

**Senator David Ige, Senate Ways and Means Committee  
February 25, 2011**

**Testimony of  
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Policy  
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**Support of: SB 813 INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL  
OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN**

**The Department of Defense State Liaison Office** operates under the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military Community and Family Policy. Our mission is to be a resource to state policymakers as they work to address quality of life issues of military families. In her position as state liaison, Dr. Crehan monitors quality of life issues for military families in HI, CA, AZ, and NV. Before coming to work in the State Liaison Office, she worked as an educator, spending over 20 years in the Department of Defense Dependents Schools as a teacher and administrator. In that capacity, she learned first hand of the educational challenges the children of our military members face as they encounter frequent school moves.

**Testimony**

Chair Ige and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, on behalf of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today as Hawaii considers making the *Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children* permanent.

The Interstate Compact addresses challenges military children face as they move from state to state. These challenges are of utmost importance to military families, and are consistently listed as among their top family concerns as they work to serve our nation in the Armed Forces.

Thirty-five states have already adopted the Compact. Hawaii is one of those states and the Commissioner of the Hawaii State Council, Dr. Kathleen Berg, has taken a leadership role in the National Compact Commission, serving as the Commission Vice-Chair and providing materials for training school officials on the Compact. Representative Mark Takai serves as an ex-officio member of the Compact Commission representing the Military Legislators Association. The Hawaii State

Council has been very active and serves as a model for other states that are just forming their State Council. It would be a great benefit to the National Compact Commission for Hawaii to continue to serve as a strong resource by remaining a member.

On average, most military children will move at least twice during their high school years, and most will attend six to nine different school systems between kindergarten and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. These frequent moves result in some educational obstacles. Though many states, including Hawaii, have made progress in addressing these educational concerns, there is a lack of consistency *between* states that continues to create difficulties for our military families. Some of these recurring issues include kindergarten start age, participation in extracurricular activities, immunizations, timely transfer of records, placement in appropriate courses, missed or redundant entrance and exit testing, support for children of deployed service members, and on-time graduation. Though one state may do several things right, the next move to another state can create a new set of problems since the procedures are not the same. These issues are addressed in the *Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children*.

The Compact is an agreement among member states to a set of practices that will allow for the uniform treatment of military children transferring between school districts and between states. The Interstate Compact does not ask for special privileges for military children; only that states create a level playing field, and work cooperatively to make it happen. Military children often end up making sacrifices because their parent's are serving our country. The language and intent of the Compact will provide consistency for our military children as they move from state to state and alleviate some of the hardship they encounter.

**I would also like to suggest one change in language to SB 813. In ARTICLE XIII, when outlining membership on the State Council, the current Compact statute states there will be a representative from PACOM and from an installation for each Service. The new proposed language adds uniformed to the description of the representative. Since most of the people in the military who work closely with the education of military children are civilian employees, the Compact, as drafted, and as adopted by the other 34 member-states, does not restrict military-related representation on the State Councils to only uniformed military members. This is because such a requirement could result in exclusion of a person, though civilian, who may be the most qualified individual to serve.**

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony and look forward to Hawaii's leadership in adopting this vital compact supporting our military children by remaining

a member of the Interstate Compact Commission. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns or questions.

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