

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS



NATIONAL
MILITARY FAMILY
ASSOCIATION

Throughout more than two decades of continuous war and a devastating global pandemic, military families have consistently and proudly answered their Nation's call to serve. Now, as America moves through the long process of pandemic recovery, military families will still be called upon to sacrifice and serve – and without hesitation, they will.

But to do so, they need support. Military families are counting on our Nation's leadership to support military families' health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

Now more than ever, Congress and the Department of Defense must ensure military families' sacrifices and dedication are not forgotten and provide them with the programs and resources they need to be strong, resilient, and ready.

The National Military Family Association knows that serving and supporting military families makes our country stronger. Our legislative priorities for the 118th Congress reflect the most urgent needs of our nation's military families and the long-term, systemic solutions they need.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Urge the Services to pursue innovative solutions to address accessibility, capacity and affordability utilizing public private partnerships.
- Pursue the creation of dependent care flexible spending accounts for service members to offset the financial burden of child and adult care services.
- Increase funding for the Services' child care fee assistance programs.
- Expand fee assistance eligibility to quality civilian child care providers.

EDUCATION

- Urge Congress to fully fund Impact Aid to offset the costs incurred by districts educating large numbers of military children.
- Establish Universal Pre-K for Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) in overseas locations.

FAMILY MEMBER WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- Bring the Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) benefits on par with State Medicaid waiver programs and extend ECHO eligibility for one year following separation.
- Urge DoD and the services to ensure the families in the Exceptional Family Member Program have the supports they need to thrive.

HEALTH CARE

- Urge Congress and DoD to ensure that TRICARE's civilian health care network is high quality and has sufficient capacity to serve families before undertaking any medical billet cuts or medical facility downsizing/restructuring.
- Reduce copays for mental health visits and physical, speech and occupational therapy, which are unacceptably high and deter families from seeking needed care.
- Eliminate the TRICARE Young Adult program and allow young adult children up to the age of 26 to remain covered, at no cost, under their parents' TRICARE benefit bringing TRICARE in line with the Affordable Care Act.
- Urge Congress and DoD to ensure that the TRICARE retail pharmacy network meets the needs of all beneficiaries, including rural families, those residing in long-term care facilities and patients who rely on specialty, compound, or infusion medications.

PAY, COMPENSATION & COMMISSARY

- Fight for annual pay raises tied to the Employment Cost Index (ECI) as prescribed by law; protect the pillars of compensation, such as the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), that were designed to partially offset the extraordinary conditions of military service.
- Oppose any change to the defense resale system that would lead to increased prices or reduced support for military family quality of life programs. Urge that any reforms are conducted transparently and with Congressional oversight.
- Address the issue of food insecurity among military families. Work to ensure every military family can afford to put nutritious meals on the table.

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

- Pursue the creation of a military spouse target group within the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.
- Expand opportunities for military spouses seeking a career in the mental health field to obtain supervision hours through DoD entities such as DHA and TRICARE in Military Treatment Facilities and the purchased care system.
- Pursue a reliable method of tracking military spouse unemployment through Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Expand the MyCAA scholarship program to include bachelor's degrees.