



June 11, 2021

FY22 Budget Conference Committee
Massachusetts Legislature
24 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Legislators:

As Massachusetts military and law enforcement leaders, we understand the difficult challenges you face as you negotiate a final FY22 budget agreement. While the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic may be behind us, the long-term impacts of the public health and economic crisis will be felt by families in the commonwealth for years to come.

As you craft a budget agreement to strengthen the Commonwealth's recovery efforts, we urge you to prioritize investments in early care and education.

While it may come as a surprise to some, Bay State military and law enforcement leaders are united in our belief that investments in early care and education are critical for our future national security and public safety. Today, a staggering 69 percent of young adults in Massachusetts are ineligible for military service, due to educational deficits, obesity, or a record of crime or drug abuse. Additionally, across our state correctional facilities are filled with inmates serving time for serious and costly crimes. Research overwhelmingly shows that high-quality programs can help to address *both* of these challenges, by boosting academic outcomes, supporting development of social-emotional skills, steering kids away from crime, and even improving certain health outcomes.

Last month, our organizations, Mission: Readiness and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, released the enclosed research brief, *Massachusetts' Working Families Need Early Care and Education*. The brief emphasizes the deep benefits of high quality early learning and care programs to the Commonwealth's future strength and security. A moderated discussion on the brief featuring retired U.S. Army Brigadier General Jack Hammond and Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr. can be found [on our website](#).

Despite the strong outcomes afforded by these programs, access remains out of reach for far too many children and working families. Historic and systemic workforce challenges, exacerbated by closures and social distancing requirements over the last year, threaten the sustainability of existing programs.

For these reasons, we strongly encourage you to ensure that a final FY22 budget agreement includes direct investments that sustain and expand access to these programs, as well as ensure the sustainability of the workforce necessary to ensure they can function. Specifically, we urge you to fund the **Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (3000-6025)** at \$10,000,000 (Senate funding) and the **Rate Reserve Increase for Early Educators**

(3000-1042) at \$20,000,000 (House funding).

We believe that these investments are vital to ensuring the strength and stability of programs critical to our national security and public safety. They're also vital for our economy too; working parents depend on a safe place to send their child during the day. Our sister organization, ReadyNation, recently estimated that inadequate access to child care, just for infants and toddlers, costs Massachusetts taxpayers an estimated \$1.6 billion annually in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.

Early care and education plays a critical role in preparing children of the commonwealth for success, strengthening our national security, improving public safety, and strengthening our economy. We urge you to make these critical investments vital for our future strength and prosperity.

Very respectfully,

MISSION: READINESS

Admiral Scott H. Swift

U.S. Navy, Retired
Westport

Lieutenant General Kevin T. Campbell

U.S. Army, Retired
Shrewsbury

Lieutenant General Jack Weinstein

U.S. Air Force, Retired
Plymouth

**Brigadier General John "Jack"
Hammond**

U.S. Army, Retired
Reading

Brigadier General Gary A. Pappas

U.S. Army, Retired
Boston

Brigadier General Paul Gregory Smith

U.S. Army, Retired
Ashburnham

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS

Randhi Belain

Chief of Police
Aquinnah Police Department

James Cummings

Sheriff
Barnstable County Sheriff's Office

Matthew Sonnabend

Chief of Police
Barnstable Police Department

Michael Blanchard

Chief of Police
Brookfield Police Department

Normand Crepeau, Jr.

Chief of Police
Grafton Police Department

Nicholas Cocchi

Sheriff
Hampden County Sheriff's Office

Michael Lyle
Chief of Police
Melrose Police Department

Jody Kasper
Chief of Police
Northampton Police Department

Daniel Hamill
Chief of Police
Otis Police Department

John Llewellyn
Chief of Police
Rockland Police Department

James Hicks
Chief of Police
Natick Police Department

David Sullivan
District Attorney
Northwestern District Attorney's Office

Michael Wynn
Chief of Police
Pittsfield Police Department

Joseph Early
District Attorney
Worcester County District Attorney's Office