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U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20010

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve—including those in schools on military bases worldwide—we offer these comments for your consideration as you vote on the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY2025.

Several features of the bill align with what Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) educators believe will help them meet the needs of students and military families, and strengthen support for educators themselves. Those provisions—some of which we have advocated for—include:

- **Advisory committees.** Section 591 codifies the creation of advisory committees for DoDEA schools to foster partnerships among schools, parents, educators, and command. Each committee will be composed of an equal number of parents of students enrolled in the DoDEA school and employees of the DoDEA school, and include one nonvoting member recognized as the exclusive bargaining representative for DoDEA employees.
- **Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF).** Section 5705 creates a data-sharing agreement between the U.S. Departments of Defense and Education, streamlining the PSLF application process for military service members as well as civilian DoD employees.
- **Student-to-teacher ratios.** Section 596 extends the current student-to-teacher ratios through school year 2029-30. Individualized teaching and support are essential for military families, many of whom endure frequent deployments in service to our nation.
- **Overseas transfer program.** Section 599A directs DoDEA to reestablish a transfer program for educators in DoDEA schools overseas.
- **NEW school meal program.** Section 594 includes an explicit authorization to create a stateside DoDEA school meals program that is consistent with federal law and standards prescribed by the Child Nutrition Act and National School Lunch Program.
- **21st Century Schools Training.** Section 599 requires DoDEA to provide specialized training for every teacher in every DoDEA 21st Century School.

We also have concerns about certain aspects of the bill. Specifically, we oppose Section 708, which would ban access to gender-affirming care for minor dependents of military service members.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association