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May 22, 2018

United States Senate
Senate Armed Services Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association, we strongly urge you to oppose any amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would create education savings accounts - which are vouchers - or private school vouchers for students with parents on active military duty. In particular, we oppose the inclusion of S. 2517, which would use Impact Aid to fund education savings accounts for military-connected students. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 115th Congress.

The National Military Family Association (NMFA), National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS), and Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) oppose vouchers because they hurt the very students proponents claim to help. The overwhelming majority of military-connected students attend public schools. As the executive directors of NMFA and NAFIS say in a joint op-ed in the March 5 edition of [Army Times](#), "The [voucher] proposal is a bad deal for military families — and a disaster for local public school districts charged with educating our nation's children."

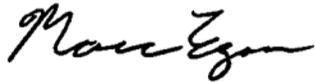
Let's be clear, an education savings account is a voucher and diverts resources from public schools to private, often religious, schools ill equipped to provide the same comprehensive services and support as public schools. Moreover, private schools are not accountable to the public and can deprive students of religious freedom, fail to protect civil rights, and provide inadequate support for students from military families dealing with issues such as parental deployments and frequent moves. Taxpayer dollars should go to public schools open to all students, not private schools that can pick and choose their students based on economic status, academic achievement, or even gender.

Impact Aid provides funding to school districts that have lost local tax revenue due to the presence of federal tax-exempt land – such as military bases or Native American lands. These funds are used by school districts to purchase textbooks and computers, fund after-school

programs and advanced placement classes, and provide additional resources for special education – among a wide variety of expenses. Using Impact Aid to fund private school vouchers would force cuts to the fundamental educational services that public schools provide to all students, and run contrary to the original intent of the program.

For all these reasons, we strongly urge you to oppose the inclusion of *any* voucher program of any kind as you markup the National Defense Authorization Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'E'.

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association