



Message from National PTA President Charles J. "Chuck" Saylor,

As you know, the benefits of our work on behalf of every child flow through schools and communities throughout this great country. It reaches across oceans, to our military bases and to our military families, and back home again to the families of our reservists and national guard troops.

These families cope with constant transition and relocation. Nine percent of enlisted soldiers and 30 percent of officers serving more than 14 years in the military have moved their families more than nine times, according to Morton Ender. By the time their children reach their senior year in high school, they will have attended schools in six-to-nine different school systems. About 16.6 percent of our soldiers, officers, guardsmen and reservists are deployed around the world defending the freedoms we hold so dear. This means that their children remain at home, missing the moms and dads who would otherwise provide them love and care.

The stress of these transitions, along with the lack of strong community ties, can take a toll on our military families. A 1998 study of children of U.S. soldiers deployed in Bosnia, 8-to-11 year olds were more-anxious about the wellbeing of their parents, retained images of war recounted to them by their parents and felt their families struggled with isolation and depression. They need shelters from the storms of life and sources of stability during times of constant change.

This is why National PTA, along with the Department of Defense schools, and organizations such as the Military Child Education Coalition, has formed PTA Alliance to Support Military Families. Through this initiative, we hope to ease their lives and help children in their learning, health and emotional growth. We want our PTAs to be as sheltering for these kids as we are for our children in civilian life.

It is also why we also approved a resolution at the 2010 National PTA Convention mobilizing PTAs in support of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The compact, developed by the Council of State Governments' National Center for Interstate Compacts, in cooperation with the Department of Defense, ensures smoother transitions for military children when they transfer to different states and school districts. Twenty-eight states have enacted the compact so far; we will need your help to gain participation from every state. More information on the PTA Alliance to Support Military Families will be provided at PTA.org.

Our military families deserve the structure, support and resources for education and wellness that we provide to our families at home each and every day. Thank you for lending your voice to improving life for every child.