

MOAA Military Family Key Issues 2021

Expand Affordability and Accessibility of Child Care for Military Families

Issue: Affordability and accessibility issues have continuously escalated as child care costs rise faster than inflation and the number of providers declines. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly exacerbated these trends. As of 2019, over 15,000 military children were on waitlists for military child care while many more military families struggle to secure care on the economy.

Recommendations:

- Invest in COVID-19 relief and stabilization funding for civilian child care facilities, as many military families seek care off post.
- Ensure sufficient appropriations and proper allocation by the services to fully fund fee-assistance programs without waitlists developing.
- Implement Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts as an option for servicemembers.
- Promote innovative solutions to expanding child care such as Family Child Care (FCC) provider incentives, buying and reserving civilian child care slots, and public-private partnerships through the Defense Community Infrastructure Program.

Reduce the Military Spouse Unemployment Rate

Issue: Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the military spouse unemployment rate was around 22%, or over four times the national average. While the pandemic has resulted in job loss among many Americans, according to the Blue Star Families Pain Points Poll, approximately 17% of military spouses lost their job due to the public health crisis. In contrast, the current national unemployment rate is 6.9% as of October 2020.

Recommendations:

- Include military spouses as a target group for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.
- Expand the My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) scholarship program to include fellowship opportunities.
- Secure funding to provide technical assistance to states to successfully implement compacts and military spouse exceptions.
- Improve tracking of military spouse unemployment data.



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Improve resources for military children.

- Provide oversight for timely implementation of EFMP improvements included in the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).
- Fully fund Impact Aid for military families.
- Follow up on military family free appropriate public education (FAPE) dispute concerns upon completion of a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study on this topic.

Improve military housing and enforce protections for tenants.

- Provide congressional oversight on the status of FY 2020 and FY 2021 NDAA provisions.
- Ensure public-private partners fully cooperate with intent of Congress and DoD and proper steps are in place to address problematic relationships.
- Develop a plan to cover long-term medical issues that stem from housing hazards.

Ensure financial stability of military families in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and aid families facing food insecurity and poverty-like issues.

- Secure a basic needs allowance for servicemembers with income below 130% of the poverty line.
- Request continuous DoD reporting on food insecurity among servicemembers to learn more what the needs are and how it impacts military readiness.
- Support financial readiness resources that are free from for-profit influence.