MISSION: READINESS
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA

June 10, 2020

Dear Members of Congress,

As retired U.S. admirals and generals, we know that the health of our population directly impacts the strength of our nation. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted many children's access to their only healthy, balanced meal of the day, increasing malnutrition, and adversely affecting their health.

We write on behalf of the 750 retired admirals and generals of Mission: Readiness who are working to ensure that all youth are prepared to serve their country in the Armed Forces, or in any career path they may choose. We are gravely concerned that 71 percent of young adults in America are currently ineligible to serve in the military. Obesity, which is a manifestation of malnutrition, is the leading medical disqualifier.

Across the country and in our local communities, we have seen how school closures and other disruptions have made it more difficult for kids to access balanced, nutritious meals. We appreciate the steps already taken by Congress to address these challenges, but it is clear that **additional action is needed**. Specifically, we ask you to:

1. **Provide supplemental funding for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to offset the increased costs associated with safely operating these programs throughout the pandemic.**

2. **Increase Technical Assistance funding to train school and summer meal program food preparers to serve nutritious and balanced meals, with available food supplies, while complying with health and packaging requirements necessary for safety during this pandemic.**

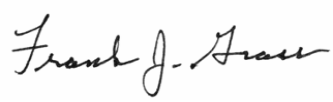
3. **Require USDA to maximize the amount of purchased commodities available for school and summer meal providers to help address food supply shortages.**

America's military leaders have long recognized the role childhood nutrition plays in our national security. The National School Lunch Program was created in the aftermath of World War II, when

military leaders alerted lawmakers that malnutrition prevented as many as 40% of potential recruits from meeting the requirements to be eligible to serve.

Today, as COVID-19 presents a new threat to our nation, the school and summer meals programs are an indispensable part of our national security. Funding these programs now will combat malnutrition manifesting as obesity and help ensure that America's youngest generation can realize a healthy, prosperous, and secure future.

Respectfully,



General Frank J. Grass
U.S. Army, Retired
Missouri



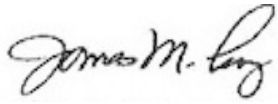
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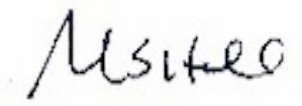
Major General Ronald O. Harrison
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