**In this issue:**

* Chapter item 1
* Chapter item 2

From National MOAA

* [MOAA Leads Effort to Address Military Spouse Employment Challenges in Federal Workforce](https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/advocacy/moaa-leads-effort-to-address-military-spouse-employment-challenges-in-federal-workforce/)
* [Army, Navy Surveys Will Help Identify Needs for Military Families](https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/spouse-and-family/army%2C-navy-surveys-will-help-identify-needs-for-military-families/)

**Chapters – enter title of your first news item here**

You can use the first part of this newsletter template for your Chapter news to include any meeting recaps or agendas, local news, state legislative issues, and other matters for your members. Please replace “Chapter item 1” above with an applicable topic title.

**Chapters – enter title of your second news item here**

You can enter your second news item here and if you have any additional items you can copy the formatting and style for any other information you would like to share.

**Annual Meeting Recap: MOAA President Outlines People-Focused Efforts to Strengthen the Association**

*By: Jen Goodale*

MOAA, in collaboration with leading military family support organizations, has urged the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) to prioritize a pressing issue affecting military families: the retention of military spouses employed by the federal government.

In a joint Nov. 18 letter to SASC Chairman Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) and Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), the committee’s ranking member, the organizations called on the committee to adopt Section 1113 of the House version of the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This provision seeks to address the unique employment challenges military spouses face, particularly those in the federal workforce.

**[**[**READ THE LETTER**](https://www.moaa.org/contentassets/c4c4ebc90582487c849474fa5e23c4e4/moaa-letter-sec-1113-fy25-ndaa.pdf)**]**

**Military Spouse Employment: A Critical Issue**

Military spouse unemployment remains at 21%, more than three times the national average. Frequent relocations due to PCS moves disrupt careers, often forcing spouses to leave federal employment. These disruptions undermine financial stability and intensify the economic challenges faced by military families.

“Military families face immense pressure from childcare shortages and inadequate housing to the added burden of high unemployment and underemployment rates of military spouses. In many cases, a dual income is vital … to achieve financial stability,” the letter states.

“Section 1113 provides a commonsense, cost-neutral solution that benefits both military families and the Department of Defense by ensuring military spouses can continue contributing to their family’s financial security and military readiness.”

**Provision Breakdown**

Section 1113 introduces flexible measures to improve job retention for federally employed military spouses:

1. **Remote Work Flexibility:**Federal agencies would evaluate positions for remote work potential, enabling military spouses to continue their roles despite PCS moves.
2. **Reassignment and Alternative Worksites:**Agencies could offer equivalent positions at new duty locations or alternative worksites, minimizing disruptions to careers.
3. **Leave Without Pay (LWOP):**For those unable to work remotely or relocate within the agency, LWOP would ensure continued employment status and retention of non-financial benefits such as security clearances. This provision would align with the duration of PCS orders, easing workforce reentry when opportunities arise.

**The Federal Government’s Role**

Private employers, including Amazon, Starbucks, and Boeing, already have implemented initiatives to support military spouse employment, inspired by the [READINESS Act](https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/advocacy/spouse-employment-meaningful-change-will-require-real-commitment/) framework which serves as the basis of Section 1113.

However, the federal government has lagged in offering comparable accommodations, a significant oversight given its position as the nation’s largest employer and an executive order calling on the government to be the “[employer of choice](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/06/09/executive-order-on-advancing-economic-security-for-military-and-veteran-spouses-military-caregivers-and-survivors/)” for military dependents.

Federal agencies “should be setting be the gold standard for supporting military spouse employment,” the letter states. “For many spouses stationed overseas, the federal government is often the only viable employer.”

**A Win for Military Readiness and Retention**

MOAA emphasizes the broader implications of military spouse employment for military readiness and retention. Financial instability caused by lost spousal income can hinder a servicemember’s ability to focus on their mission, placing unnecessary strain on families.

By enabling military spouses to retain employment, Section 1113 would ease financial burdens, improve quality of life for military families, and strengthen overall force readiness.

As MOAA and its partners push for the inclusion of Section 1113 in the NDAA, the message to lawmakers is clear: Retaining military spouses in the federal workforce is not just a benefit for families, it is a strategic imperative for the nation’s defense.

With the NDAA under deliberation, military families are hopeful this critical provision will garner the support it needs to become law. Use MOAA’s [Legislative Action Center](https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/53724/) to ask your senators to support efforts to retain federally employed military spouses.

**Army, Navy Surveys Will Help Identify Needs for Military Families**

By: Kevin Lilley

Two ongoing surveys will allow Army and Navy servicemembers and families to weigh in on programs critical to the readiness and morale of the all-volunteer force.

Why take part? MOAA and other advocacy groups use data from these and similar surveys to set legislative agendas, determining which focus areas will make the most difference for the wider uniformed services community. Only by identifying chokepoints, faulty programs, or areas of concern across the services can MOAA succeed in its efforts to improve quality of life for all in uniform, regardless of rank or branch.

Beyond the surveys, servicemembers and dependents can use the new [DoD Housing Feedback System](https://www.dhfs.mil/rfs/) to address more direct housing concerns, such as submitting new maintenance orders, beginning the dispute resolution process on existing orders, and finding contact information for landlords/property managers, housing offices, or other DoD resources.

Some details about the ongoing surveys, including eligibility and open dates:

**Navy Military Personnel Housing Survey**

**What:** Survey-takers will be asked about their current housing (type, costs, etc.), how they make housing-related decisions, and how family concerns affect housing needs.

**Why:** Results will inform Housing Requirements Market Analyses (HRMAs), which are used to determine housing allotments on or near installations. Learn more about the importance of those reports – and some issues with DoD’s timeliness in their completion – [at this link](https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/advocacy/gao-report-finds-flaws-in-dods-approach-to-housing-challenges/).

**Details:**Survey results are confidential. The survey takes 5 to 10 minutes and is open through Dec. 20. [Click this link](https://www.research.net/r/NMHS2025) to learn more and to take the survey – have your Unit Identification Code (UIC) ready.

**Army MWR Survey**

**What:**The Customer Needs Survey from Army Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (Army FMWR) is open to servicemembers assigned to Army installations or support activities (regardless of branch) and their family members, along with any other eligible Army MWR participants. It covers the full range of MWR offerings, to include child care, dining, gyms, and more.

**Why:**“We’ll use it to improve existing programs and develop new ones that better serve our customers – and create a more fulfilling Family and MWR experience for everyone,” Josh Gwinn, director of Family and MWR programs, said in a [news release announcing the survey](https://www.dvidshub.net/news/485761/mwr-survey-gives-army-families-say-programs-serve-them).

**Why Else:**Survey-takers will be entered to win a five-night trip to any [Armed Forces Recreation Center Resort](https://www.armymwr.com/travel/armed-forces-hotels-resorts).

**Details:**The survey is confidential and takes about 10 minutes. It closes in January. [Click here](https://www.armymwr.com/survey) for details, to take the survey, and to enter the trip sweepstakes. Email amy.m.leon.naf@army.mil with questions.

Do you have concerns about housing or family readiness issues that aren’t covered by your survey, or do you fall outside the survey pools? MOAA is always seeking feedback from currently serving members and their families to ensure DoD programs are working as intended and quality of life challenges are addressed. Email legis@moaa.org to reach us.