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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony in Support of
LD 31, An Act Regarding School Enrollment for Military-connected Students
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
February 5, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Mattie Daughtry. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and I proudly represent Senate District 23, which includes Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownall, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth. I am honored to be a co-sponsor of LD 31, “An Act Regarding School Enrollment for Military-connected Students.” I want to thank Senator Farrin for bringing forward this important measure to support the educational success and stability of Maine’s military families.

Maine has a proud tradition of service. Military families make tremendous sacrifices in service to our country, and frequent relocations are part of that reality. However, those moves shouldn’t come at the cost of a child’s education.

With family members who have served in the Army and Navy and friends across all branches of the armed services, I have seen firsthand the challenges military families face. Growing up in Brunswick, home to the former Brunswick Naval Air Station, many of my childhood friends were military-connected students. I witnessed how frequent relocations disrupted their education, strained friendships, and made it harder to find stability.

LD 31 ensures that military-connected students can maintain continuity in their schooling, even when their families are required to move. Under this bill, superintendents will have the authority to approve school transfers for military-connected students. Students whose residence changes will have the option to remain in their current school—through the school year for younger students and through graduation for high schoolers. This simple but meaningful policy change allows the children of Military families to focus on learning without the added stress of switching schools mid-year.

Research shows that school stability is critical to academic success. Military-connected students already experience higher rates of school transitions than their peers—some estimates suggest they may attend six to nine different schools before graduating high school. Each transition brings disruptions: adjusting to new curricula, forming new friendships, and finding a sense of belonging in an unfamiliar environment. By allowing these students to stay in their schools, LD 31 will help reduce academic disruptions and support their overall well-being.

Maine has long recognized the importance of supporting our military families. We’ve taken steps to ease professional licensing transitions for military spouses and have supported tuition assistance programs for service members. LD 31 is a natural extension of that commitment—it acknowledges that when we support military families, we strengthen our communities.

I urge you to support LD 31 and ensure that Maine's military-connected students have the stability and support they need to succeed.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mattie".

President of the Senate, Senate District 23

Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth