SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3631

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 1, 2025

The Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3631.

As amended by the committee, this bill provides increased flexibility in school district enrollment for military-connected students. As used in the bill, "military-connected student" (or "military-connected child") means a student enrolled in a public school in the State who is a dependent of:

(1) a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Space Force;

(2) a member of the National Guard;

(3) a member of any other reserve component of the armed forces;

(4) retirees and those separated honorably from the armed forces;

(5) a member or veteran who is medically discharged for one year or longer after the date of separation;

(6) a member who perished while on active duty;

(7) a uniformed member of the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and United States Public Health Services;

(8) a civilian employee of the Department of Defense; and

(9) a school employee who works in a school district in which federal impact aid makes up a significant portion of the district budget, as determined by the Commissioner of Education, as a result of its proximity to a military installation.

The bill provides that in the event that a military-connected child relocates outside of the child's original district of residence, the parent or guardian will retain the option to maintain the child's enrollment in the original district of residence for the remainder of the school year, or to begin enrollment in the new school district in which the family resides. Additionally, the bill provides that in the event that a military-connected child relocates outside of the child's original district of residence during the 11th grade, the parent or guardian will retain the option to maintain the child's enrollment in

the original district of residence until the child's graduation from high school, or to begin enrollment in the new school district in which the child resides.

The bill also provides that, in the event that a military-connected student cannot access temporary living facilities or military installation housing within 30 days of arriving at the duty station, the parent or guardian will have the option to enroll their child in a school that serves families that reside on the military installation within ten days of arrival on duty station. In the event that a military-connected child resides in a school district that is found to satisfy less than 80 percent of the quality performance indicators in the instruction and program component of school district effectiveness under the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum, the parent or guardian will have the option to enroll their child in a school that serves families that reside on the military installation.

The bill amends the "Interdistrict Public School Choice Program Act" and requires a school district that participates in an inter-local agreement for the enrollment of students provide a military-connected student:

(1) a waiver from any requirement of the agreement that a student reside in a district for a certain length of time before applying for enrollment in a school that is subject to the agreement;

(2) preference for enrollment in a school that is subject to the agreement above other students;

(3) protection from discrimination in its admission policies or practices on the basis of the student's status as a military-connected student; and

(4) guaranteed admission to any school that is subject to the agreement regardless of the capacity of the district, if the parent or guardian can provide military orders or other evidence documenting the parent or guardian's temporary transfer for more than 30 consecutive days.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee made technical amendments to the bill to update a section to current law and to correct a grammatical error.