



MISSION: READINESS

MILITARY LEADERS FOR KIDS

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Retired Admirals and Generals Urge Congress To Get Junk Food Out of Schools

*Former Head of California Army National Guard
Tells House Panel Child Obesity Poses a Threat to National Security*

Washington, D.C. (July 1, 2010) – Representing more than 150 retired U.S. admirals and generals across the country, a retired U.S. Army Major General from California told a Congressional panel today that child obesity rates are so high they pose a threat to national security.

Retired U.S. Army Major General Paul Monroe, a former head of the California Army National Guard, urged Congress to move quickly to pass new child nutrition legislation to help reduce the child obesity epidemic and expand the pool of healthy young adults available for military service.

“Make no mistake. Child obesity threatens our nation’s security,” said Monroe, who cited recent Defense Department statistics showing that 27 percent of all young adults, an estimated 9 million Americans ages 17 to 24, are too overweight to join the military. “When 1 in 4 young adults is too overweight to defend our country, then something is seriously wrong.”

Testifying before the House Education & Labor Committee, Monroe represented MISSION: READINESS, a non-profit, bipartisan group of retired generals and admirals who support major new investments in the nation’s school nutrition program. The committee, chaired by Rep. George Miller, D-CA, also heard from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and other experts on child nutrition.

General Monroe noted recent research showing that up to 40 percent of children’s daily calorie intake occurs at school and that 80 percent of children who were overweight between the ages of 10 to 15 were obese by age 25. Improving school nutrition is therefore a crucial area for reducing or preventing child obesity, Monroe said.

Monroe told the panel that retired military leaders are calling on Congress to enact a robust child nutrition bill that would:

- Get the junk food and remaining high-calorie beverages out of the nation’s schools
- Support increased resources for child nutrition programs that would improve nutrition standards, upgrade the quality of meals served in schools and enable more children to have access to these programs, and

(more)

MISSION: READINESS is the nonprofit, bi-partisan organization of senior retired military leaders ensuring continued American security and prosperity into the 21st century by calling for smart investments in the next generation of American children.

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- Help develop new school-based strategies, based on research, that help parents and children adopt healthier life-long eating and exercise habits.

“In 1946, Congress passed the National School Lunch Act as a matter of national security,” said Monroe. “In the past retired admirals and generals have stood up to make it clear that America is only as healthy as our nation’s children. Childhood obesity is now undermining our national security, and we need to start turning it around today,” he said.

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MISSION: READINESS is a national non-profit group of more than 150 retired admirals, generals and other military leaders, including two former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hugh Shelton (Ret.) and General John Shalikashvili (Ret.).

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