



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

February 2, 2024

The Honorable Representative Mark J. Hashem
Chair, House Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans
Hawaii House of Representatives
415 S Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: DoD Letter of Support – HB 1904 (RELATING TO EDUCATION)

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and members of the committee:

On behalf of military families and the Department of Defense, I am writing in support of the policy changes expressed in HB 1904, a measure to ease enrollment challenges for military families with school-age children.

Approximately 185,000 U.S. military children move between schools annually. Military service members are routinely reassigned to new duty stations, due to mission and training requirements. Service members typically receive official military orders detailing their upcoming assignment thirty days to six months prior to their move. Allowing military families, including those with special education needs, to enroll their children in school, register for classes and apply for specialized programs at the same time as their peers, prior to physically arriving to their location, will help to facilitate their uninterrupted educational progress and smooth integration into their new communities, and relieve unneeded stress during their transition between locations.

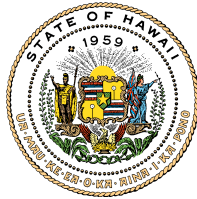
With nearly 17,000 active-duty military school-age children attending school in this state, Hawaii is in a position to have a highly impactful positive effect on the educational experiences of military children and families and join forty states that have enacted this policy. The intent of this policy is not to offer an advantage or priority over other students, but simply to provide military families access to educational programs and courses at the same time as their in-state peers. There is added benefit to Hawaii complex area schools by reducing the discrepancy between projected and actual student enrollment numbers for staffing and resource-planning purposes.

In closing, we are grateful for the tremendous support that Hawaii has previously made and is currently making to support our military members and their families. We appreciate the opportunity to support the policy reflected in HB 1904 and would especially like to thank Representative Woodson for spearheading this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelli May Douglas".

Kelli May Douglas
Pacific and Southwest Regional Liaison
Defense-State Liaison Office
DoD, Military Community & Family Policy
571-265-0075



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
CENTRAL OAHU DISTRICT OFFICE
1122 MAPUNAPUNA STREET, SUITE 200
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819**

February 5, 2024

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Bob Davis, Complex Area Superintendent,
Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua Complex Area

Title of Bill: HB1904, RELATING TO EDUCATION

Purpose of Bill: Department of Education; School Placement; Child of Military
Parent or Guardian

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun and Members of the Committee:

I would like to respectfully provide comments on HB1904.

The Hawaii Department of Education (Department) and our schools in the Leilehua, Mililani and Waialua (LMW) area are fully supportive of our military families and the unique struggles they face. Our Joint Venture Education Forum (JVEF) is a cooperative partnership between Hawaii's military community, the Department and other community organizations that provides a venue to transform schools in positive ways for our military-impacted families. This year marked the 24th anniversary of that partnership that has resulted in a multitude of positive initiatives like our Transition Centers which are a key component to help incoming students acclimate to a new school. Partnerships between our schools and military partners in all branches also shows the shared commitment to all our students and families. The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children was developed in an effort to reduce the educational and emotional issues encountered when the children of military personnel are required to transfer from schools in one state to another. Hawaii's State Council

includes representatives from the Department as well as Executive and Legislative branches and the military.

However, the Department does need to balance the treatment of our military-impacted families with the treatment of our overall student population. One concern the Department has with this measure is that it would create inequity in the registration process for students. Families living in Hawaii who are deciding to move residences are not allowed to pre-register or enroll electronically into their new school. Additionally, if a family decides they wish to stay in a school, even if they are changing school districts, they would be subject to the existing geographic exception process that allows for principals to ensure they have the capacity to accommodate all of the families within their community.

Given the high number of military-dependent students that Hawaii services, there are about 45 schools that are located on or near military installations in Oahu. This is very different from other school districts on the mainland which may have only one elementary, middle, and high school that services a military community. We are glad for the myriad of opportunities this provides to our military-impacted students but we also want to point out the capacity issues this can cause for our principals. With approximately 15,000 military-dependent students being taught in our schools we want to ensure that principals are able to serve all of the students in their communities. When military-impacted families move from transition housing to more permanent housing the Department appreciates the ability to allow the principal to make the determination as to whether they have the capacity to continue serving that student.

The Department agrees with the Legislature in wanting to protect the welfare of our military-impacted families but believes that the existing processes and successes garnered through our robust partnerships with the military and the surrounding school communities would deem this measure as unnecessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB1904.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/07/2024

Time: 09:30 AM

Location: 430 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Corrections, Military,
& Veterans

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1904 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Provides a process for school placement for a child whose parent or guardian has transferred or is pending transfer from another state to a military installation in Hawaii while on active military duty pursuant to an official military order.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on HB1904.

