

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Lloyd J. Austin III, Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-1000

Ashish S. Vazirani, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
4000 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 203101-4000

March 5th, 2024

Dear Mr. Vazirani,

We write today to encourage the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to commit to working with state education and data officials to develop a secure, effective protocol for sharing military service data with states. We urge DoD to respond promptly to state education officials' requests to access this data and the complete information and perspective they need to maximize students' prospects for career success – including through military service.

We feel that our schools must have insight into post-high school outcomes for all students, including those who enter the military. An educator's ability to accurately communicate the benefits of all available career paths, including military enlistment, is essential when preparing students for college and other future careers. To help support states in this endeavor, Federal agencies, including DoD and the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, should collaborate with states to share necessary information about successful post-high school outcomes, such as military enlistment.

State education officials have emphasized that they are hamstrung in their ability to support graduates without access to data on career outcomes for those serving in the military. The absence of military service data leaves state data systems incomplete and schools blind to whether or not they are successfully preparing students to decide to serve. It's clear that improved data-sharing will benefit schools, high school graduates, and the military by ensuring that enlistment is more clearly recognized as a viable and rewarding career option. Students must hear this not only from military recruiters but also from their educators.

On November 13, 2023, 31 U.S. state and territory chief education officers wrote to DoD, sharing the concerns discussed above and requesting the Department's collaboration in developing a data-sharing protocol to deliver accurate, timely, and secure data on military service. As Senators committed to supporting our military and education systems, we emphasize the importance of their request and encourage DoD to prioritize engaging with our states on this matter.

To that end, we request an update on the status of DoD's response to this letter. Specifically, we request a written update on establishing a cross-agency working group to create a standard, secure process for states to access military enlistment data and any other data that the working group deems appropriate **by April 5, 2024**.

We appreciate your attention to this issue and await your prompt reply. We look forward to working with you as DoD develops a path forward for better sharing of military service information between the federal government and states.

Sincerely,

Jerry Moran

Jerry Moran
United States Senator

Thom Tillis

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Roger W. Marshall

Roger Marshall
United States Senator

Shelley Moore Capito

Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator

Patty Murray

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Mitt Romney

Mitt Romney
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Bill Cassidy
United States Senator

Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Maggie Hassan

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Mike Crapo

Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Bill Hagerty

Bill Hagerty
United States Senator

Krysten Sinema

Krysten Sinema
United States Senator

Chris Murphy

Chris Murphy
United States Senator

CC:

The Honorable Christine Wormuth, Secretary of the Army

The Honorable Frank Kendall, Secretary of the Air Force

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the Navy