

Memorandum of **OPPOSITION**

Oppose Redirection of Federal Funding from the Impact Aid Program

The New York State School Boards Association opposes the below referenced legislation and urges your negative vote.

H.R. 5199 and S. 2517 (Educational Savings Accounts for Military Families Act of 2018), would redirect federal funding from the Impact Aid program used for classroom instruction, counseling, tutoring and other academic support services for students whose parents and/or guardians are enlisted in the Armed Forces, as well as for students who reside on federal properties, such as Native American trust lands. Diverting the federal investment in Impact Aid into education savings accounts (ESAs) would be extremely detrimental for many of New York's school districts and their students.

The federal government is exempt from paying taxes on its property. Therefore, federal property located within a community imposes a financial burden on local taxpayers. Congress created the Impact Aid program to reimburse school districts for lost local tax revenue.

New York State receives more than \$47 million in Impact Aid. While not every district receives this aid, compensating for this shortfall will affect all school districts and students, as these funds are used in the general operating budget of school districts. A reduction in funding would result in the elimination of critical services that school districts provide to all students.

Furthermore, ESAs are no different than traditional private school vouchers; they transfer funding from all public school students into an account for a small group of students to use on other education expenses, including private school tuition.

Approximately 80% of children of military families attend public school districts. Military-connected students face unique challenges due to frequent relocations as well as the absence of their parents, who are often deployed or stationed overseas. These challenges are recognized by public school districts through coordinated academic transfer agreements, as well as comprehensive systems of support.

Without this funding, the school districts in New York that depend on Impact Aid would be left with budget shortfalls. Those shortfalls would have to be filled by the local taxpayer, or programs would have to be cut. While NYSSBA would support the provision of additional resources for military families and students, those additional resources should not be at the expense of their fellow students.

For the reasons stated above, NYSSBA urges you to oppose this proposal. For additional information, please contact NYSSBA Governmental Relations at 518-783-0200.