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***“To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth”***

**MARCH 3, 2010**

**HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

**HB 176- PUBLIC SCHOOLS – STUDENT INFORMATION – AVAILABILITY TO MILITARY RECRUITERS**

***SUPPORT***

Maryland PTA represents 180,000 members in 977 public schools across the state. Maryland PTA supports SB778, which would prohibit the release of test scores of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery to military recruiters without the consent of the student or his or her parents.

The ASVAB is a useful tool for students to gauge their interests, capabilities and talents for particular types of employment. While the US Department of Defense developed the test as a means of appropriately placing new recruits, its' usefulness extends beyond the military.

Military recruiters have access to high schools students and their directory information. National PTA is concerned about the privacy of student records, and consistent with our privacy resolution, will continue to work toward building community sensitivity about the hazards involved in the collection and dissemination of information regarding students.

In accordance with section 544 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2002 and section 9528 of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, military recruiters are entitled to receive the name, address, and telephone listing of all juniors and seniors in high school. In May 2005, the Department of Defense (DOD) announced that it was creating a massive database for recruiting and other “routine” purposes. The Pentagon has been building this database of information on more than 25 million children over the past three years. The database is updated daily and distributed monthly to the Armed Services for recruitment purposes. The database contains the child’s full name, address, email addresses, home and cell phone numbers, ethnicity, social security numbers, date of birth, gender, high school name, graduation date, Grade Point Average (GPA) code, education level, college intent (if documented), military interest (if documented), field of study, current college attending, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test date, ASVAB Armed Forces Qualifying Test Category Score. Parents and students can also “opt-out” of being included in this database but the information is not deleted but moved to a “suppression file,” where the Pentagon will retain, but not release, the information.

National PTA seeks to increase awareness and community sensitivity about the collection and dissemination of information regarding students and believes that such records should respect the rights to privacy and be relevant to a child's education.

National PTA will continue to support legislation and policies which would change current law by providing for an "opt in" policy where interested students and families can instead choose to request contact from military recruiters. Parents and students deserve to know who has their information, and parents should be involved in the important decision to enlist in military service.

Maryland PTA honors the commitment and sacrifices made by members of the military and their families, and recognizes the difficult decisions that students and families face in preparing for adulthood. Students and their parents should make informed decisions regarding joining the armed forces to serve our country, and should not be pressured into a decision based on ASVAB scores. Requiring permission for release of the test results will encourage students to use the ASVAB as the tool it is without added pressure from military recruiters.

We encourage you to vote favorably on SB778.

Respectfully,

Sam Macer, President

Merry Eisner, Vice President for Legislation