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NAFIS, MISA TAKE ISSUE WITH SECRETARY'S REMARKS ON VOUCHERS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES; OPPOSE "CHOICE" ACT

(WASHINGTON, DC) – The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) and the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) have strong concerns about the Secretary of Education's remarks on extending vouchers to military families; and opposes the Creating Hope and Opportunity for Individuals and Communities through Education (CHOICE) Act, authored by Senator Tim Scott (R-SC). The CHOICE Act, referenced by Secretary DeVos during a visit to a Department of Defense-run school, would create a voucher program for military-connected students, turn IDEA into a voucher program, and expand the DC voucher program, while stripping vital protections, accountability standards, and benefits from students.

"On the first week of the Month of the Military Child, NAFIS believes Secretary DeVos should be focused on investing in public schools – those in which the majority of military-connected children attend – instead of praising a bill that would drain dollars away from those schools," said NAFIS Executive Director Hilary Goldmann. "The CHOICE Act fails to recognize the fact that public school districts that educate military connected students, including Blue Ribbon Schools, are devoted to and successful in meeting the academic and emotional needs of this unique student body.

Supporting military families and the unique needs of military-connected students is a top priority for public school districts and states. For example, the Military Interstate Children's Compact, that has been adopted by all 50 states and Washington, DC, addresses educational transition challenges encountered by military families including enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility and graduation. The Compact *only* applies to public schools.

Impact Aid is the Federal government's tax payment for educating military-connected students attending public schools around the country. The program is funded at less than 60-percent of the need formula established in law. NAFIS is concerned about the consequences a voucher program would have on the Impact Aid program and the tax burden on residents in federally impacted communities.

"Rather than distributing scarce resources in the form of a new voucher program, the Federal Government should be making good on its obligation to all federally impacted school districts," said Kyle Fairbairn, Executive Director of the MISA, a NAFIS subgroup. "The CHOICE Act would set back education for military-connected students, period."

NAFIS and MISA have collaborated on a position statement opposing the CHOICE Act. Access it [here](#).

During the month of April, NAFIS and MISA encourage Secretary DeVos to visit a public school since more than 80-percent of military-connected students are educated in public schools. Both associations look forward to working with the US Department of Education and Congress to strengthen and increase funding to public school districts, including all Impact Aid-recipient school districts.

NAFIS is a non-profit, non-partisan association of school districts located across the United States. Founded more than 40 years ago, the association works to ensure the needs of the federally impacted school districts, and the children they educate, are met through adequate Federal funds. NAFIS is organized primarily to educate Congress on the importance of Impact Aid and to make sure school districts affected by a Federal presence receive the basic resources necessary to provide a high quality education program for their students.

MISA is a national organization of school superintendents whose mission is to serve school districts with a high concentration of military children. MISA is part of the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools. MISA works on funding, legislation, partnerships and programs for military families on the move. MISA works with local school districts and commanders to highlight best practices and partnerships that can further meet the needs of military families.

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