



May 20, 2024

Dear Members of Congress,

The strength of our country depends on a strong military. This is a significant challenge since **77 percent of today's young adults ages 17 to 24 cannot qualify for military service** because they are not academically prepared, are too overweight, or have a record of crime or drug abuse.

Representing [Mission: Readiness](#), an organization of over 800 retired admirals and generals, we cannot accept the status quo for our national security or our nation's young people. For the past 15 years, Mission: Readiness has championed evidence-based, bipartisan state and federal public policy solutions that are proven to prepare our youth to be ready and able to serve their nation in any way they choose.

At the top of this list are solutions that help ensure a strong start in the earliest years of a child's life. Decades of research have shown the short- and long-term benefits of high-quality early childhood programs for children's development, including addressing factors that can later disqualify youth from military service. We know that quality early childhood care and education lays the foundation upon which all later learning and success are built, helping kids to grow up healthy, productive, and crime-free. Early childhood programs can also serve as essential venues for promoting healthy habits, such as good nutrition and physical activity.

However, despite these documented benefits, interrelated challenges around child care access, affordability, and quality have resulted in a crisis that now costs our nation [\\$122 billion](#) in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue every year.

To help counteract these challenges, we urge Congress to prioritize additional funding to expand the following programs:

- **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Program** - Provides states with funding to help low-income families secure child care. CCDBG requires parents to be working or attending school or job training.
- **Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS)** - Designed to promote school readiness for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers at no cost to families in poverty.
- **Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5)** - Available to states and territories and are designed to improve states' existing early childhood systems that support children from birth through age 5 and their families. PDG can also strengthen the capacity of states' early childhood workforce through providing professional development opportunities, onsite coaching to teachers, and creating policies to provide pay parity with K-12 teachers.

1025 Connecticut Avenue NW / Suite 1100 / Washington, DC 20036

Protecting and strengthening these strategic early childhood investments can help preserve our national security and prepare our youth to serve their nation in any way they choose.

Sincerely,

David A. Bramlett
General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Hawaii

Bantz J. Craddock
General (Retired)
U.S. Army
South Carolina

Frank J. Grass
General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Missouri

Stanley A. McChrystal
General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

William S. Wallace
General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Florida

Johnnie E. Wilson
General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Walter E. Boomer
General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
South Carolina

William L. Nyland
General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Florida

William Evans Gortney
Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

John C. Harvey Jr.
Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Gregory G. Johnson
Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Maine

Scott Swift
Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Massachusetts

William M. Fraser, III
General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Texas

James M. Loy
Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
Virginia

Jared L. Bates
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

John Michael Bednarek
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Dennis L. Benchoff
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Pennsylvania

Jeffrey Buchanan
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Arizona

Kevin T. Campbell
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Massachusetts

Robert Caslen
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Florida

Dennis D. Cavin
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Tennessee

Karen E. Dyson
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
New York

Samuel E. Ebbesen
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Robert G. Gard Jr.
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

William B. Garrett III
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Georgia

Mark Hertling
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Florida

Donald L. Kerrick
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Florida

Raymond V. Mason
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Paul Ostrowski
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

John P. Otjen
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Georgia

Randall L. Rigby
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Illinois

Mitchell H. Stevenson
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

William P. Tangney
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
South Carolina

Richard P. Zahner
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Arizona

John G. Castellaw
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Tennessee

Carol A. Mutter
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Indiana

Henry P. Osman
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Virginia

Duane D. Thiessen
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Florida

Donald Arthur
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Massachusetts

Nancy E. Brown
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Illinois

Daniel L. Cooper
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Pennsylvania

Lewis W. Crenshaw Jr.
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Richard W. Mayo
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Maine

Rick Snyder
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Florida

James D. Williams
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Maine

Mathias Winter
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

John A. Bradley
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Tennessee

John D. Hopper Jr.
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Jan-Marc Jouas
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Washington

Tad Oelstrom
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Massachusetts

John F. Regni
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Arizona

Norman R. Seip
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Thomas Trask
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Maryland

Jack Weinstein
Lieutenant General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Massachusetts

