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# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Maryland Legislature Considers Bills to Assist Military Families**

Children Would Have Access to Public PreKindergarten Classes

The Maryland General Assembly is considering bills to help military families confronting the disruption and stress of frequent relocations and overseas deployment. By providing access to the State's public prekindergarten program, the bills would provide social, educational, and financial assistance to military families with young children.

Local school districts now provide public pre-K to low-income 4-year olds. HB 1319, sponsored by Delegate Tom Hucker (District 20, Montgomery), and SB 912, sponsored by Senator Dyson (District 29, Southern Maryland), would expand access to cover children of active-duty military personnel.

Children of military personnel face many challenges and much stress, especially socially and emotionally. These include:

- frequent relocations and school/social transitions,
- frequent and/or prolonged parental separation,
- adjustment to changing family situations: pre-deploy, deployment, reunion, and
- fear of parental death or injury.

High-quality pre-K programs provide play-based learning, fun, friendship, teamwork, caring adults—and perhaps most importantly for military-connected children, stability, routine, and consistency. In addition, high quality pre-K helps build a strong foundation for future learning and will help military children succeed in Maryland's top-ranked public school system.

Brigadier General David L. Grange (retired), currently president of the McCormick Tribune Foundation, is a strong proponent of providing public pre-K to military families. He observes, *"Providing high-quality pre-K for military children can also help our service men and women to be safer and more successful on the job. Military personnel regularly cite the welfare of their families as a primary concern during deployment. When our service men and women know that their children are well cared for, they worry less and concentrate more on the important work they do for our country."*

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