



IWV Supports Amendments To Improve Education For Children of Military Personnel

June 10, 2024

Dear Members of Congress,

Independent Women's Voice, which fights to enhance people's freedom, opportunities, and well-being, applauds Representative Jim Banks for introducing two amendments to the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act (**H.R. 8070**) to improve education for children of military personnel overseas. **The first amendment would dismantle** the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)'s "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI) Steering Committee and **the second amendment would establish** a school choice pilot program for eligible children of active U.S. military service members who are stationed in Bahrain.

Over the last several years, the DoDEA—which oversees thousands of teachers and **160 schools** worldwide serving over 66,000 military children—has implemented and expanded DEI programming. As a result, many military children have been **subjected** to divisive curricula inspired by critical race theory (CRT) and gender ideology in their DoDEA schools overseas.

These pernicious ideologies must be left at the door. Congress should exercise its authority over DoDEA schools so that the agency can no longer push its harmful agenda on students. For students to succeed, teaching materials should focus on essential academic skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Students also benefit tremendously from **education freedom** and should have the ability to enroll in alternative schooling options if their current school is failing to meet their needs. Importantly, the second Banks amendment would establish a pilot program in Bahrain in which qualifying military households could receive and use the Department of State Standardized

Regulations education allowance to pay for their children to attend a non-DoDEA school in Bahrain. This would put parents in the driver's seat, and DoDEA schools would be held accountable when they fall short.

Moreover, while participation in the pilot program would be limited to 30 students to start, this could be the first step to extending greater education freedom to many other military children.

Military children deserve the best education our nation has to offer; it is inexcusable that the Department of Defense is failing to meet their needs. For these reasons, we urge you to pass these amendments immediately.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virginia Gentles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Virginia Gentles
Director, Education Freedom Center
Independent Women's Voice