

POLICY MINI-BRIEF SERIES

WORK-FAMILY INFORMATION ON: MILITARY FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

SUPPORTED BY: THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION
COMPILED BY: JULIE WEBER, JD; MARY CURLEW, MSW; AND SANDEE TISDALE, MSW

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WHY ARE MILITARY FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AN IMPORTANT POLICY ISSUE?

"We as policy makers must make sure that the stress and sacrifice they endure for our country is not compounded by asking their children to sacrifice their educational opportunities. We should provide support and assistance to the children of our active military in any way possible, as a small recognition of the sacrifice that their families make for us."

Kentucky Representative Robert Damron



WHAT CHALLENGES ARE FACED BY MILITARY FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN?

Military life places unique demands on military families with children, including:

- frequent moves
- financial difficulties
- disruptions in schooling
- underemployment of military spouses
- family separation
- risk of injury or death of military personnel

Want more INFORMATION on MILITARY FAMILIES?

<http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic.php?id=38>

The Military and the Public Benefit When Military Families with Children Are Supported.

Resources enabling military families with children to manage work-life demands successfully can help the military maintain a strong, well-trained force that is ready to serve. Benefits may include:

- higher retention rates
- increased recruitment
- improved performance and readiness

RECENT LEGISLATION

FEDERAL

The National Defense Authorization Act expanded the Family Medical Leave Act to military families.

STATE LAWS

Numerous states have enacted legislation that supports military families with children.

- Ten states (CA, CT, IL, IN, ME, MN, NE, NY, RI, WA) have passed laws that provide family members of the armed forces who have been ordered to active duty with the opportunity to take family leave before or after deployment.
- Twenty-three states (AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IN, KS, MD, NC, NE, NJ, NM, NV, ME, MT, OK, PA, RI, SC, TX, WA) provide unemployment compensation to spouses of military personnel under certain circumstances.
- Fourteen states (AZ, CO, CT, DE, FL, IL, KS, KY, MD, MI, MO, NC, OK) have enacted the Interstate Compact of Educational Opportunity for Military Children and/or have formed a task force to study the issue (MD, WA).
- Three states have established military family relief funds (CA, CO, ME).

STATE BILLS IN SESSION

Legislation introduced in the 2009 session includes:

- Bills to enact the educational compact to assist military children during relocation (AL, HI, IN, VA, WA).
- Bills to allow leave for spouses or family members of deployed military personnel or to amend existing laws (CT, HI, IA, IL, IN, OR).
- Bills to provide unemployment benefits to spouses of military personnel (AL, CO, HI, MI, OH, SD, WY).
- Bills to assist military families in raising their children (financial, tuition, and research) (AL, AZ, CA, CT, HI, IL, IN, KY, MN, NC, NH, NM, NY, VT).

Want more POLICY INFORMATION on MILITARY FAMILIES?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/pdfs/policy_makers15.pdf

HOW CAN POLICY MAKERS SUPPORT MILITARY FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN?

Policy makers can initiate legislation, including laws that:

- Address dependent-care needs that arise during a parental separation.
- Facilitate successful school transfers for children in military families.
- Provide employment opportunities for spouses of military personnel.

% DID YOU KNOW?

- "43.2% of the Active Duty force and 43.1% of the Selected Reserves have one or more children; in fact, nearly one million military personnel are parents" (Military Family Research Institute, 2005).
- Twenty percent of active duty military personnel reported concerns about the impact of their deployment on child-care arrangements (Mancini & Archambault, 2000).
- Over a third of Army personnel reported problems related to transferring their child(ren) to a new school (Booth, Segal, & Bell, 2007).
- Wives of military personnel are less likely to be employed than wives of civilians, and those who are employed earn significantly less than wives of civilians (Lim, Golinelli, & Cho, n.d.).

Want more STATISTICS or the full references for above statistics?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=38&type=1&area=All



SUGGESTED READINGS

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The Policy Mini-Brief Series provides a summary of Military Families policy information.

To learn more about Military Families, go to http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/pdfs/policy_makers15.pdf