



# The National Guard Association of Kansas The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Kansas



## Testimony for the Kansas Senate Committee on Education Senate Bill 473

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**Major Keith Marshall, NGAKS**  
**Technical Sergeant Eugene Bradley, EANGKS**

Other than pure patriotism, there is no greater recruiting and retention tool for the Kansas National Guard than the ability to educate our soldiers, airmen, and their families. The United States has a rich 75-year legacy of American commitment through the Montgomery GI Bill to provide education and greater opportunity to its service members and their families. The GI Bill changed the social and economic fabric of America in a way that only education can, increasing labor force participation, earnings, and job satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> The results have been clear for three-quarters of a century: more education is a good thing!

We appreciate the Treasurer's Office and the Kansas Legislature for considering National Guard soldiers and airmen for inclusion in the Kansas Investments Developing Scholars (KIDS) matching grant program, and applaud the recognition that there is not a better cost-effective investment than in the children of Kansas National Guardsmen. Probably more so than any other segment of the United States military, the National Guard is built on a foundation of family service. A great number of our Guardsmen serve in uniform alongside their parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, their own children, and a host of other relatives, and continue a family legacy of service stretching back generations. The KIDS program is a particularly good investment for National Guard families because military members are more than twice as likely to have a son or daughter who serves than are members of the general public – 21% versus 9%.<sup>2</sup>

Investing in the children of Kansas National Guard members will build a stronger Kansas for years to come. Our soldiers and airmen are Kansas residents, taxpayers, and voters who live in every legislative district in the state and report directly to the Governor of Kansas. The Guardsmen of tomorrow are who we will call on in times of emergency to protect life and property of Kansans and preserve peace, order, and public safety. Kansas Guardsmen have responded to tornadoes, ice storms, flooding, and other disasters for years, and already this month answered the call to combat wildfires near the Oklahoma border. They will continue to respond long into the future.

Thank you for considering the soldiers and airmen of the Kansas National Guard for inclusion in the KIDS matching grant program, and as always thank you for your ongoing support of the Kansas National Guard! I am available at the appropriate time to answer your questions.

### **Contacts**

Maj Keith Marshall, NGAKS, 417-438-4128, [keith.l.marshall@gmail.com](mailto:keith.l.marshall@gmail.com)  
TSgt Gene Bradley, EANGKS, 704-307-7707, [eugene.i.bradley@gmail.com](mailto:eugene.i.bradley@gmail.com)

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Jennie W. Wegner, *et al.* "Are Current Military Education Benefits Efficient and Effective for the Services?" *Rand*