

SENATE No. 2361

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

John C. Velis

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to military childcare, innovation, learning and development.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

John C. Velis

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Hampden and Hampshire

SENATE No. 2361

By Mr. Velis, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2361) of John C. Velis for legislation relative to military childcare, innovation, learning and development. Veterans and Federal Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act relative to military childcare, innovation, learning and development.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section
2 15QQQQQQ the following section:-

3 Section 15RRRRRR. The governor shall annually set apart December 19, the anniversary
4 of the founding of the united states space force, in recognition of its distinguished history and
5 spacefaring service, and shall issue a proclamation recommending that the day be observed by
6 the people in the display of the flag and in appropriate public exercises, commemorative of the
7 services and sacrifices of the citizens of the commonwealth who have served and continue to
8 serve in the defense of the united states.

9 SECTION 2. Section 6A of Chapter 2 of the General Laws, is hereby amended by adding
10 at the end the following paragraph:-

11 (H) All military service members residing in Massachusetts, and performing military duty
12 under official orders, who are killed while in an active-duty status, will be honored by having

13 flags throughout the commonwealth flown at half-staff from the day of death until sunset of the
14 day of interment in accordance with such orders or instructions as may be issued by, or at the
15 direction of the governor. The remains of POWS/MIAS repatriated within the commonwealth
16 shall have the flag half-staffed on the day of arrival within the commonwealth through the day of
17 internment. Additionally, flags will be half-staffed each year on national POW/MIA day,
18 observed across the nation on the third friday of september, from sunrise to sunset.

19 SECTION 3. Section 78 (a) of Chapter 10 of the General Laws is hereby amended by
20 inserting after the words "United States Air Force Reserve" the following words:-

21 United State space force

22 SECTION 4. Section 1 of Chapter 15E of the General Laws is hereby amended by
23 removing the word "sections" in line 4 and and inserting in place thereof the following:-

24 chapters

25 SECTION 5. Section 1 of Chapter 15E of the General Laws is hereby amended by
26 removing the word "airforce" in line 44 and inserting in place thereof the following:-

27 , space force

28 SECTION 6. The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after chapter 71B the
29 following chapter:

30 CHAPTER 71C. MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS.

31 Section 1. Definitions. For the purposes of this chapter, "military-connected student"
32 shall mean a student who is an unemancipated person whose parent or guardian is: (i) a current,

33 reserve or former member of the United States Army, United States Navy, United States Marine
34 Corps, United States Coast Guard, United States Space Force, Army Nurse Corps, Navy Nurse
35 Corps, United States Air Force, Air National Guard or Army National Guard; or (ii) a member of
36 a military or reserve force under clause (i) who was killed in the line of duty.

37 Section 2. Equal rights and educational opportunity. Notwithstanding any other provision
38 of law, military-connected students shall have equitable access to academic courses and
39 programs and to extracurricular academic, athletic and social programs.

40 Section 3. Military Parent Student Support. (a) Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year
41 and each school year thereafter, each public school shall provide appropriate support services, as
42 specified in subsection (b), to military-connected students whose parent or guardian is a member
43 of the armed forces being called to and while serving on active duty.

44 (b) If a parent or guardian of a military-connected student is called or ordered to active
45 duty by the Federal Government under the provisions of 10 U.S.C. (relating to armed forces) or
46 32 U.S.C. (relating to National Guard), the parent or guardian may notify school district of the
47 activation to active duty and request additional supports for the student under this section. Upon
48 receiving notification from the parent or guardian of activation, the school district shall provide
49 the student and parent or guardian with the following:

50 (1) Access to the following:

51 (i) a certified school counselor;

52 (ii) a certified school psychologist;

53 (iii) school social workers; or

54 (iv) certified home and school visitors.

55 (2) Information regarding the following:

56 (i) Existing Federal and State military support services.

57 (ii) Any other service, agency or resource necessary to support or provide assistance to
58 the student, parent or guardian.

59 (c) The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall coordinate with the
60 military division of the commonwealth to carry out this section, including posting information
61 about the requirements of this section to their publicly accessible Internet websites and providing
62 informational materials for use by school districts to inform parents and guardians of the
63 supports available under subsection (b)(2).

64 Section 4. National Guard and Reserve Parent Student Support. (a) Notwithstanding any
65 other provision of law, a military-connected student who is a child of a member of the National
66 Guard and Reserve shall be afforded the same rights as a student of an active duty military
67 family under chapter 108 of the acts of 2012, known as the Interstate Compact on Educational
68 Opportunity for Military Children Act, if a parent is required to move to perform the parent's
69 responsibilities in the service of the National Guard or Reserve resulting in the student having to
70 transfer from a public school in one state to a public school in another state.

71 Section 6. Military-connected Student Identifier. (a) A school district shall notify a
72 classroom teacher of the enrollment of a military-connected student in any class taught by the
73 teacher. The purpose of the notification is to provide the teacher with the opportunity to monitor

74 a military-connected student’s level of academic engagement, and to provide additional
75 academic support to the student as needed.

76 (b) A parent or guardian of a military-connected student may opt their child out of being
77 identified to the teacher as a military-connected student, pursuant to subsection a of this section.
78 At the request of a parent or guardian, the school district shall not notify a classroom teacher of
79 the enrollment of the military-connected student pursuant to this section.

80 SECTION 7. The ninth paragraph of Section 1G of Chapter 15 of the General Laws is
81 hereby amended by inserting after the words “school administrators and officials” the following
82 words:-

83 military-connected students,

84 SECTION 8. Section 15 of Chapter 33 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding
85 at the end the following paragraph:-

86 (j) There shall be a military spouse liaison appointed by the adjutant general who shall
87 conduct outreach to and advocate on behalf of military spouses residing in the commonwealth.
88 The duties of the military spouse liaison shall include, but not be limited to: (i) providing
89 assistance and information to military spouses seeking professional licenses and credentials or
90 other employment the commonwealth; (ii) coordinating research on issues facing military
91 spouses; (iii) creating informational materials to assist military spouses and their families; (iv)
92 providing recommendations to assist spouses in accessing high quality child care; (v) developing
93 resources in coordination with military installations to increase access to high quality child care
94 for military families; and (vi) developing, in coordination with the division of professional
95 licensure, a common form for military spouses to complete highlighting specific skills,

96 education, and training to help spouses quickly find meaningful employment in relevant sectors.
97 The military spouse liaison shall report annually to the joint committee on veterans' and federal
98 affairs and participate in policy development relating to military spouses, the clerks of the house
99 of representatives and the senate and the house and senate committees on ways and means.