Manson K. Brown
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
Virginia

James D. Hull
Vice Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
California

Earl Adams
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Maine

Marcia Anderson
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Wisconsin

Arthur Bartell
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Michigan

Peter Berry
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Maine

Buford Blount III
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Mississippi

David R. Bockel
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Georgia

Ronald S. Chastain
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Arkansas

James W. Comstock
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
California

James Davis
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Georgia

Allan Elliott
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Georgia

William Enyart
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Illinois

Rick D. Erlandson
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Minnesota

Gina Farrisee
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Malcolm Frost
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

William Grimsley
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
South Carolina

Earnest L. Harrington Jr.
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Mississippi

Ronald O. Harrison
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Florida

Steven John Hashem
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
New Jersey

Ralph L. Haynes M.D.
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
North Carolina

Stephen Hogan
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Kentucky

Sanford Holman
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Maryland

Robert C. Hughes Jr.
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Georgia

Jeffrey A. Jacobs
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
South Carolina

Ronald L. Johnson
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Georgia

Matthew L. Kambic
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Arizona

Dennis E. Klein
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Oregon

Curtis A. Loop
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Oregon

Walt Lord
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Tennessee

Larry J. Lust
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Kansas

Dennis E. Lutz
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Michigan

Randy Manner
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Gregg Martin
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Florida

Thomas E. Mattson
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Oregon

Wade McManus
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
South Carolina

James M. Milano
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Illinois

Gerald A. Miller
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Michigan

Johnny Miller
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Illinois

Don C. Morrow
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Arkansas

Roger A. Nadeau
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Richard J. Noriega
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Texas

Joseph F. Perugino
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Pennsylvania

David C. Petersen
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Nebraska

Jeffrey Edward Phillips
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Leslie Purser
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Tennessee

Marilyn A. Quagliotti
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Stephen V. Reeves
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Jon R. Root
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Washington

Roger W. Sandler
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
South Carolina

Robert S. Silverthorn Jr.
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Kentucky

Michael Sumrall
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

James Taylor
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Iowa

Bennie E. Williams
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
North Carolina

Margaret C. Wilmoth
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
North Carolina

William Wofford
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Arkansas

Jessica Garfola Wright
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Pennsylvania

D. Allen Youngman
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Kentucky

Juan Ayala
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Texas

Francis X. Hamilton
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Florida

James E. Livingston
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
South Carolina

David M. Mize
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Louisiana

Douglas V. O'Dell
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Maine

Ronald G. Richard
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Louisiana

C. Dean Sangalis
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Indiana

Gregg Sturdevant
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Florida

Daniel Bowler
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Maryland

Michael Broadway
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Georgia

Walter Cantrell
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
North Carolina

Wendi B. Carpenter
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Georgia

Casey W. Coane
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Georgia

Donna Lynn Crisp
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Bryan P. Cutchen
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Maine

Timothy Gallaudet
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Maryland

Sinclair Harris
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Richard R. Jeffries D.O.
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
California

Edward K. Kristensen
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
District of Columbia

John H. McKinley
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Tennessee

Donald P. Quinn
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Florida

John Scorby
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Florida

Steven Tomaszeski
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Maryland

Miles B. Wachendorf
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Robert O. Wray Jr.
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Maryland

Ronald Bath
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Nevada

William D. Cobetto
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Illinois

Thomas G. Cutler
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Michigan

Gary R. Dylewski
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Illinois

David M. Edgington
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

David Eidsaune
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Washington

Wallace Farris
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Washington

Frank R. Faykes
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Terrence A. Feehan
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Arizona

Dawn Ferrell
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Texas

Michael S. Hall
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
New York

Irving Halter
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Pennsylvania

Gerald E. Harmon
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
South Carolina

James J. Jones
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Steven J. Lepper
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Florida

Mark R. Musick
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Nebraska

John F. Nichols
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Texas

Anthony F. Przybyslawski
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Colorado

Lenny Richoux
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Gregory J. Schwab
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Iowa

Cassie Strom
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Missouri

Edward W. Tonini
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Kentucky

Bobby J. Wilkes
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Michael N. Wilson
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Florida

