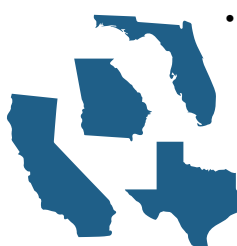


Charter Schools & Military Families in Virginia

THE PROBLEM

- **Military families move six to nine times during their child's K-12 academic experience**, making a significant impact on the quality and consistency of their child's education. They also move several times within a state from temporary to permanent housing. Because public school enrollment in Virginia is based on the address of the family, this means kids are often shuffled from school to school, a problem that public charter schools would fix because students can stay in the same school regardless of address.



- **In most other states with large military populations, families have robust options for school choice.** When they move to Virginia, military families are frustrated to learn these options – like charter schools – aren't readily available. In 2008, the Department of Defense recommended that charter school options be offered to military families stationed in locations with public schools perceived as poor performing.
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- In Norfolk, home of the largest Naval Station in the world, **nearly half of the public schools have lost full accreditation** and too many military families are forced to send their children to failing schools. Because of this, many families are choosing not to move into military housing, leaving base housing unfilled, a key factor the BRAC commission considers when making decisions about which bases to close.
 - High-quality charter school networks that parents have access to in other military communities will not open schools in Virginia due to the lack of autonomy and our state's weak charter school law.

THE SOLUTION

- Allowing more high-quality public charter schools to open in high-needs areas, including those close to military bases, would significantly strengthen the public education options available to Virginia's military families.
- Because of their small size, flexibility, and ability to welcome students from a broader geographic region, charter schools provide a more stable option for many military families. They could reduce the number of times a student has to change schools and can more quickly accommodate military students and their ability levels mid-year as is so often needed.
- New Virginia charter school legislation that allows the state to authorize high-quality public charter schools in high-needs places like Norfolk would be a lifeline to these parents and students who are serving our country and deserve more options and access to a great school.

Did you know? Virginia has over 73,000 military connected children, the highest in the country.

“The move to Virginia was hardest for my youngest son, who was in 6th grade at the time and has some special needs. He had felt safe and thrived in the small charter school he attended in Arizona. Within a week, he was thrown into a middle school with over 1,000 students where he was bullied and he still hasn't recovered academically. A small high-quality public charter school would have made our move much less stressful.

– Jill Gaitens, Director, Central and Coastal Virginia for the Military Child Education Coalition. Spouse of Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant (Ret.) Dennis Gaitens



For more information:
VirginiaChartersSchools.org

Help Virginia's military families by expanding access to high-quality public charter schools.