

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7123

AN ACT CONCERNING MILITARY FAMILIES AND EDUCATION POLICIES
REGARDING ENROLLMENT FOR PURPOSES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND

Title: PLACEMENT STABILITY.

Vote Date: 3/11/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/4/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee, requested by the United States Department of Defense

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill looks to facilitate the transition of military families with children in special education programs upon relocation, and it allows military children to stay enrolled in their school district after being relocated during the school year. Military families tend to change schools often due to regular relocation, and these constant changes can have a negative impact on military children. This bill would provide students with academic continuity by allowing them to finish their school year in their original school district after being relocated, and it would ensure that military children with special education needs would experience an easier transition between different special education programs after being relocated.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

United States Department of Defense Liaison Office, New England Region Liaison,

Melissa Willette: Ms. Willette expressed her support for this bill on behalf of the Department of Defense. She explained that roughly 185,000 military children must change school districts on a yearly basis, which can create a disconnect between those kids and their education. Ensuring educational placement stability would go a long way in supporting military children's educations and in encouraging servicemembers with families to continue their tours of duty. She also noted that many families with children in special education programs are not always allowed access to advanced enrollment; expressly stating that children with special education needs are included in advanced enrollment policies would help both the children and the school districts that cater to them.

Connecticut State Department of Education, Commissioner, Charlene Tucker: Ms.

Tucker explained that while the Department of Education appreciates the intent of this bill, they have a few concerns with some of the language. Section 1 of the bill lays out a 30-day timeline in which schools must provide special education students with a reevaluation of their needs; Ms. Tucker noted that this is inconsistent with state and federal law regarding reevaluations and would impose an undue burden on school districts to churn out a reevaluation. She also pointed out that the provision in Section 2 that allows military families to enroll in an educational program before establishing residency there is already covered by individual school policies in schools near military bases. She requested too that the committee clarify the language concerning a child's ability to stay enrolled in a school district after relocating out of that district: as it is written, the language allows a child to stay in their former school district until the end of their educational career, not until the end of the school year.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Sam Sims

Date: 3/20/2025