Delilah Works
Major General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Tennessee

Thomas Atkin
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
Virginia

J. Burhoe
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
Virginia

Paul Busick
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
North Carolina

Pat DeQuattro
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
District of Columbia

Mary E. Landry
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
Florida

John Nadeau
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
North Carolina

Steven H. Ratti
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
North Carolina

Richard Schneider
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
Vermont

James Carter Van Sice
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Coast Guard
Maryland

Anthony Adrian
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Missouri

Roger Allen
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Michigan

Sandra Alvey
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Arthur Austin
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
New York

William Austin
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Illinois

Bruce Bingham
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
South Carolina

James Bisson
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Texas

Stephen Bogle
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Florida

James Brunson
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
North Carolina

Stephen Curda
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Illinois

Charles O. Dillard
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Ohio

Dwayne Drummond
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Maine

Michael A. Dunn M.D.
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Indiana

Robert E. Gaylord
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Virginia

Richard V. Geraci
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Kansas

Richard Clayton Gross
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Tennessee

John A. Hammond
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Massachusetts

John C. Hanley
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Wisconsin

Gary L. Jones
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Louisiana

Timothy Kennedy
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Minnesota

Kenneth A. Koon
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Wisconsin

Maureen LeBoeuf
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
North Carolina

Robert C. Lee
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Maine

Donald H. Marden
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Maine

Daryl McCall
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Missouri

Jerry L. Neff
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Florida

James P. O'Neal
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
South Carolina

John Poppe
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Texas

Gary M. Profit
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
North Carolina

Douglas R. Satterfield
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
New Jersey

George M. Schwartz
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Pennsylvania

Paul Gregory Smith
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Massachusetts

Shepard B. Stone
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Connecticut

Lance A. Talmage
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Ohio

William T. Thielemann
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Georgia

Robin Umberg
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
California

Blake E. Williams
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
North Carolina

Dayle Williamson
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Nebraska

Clarence Elliott Workman
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Delaware

Mark E. Zirkelbach
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Army
Iowa

Stephen Cheney
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Virginia

Peter Collins
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Ohio

Roger Machut
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Illinois

Joseph V. Medina
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Texas

Michael I. Neil
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
California

J. Scott O'Meara
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
North Carolina

David G. Reist
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
Virginia

Kevin Stewart
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
North Carolina

James C. Walker
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Marine Corps
South Carolina

James Barnett
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Robert Besal
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
South Carolina

Richard Butler
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Gerald Clusen
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Wisconsin

Scott Craig
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Michael Curran
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Ronald H. Henderson Jr.
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
North Carolina

Tilghman Payne
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Georgia

Kenneth M. Perry
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Fernandez Ponds
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
California

Eleanor Valentin
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Washington

Charles F. Williams
Rear Admiral (Retired)
U.S. Navy
Virginia

Dana Born
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Max Della Pia
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
New York

John Douglass
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Jerald Engelman
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Minnesota

Dan R. Goodrich
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Florida

Judy M. Griego
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
New Mexico

Allison A. Hickey
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

James M. Johnston III
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Colorado

Larry V. Lunt
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Utah

Joe I. Mensching
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Arizona

Robert Palmer
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Stephan A. Pappas
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Wyoming

James L. Pierce
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Arizona

Avrum Mark Rabin
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Illinois

James W. Schroeder
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Illinois

Debra A. Scullary
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
New York

Sharon Shaffer
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Allyson R. Solomon
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Virginia

Richard W. Tuttle
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Maine

Guy M. Walsh
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Maryland

Terrence P. Woods
Brigadier General (Retired)
U.S. Air Force
Arizona

Alford L. McMichael
Sergeant Major of the Marine
Corps
U.S. Marine Corps
Virginia

Michael Montelongo
Former Secretary for Financial
Management
U.S. Air Force
Arizona

Charles Bowen
Master Chief Petty Officer of
the Coast Guard
U.S. Coast Guard
Florida

Vincent W. Patton III
Master Chief Petty Officer of
the Coast Guard
U.S. Coast Guard
Virginia