



**MISSION: READINESS**  
MILITARY LEADERS FOR KIDS

September 15, 2014

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the over 450 retired generals and admirals of MISSION: READINESS, I want to express our support for S. 1086, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, as reported out by the House Education & the Workforce Committee. In order to staff the highly advanced, all-volunteer U.S. Armed Forces in the years to come, we must prioritize the development and care of our youngest citizens now. We support S. 1086 and its enhanced quality requirements as an investment in our future military preparedness.

As an organization whose members have served in the highest ranks of the military, we are alarmed by Department of Defense data that over 70% of Americans between the ages of 17-24 are ineligible for military service, primarily due to inadequate education, a lack of physical fitness, or serious criminal involvement. The research is clear that high-quality early childhood programs can significantly reduce each of these barriers to enlistment. High-quality early childhood programs provide a solid foundation for the next generation to grow up citizen-ready, whether or not they choose to pursue a career in the military.

We support the legislation's strong emphasis on program quality and safety standards, as necessary components for program success. We also applaud the enhanced nutrition provision in S. 1086 that will promote healthy eating habits necessary to reduce the rate of childhood obesity that threatens not only the next generation's potential military eligibility, but also their long-term health. Given that there is an urgent unmet need for these services – with only 1 in 6 eligible children currently receiving assistance – additional resources will be required to improve access to quality care.

As an organization committed to promoting national security, we support S. 1086, the Child Care and Development Block Grant of 2014, as reported out by the House Education & the Workforce Committee. We look forward to continuing to work together to prioritize proven investments to reduce barriers to military enlistment and sustain future military readiness.

Very respectfully,

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