work with the General Assembly to ensure that Maryland's public schools remain welcoming, responsive, and supportive of military families.

**Montgomery County Board of Education\_SB 263\_SWA.pd**

Uploaded by: Patricia Ursprung

Position: FWA



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*

15 West Gude Drive ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

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**BILL:** Senate Bill 263

**TITLE:** Education - Dependent Children of Active Service Members - Advance Enrollment Procedures

**DATE:** February 27, 2026

**POSITION:** Support with Amendments

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**CONTACT:** Patricia Ursprung, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs

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The Montgomery County Board of Education supports Senate Bill 263 with amendments.

This bill requires local education agencies (LEAs) to permit active duty members to initiate the enrollment process for their dependent child once the service member receives orders that they will be stationed in Maryland. Enrollment must be accomplished remotely and include the ability to provide information about the student's current eligibility for special education or Section 504 services, if applicable.

This bill will allow active duty service members additional flexibility around school enrollment when relocation is needed as a function of their job. This flexibility will assist families that are making all of the arrangements needed to relocate, sometimes on short notice. Additionally, it guarantees a student cannot be transferred during the school year, once the school of assignment is determined, because the family no longer meets the residency requirements for that particular school. This bill will help prevent or minimize an interruption in educational services for children who will most certainly benefit from educational stability.

While the Board supports the bill, it suggests that language be added to section (b)(4)(ii) to clarify that, although educational services shall be provide to the child "without undue delay," no services are required until the child begins physically attending their assigned school. This applies to all educational services, but especially services that would be provided pursuant to an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Plan. Further, the Board recommends additional language that confirms that any special education services will subject to, and in compliance with, applicable laws.

The Board supports Senate Bill 263 with the recommended amendments.