



April 7, 2015

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate HELP Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

The National Military Family Association has long been an advocate for improving the quality of life of service members and their families, who have sacrificed greatly in support of our Nation. One of our highest priorities is ensuring that military-connected children receive the best possible education. However, currently there is no reliable data on how the challenges of military life may affect students' academic success. For this reason we support the implementation of a national military-connected student identifier to measure educational outcomes of military children.

It is widely recognized that having a parent in the military can profoundly affect young children. Military children move frequently – an average of six to nine times from kindergarten through grade 12 – and often experience lengthy separations from their service member parent. While common sense tells us this experience must have an impact on children's academic outcomes, there is no data to support this conclusion. Adding military affiliation as a report-only subgroup of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) would provide vital information on military children's academic progress, attendance and graduation rates. This data would enable policymakers to better direct resources and evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs serving military-connected children.

Thank you for introducing this important legislation that will have a profound impact on the quality of life of military families. If we can be of assistance in your efforts to support military families or if you have any questions or need further information, please contact Eileen Huck in our Government Relations Department at (703) 931-6632 or EHuck@militaryfamily.org.

Military families serve our country with pride, honor, and quiet dedication. The National Military Family Association is the leading nonprofit dedicated to serving the families who stand behind the uniform. Since 1969, NMFA has worked to strengthen and protect millions of families through its advocacy and programs. We provide spouse scholarships, camps for military kids, and retreats for families reconnecting after deployment and for the families of the wounded, ill, or injured. NMFA serves the families of the currently serving, retired, wounded or fallen members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Commissioned Corps of the USPHS and NOAA. Our 45 years of service and accomplishments have made us a trusted resource for military families and the Nation's leaders.

Sincerely,

Joyce Wessel Raezer
Executive Director