

TESTIMONY

Testimony To: Senate Committee on Education
Respectfully Submitted by: Daniel M. French, Ed.D., Secretary of Education
Subject: Testimony on S.104, S.105 and H.517
Date: April 1, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the following three bills:

- S.104 – Act relating to the education of military families
- S.105 – Act relating to purple start school programs
- H.517 – Act relating to the Vermont National Guard Tuition Program

S.104

We support the concept of making it easier for military families to register for school and to certify their residency. Some aspects of the bill should be cleaned up from a technical perspective, and the Agency would be happy to work with legislative counsel to improve the language:

- Remote registration – It is not clear to me if it is a requirement to register in person.
- Section C - “tuition for in-state purposes” - if a non-operating district, they would also be eligible for out of state tuition support.
 - Also, this would take effect immediately upon being a resident not at the beginning of the next semester
- Classification as an in-state student – there is no such classification now.
- Change of orders of retirement – could conflict with current residency language.

S.105

We support the [Purple Star Schools initiative](#), however, unlike other states who have adopted Purple Star programs such as Texas and Florida, Vermont does not have many military families relatively speaking, and our schools are also relatively small. That being said, we support the intent and language of S.105.

One suggestion we would make is that the proposed statutory language is sufficiently specific to implement the program on its own. We do not think there would be a need for rules to implement the program and would recommend striking paragraph (e).

H.517

We support this bill to extend the Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program to a member seeking a master’s degree or a second baccalaureate degree.