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June 8, 2026

Committee on Armed Services
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association, including educators who support and teach military-connected students at Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools, we submit these comments in conjunction with the committee's markup of the fiscal year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

NEA educators at DoDEA schools are represented by the Federal Education Association (FEA), an NEA affiliate. Our members—wherever they live and work—are passionate about ensuring that our nation's students have access to a public education that inspires their desire to learn. For DoDEA educators, this mission takes on special significance and urgency—their students face unique challenges, including multiple deployments and relocations.

Furthermore, a [May 2025 GAO report](#) found that DoDEA schools “assessed one in 50 students for suicide risk in each of school years 2022-23 and 2023-24 in response to an identified mental health concern.” DoDEA school psychologists and school counselors said they struggled to support students' needs for help in dealing with anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and other mental health issues.

In light of the challenges our students face, we urge you to vote in favor of any amendments to the NDAA that would increase support for DoDEA special education services, programs, and staff members, as well as amendments that would increase access to comprehensive, school-based mental health services for DoDEA students.

We also urge you to vote in favor of the amendment from Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ) that would restore collective bargaining rights for Department of Defense civilian employees, including our FEA members in DoDEA schools.

Through collective bargaining, FEA members advocated for conditions that enhance students' experience, including increased learning time and stronger connections between military-connected families and educators. Last year, 44 members of Congress signed a [bipartisan letter](#) urging the Department of Defense to restore collective bargaining in DoDEA. They argued that the agency “does not have a primary function related to intelligence, counterintelligence, investigative, or natural security,” so federal collective bargaining protections can be applied in a manner consistent with national security requirements and considerations.

We appreciate your consideration of our views and urge you to take into account the unique circumstances and sacrifices of America's military families. To ensure that DoDEA students and educators have the resources and support they need, please vote in favor of the amendments cited above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kimberly Johnson Trinca', written in a cursive style.

Kimberly Johnson Trinca
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association