The Department is fully supportive of our military families and the unique struggles they face. Our Joint Venture Education Forum (JVEF) is a cooperative partnership between Hawaii's military community, the Department and other community organizations that provides a venue to transform schools in positive ways for our military-impacted families. This year marked the 24th anniversary of that partnership that has resulted in a multitude of positive initiatives like our Transition Centers which are a key component to help incoming students acclimate to a new school. Partnerships between our schools and military partners in all branches continues to exhibit the shared commitment to all our students and families.

In addition to JVEF, the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children was developed in an effort to reduce the educational and emotional issues encountered when the children of military personnel are required to transfer from schools in one state to another. Hawaii's State Council includes representatives from the Department as well as Executive and Legislative branches and the military.

However, the Department does need to balance the treatment of our military-impacted families with the treatment of our overall student population. One concern the Department has with this measure is that it would create inequity in the registration process for students. Families living in Hawaii who are deciding to move residences are not allowed to pre-register or enroll electronically into their new school. Additionally, if a family decides they wish to stay in a school, even if they are changing school districts, they would be subject to the existing geographic exception process that allows principals to ensure they have the capacity to accommodate all of the families within their community.

Given the high number of military-dependent students that Hawaii services, there are about 45 schools that are located on or near military installations in Oahu. This is very different from other school districts on the mainland, which may have only one elementary, middle, and high school that services a military community. We are glad for the myriad of opportunities this provides to our military-impacted students, but we also want to point out the capacity issues this can cause for our principals. With approximately 15,000 military-dependent students being taught in our schools we want to ensure that principals are able to serve all of the students in their communities. When military-impacted families move from transitional housing to more permanent housing, the Department appreciates the ability to allow the principal to make the determination as to whether they have the capacity to continue serving that student.

The Department agrees with the Legislature in wanting to protect the welfare of our military-impacted families but believes that the existing processes and successes garnered through our robust partnerships with the military and the surrounding school communities would deem this measure unnecessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB1904.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:
H.B. NO. 1904, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BEFORE THE:
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, AND VETERANS

DATE: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 **TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 430

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Emma R. Christopherson, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Hashem and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments.

The bill provides a process for school placement for a child whose parent or guardian has transferred or is pending transfer from another state to a military installation in Hawaii while on active military duty pursuant to an official military order.

Section 1 of the bill proposes to amend section 302A-1143, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to add to the newly designated subsection (a) a new paragraph (5), on page 1, line 16, through page 2, line 2, to create a new exception to the requirement that a student attend the school of the service area where the student resides.

However, the exception in the new section 302A-1143(a)(5) and (b) is too broad, in that it requires the DOE to accept an application for enrollment without the need to establish current or future residency within the school district. This could be construed to lead to unnecessary enrollment in schools outside of the student's geographic service area.

We recommend deleting new section 302A-1143(a)(5), and revising new section 302A-1143(b) to state:

(b) [If subsection (a)(5) applies:] If the parent or guardian of the person has transferred or is pending transfer from another state to a military installation in Hawaii while on active military duty pursuant to an official military order:

(Page 2, line 3, deleted wording in the bill is stricken; new wording is underscored.)

We believe that the revision would better define the geographic service area for military families transitioning to Hawaii, recognizing the uncertainty of military housing availability and the desire to provide educational stability to students.

The Department also suggests replacing "and" with "or" on page 3, line 13.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.



**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1904
RELATING TO EDUCATION**

House Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans
The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair
The Honorable Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 430 & Via Videoconference
415 South Beretania Street

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") **strongly supports** HB 1904, which provides a process for school placement for a child whose parent has transferred or is pending transfer from another state to a military installation in Hawaii while on active military duty pursuant to an official military order.

The MAC was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawaii's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawaii's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

The MAC applauds the efforts of the legislature in recognizing the challenges faced by military families and their children when moving to a military permanent change of station orders destination. Military families transferring on official military permanent change of station orders are not eligible to register in courses, enroll in specialized academic programs or sports, or submit their children's names for charter school entry until they are physically located in Hawaii.



The initiative, called Advance Enrollment, is now the policy in 34 states, and with the large active military presence in Hawaii, this initiative will reduce stress and ease the transition for military students and their families.

When military students know which school they will be attending and their class schedules in advance, they and their families have a sense of comfort, relieving unneeded stress during their transition between locations.

Hawaii has an active military presence, with several major military bases located throughout the islands. This makes the initiative beneficial for many families.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support.