

CALL TO ACTION: Oppose New Federal Voucher Program for Military-Connected Students

CALL TO ACTION: Republicans in Congress recently introduced the Military Education Savings Accounts Act (HR 5199 / S. 2517), which would create a private school voucher program for students with an active-duty parent in the military. We expect to see efforts in the next few weeks to attach this bill to must-pass legislation that funds the military (the National Defense Authorization Act). This is uncharted territory in the fight to keep public dollars in public schools. **We need YOU to take action today** and urge your House and Senate leaders to oppose this bill. Click [here](#) to take action now or see the template email below.

BACKGROUND: This bill will hurt the very students it claims to help. The program will [drain dollars from the Impact Aid program](#), which is designed to support the public schools that serve military-connected students (as well as Native students and other students who are impacted by the presence of federal lands). Instead, a few military-connected students will be eligible for a \$2500 voucher (known as an “education savings account”) that they can use at a private school, online school, summer camp, afterschool programs or for homeschooling. This [voucher scheme will undermine the public schools that will continue to serve the majority of military-connected students in America](#), but now have fewer resources to do it adequately. The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools estimates that Impact Aid school districts could lose up to \$450 million dollars or 39% of the total funding for the program.

Public dollars belong in public schools. America’s service members’ children deserve better than a voucher scheme that will allow a few wealthy military families to get a \$2500 discount on private school tuition or pad their child’s 529 accounts. Our military families deserve well-resourced public schools that will serve any child who walks through their doors regardless of their academic or physical ability, income level, religion or sexual orientation. Service members make incredible sacrifices to keep our nation safe. Impact Aid helps ensure that a quality public education for their children isn’t one of those sacrifices.

Impact Aid is a transparent and accountable way of tracking federal education dollars (unlike vouchers) and study after study has shown vouchers do not work to improve academic achievement. Rather than increase the investment in the public schools that serve 80% of military connected children this is an attempt by [major conservative think-tanks and PACs](#) to divert federal resources away from public schools (all under the assumption that military families deserve more educational opportunities regardless of the opportunity’s quality).

Please take a moment to [contact your representative today](#) and tell them you want them to oppose any proposal that would create a private school voucher plan for military students. The men and women who serve our country deserve excellent public schools for their children—not private school vouchers.

SAMPLE EMAIL TEXT:

As a superintendent in xx district, I urge you to oppose adding any private school voucher program to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). In particular, I oppose adding a voucher for military-connected students, especially if it would be funded by Impact Aid.

A voucher program for military-connected students would drain the already limited funds available for public schools that provide comprehensive support and services for military-connected students and redirect them to private, often religious schools. Siphoning away Impact Aid funding for vouchers would make it more challenging for public schools to appropriately meet the needs of military-connected students and their families.

Private school voucher programs undermine our public schools and are harmful education policy. Among other problems, vouchers lack quality control and fiscal accountability, strip students of rights and protections and lead to declines in students' education outcomes. Furthermore, administering the new voucher program is complicated and would require an enhanced size and role for the Department of Education in monitoring public and private schools, educational entities and businesses. Public taxpayer dollars should fund the public schools that serve all students, not private schools that serve a few select students.