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The Honorable Pete Sessions
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Sessions:

ATPE is the largest association representing professional educators in the State of Texas, with 100,000 members, and the largest independent educator association in the country. There are currently over 2,300 ATPE members residing in the 32nd Congressional District of Texas. We write to you today to express our strong opposition to HR 5199, the Education Savings Accounts for Military Families Act of 2018.

It is our understanding that this legislation will be submitted to the House Rules Committee as a proposed amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2019. ATPE joins the Military Coalition, a coalition of more than 25 organizations representing more than 5.5 million active and former members of the U.S. Military in opposing HR 5199. This legislation would create a private school voucher program for children with an active-duty parent in the military by draining money from the Federal Impact Aid Program that supports public schools that serve military-connected students.

The State of Texas has more than 89,000 military-connected students who deserve access to a top-rate public education and who often have unique needs that the Federal Impact Aid Program was designed to address. The \$2,500 voucher program created by HR 5199 would drain limited dollars from both the public school system in Texas as well as the Federal Impact Aid Program, hurting the very military-connected students it purports to help.

As you know, our public schools in Texas are already underfunded. We cannot afford to meet our state's constitutional mandate to fund and operate a public school system and also fund private and home schools that are neither accountable nor transparent to Texas taxpayers. This would place an enormous strain on Texas public schools that, unlike private schools, have an obligation to educate every child, regardless of behavioral issues, physical disabilities, or learning disabilities.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you oppose HR 5199 and reject efforts to include this misguided legislation in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our concerns, and please feel free to reach out if you would like further information on this important subject.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Mitchell Canaday, CAE
ATPE Governmental Relations Director

Your Ally. Your Voice.

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