

Veterans' Affairs Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6775

AN ACT CONCERNING MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS AND PUBLIC

Title: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT.

Vote Date: 3/12/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/14/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Veterans' Affairs Committee
Sen. Henri Martin
Rep. Laura M. Devlin

REASONS FOR BILL:

In addition to the usual challenges of a K-12 education, the children of military families face their own obstacles in public schools. Many stressors, like those associated with having an active duty or reserve family member, are unique to the children of military families and children in public schools may struggle to find communities that understand these challenges. H.B. No. 6775 (LCO 5913) seeks to establish a way of connecting these children to the existing resources designed to support them.

Proposed Substitute Language: The resources specified in the original language included "qualified veterans' charitable organizations." H.B. No. 6775 (LCO 5913) removed the language regarding charities, limiting the resources affected by the bill to those available from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Military Department.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Thomas J. Saadi, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Affairs: Commissioner Saadi testified that in his experience, the problem is not a lack of programs and services but a failure to connect eligible persons to such programs and services. The commissioner lent his support for H.B. No. 6775, stating that the bill was a revenue neutral way of connecting students in military families with existing support programs and resources. The commissioner noted that school staff would require a basic level of knowledge regarding available resources in order to make such referrals, but made it clear that the Department of Veterans

Affairs was ready and willing to provide such information, as needed, to municipal Boards of Education.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[K. Robert Lewis, Chairman, the American Legion Department of Connecticut Legislative Committee](#): Mr. Lewis testified that military children face a unique set of challenges, especially when the military family member is activated and deployed, and that the American Legion is strongly in favor of any proposed legislation that can connect children of military families with available resources.

[Ed Barry](#): As a retired officer in the National Guard, Mr. Barry testified that he felt very supported during his two deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that H.B. No. 6775 continues Connecticut's proud tradition of supporting veterans and their families.

[Marissa Love](#): Ms. Love, a resident of Fairfield, stressed the need to provide military children with support communities, but noted that the means of identifying such children must also be able to find the children of National Guard or Reserves service members, and not just those on active duty.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed for H.B. No. 6775

Reported by: Benjamin S. Watson, Asst. Clerk Date: March 22th, 2019