



21 September 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-323 Capitol Building  
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable John Boehner, Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204 Capitol Building  
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 Capitol Building  
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 Capitol Building  
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Representative Boehner, and Senators Reid and McConnell:

As retired Generals, Admirals, and other senior leaders of the United States Armed Forces, we are deeply troubled by the difficulty that child obesity is placing on our nation's ability to sustain a high level of military readiness. **In this regard, we respectfully urge you to work together to ensure passage of a robust and fully funded child nutrition reauthorization bill before the programs expire on September 30, 2010.**

Obesity is now the leading medical reason why young Americans today are unable to qualify for the armed forces. At least 9 million young adults, or 27 percent of all young Americans ages 17 to 24, are too overweight to enlist. Since 1995, the proportion of candidates who failed their physical exams due to weight problems increased by a staggering 70 percent. This all-too-common disqualifier is limiting the pool of available recruits and eroding our military readiness.

By now most of us have heard that child obesity rates have more than tripled in the last 30 years. New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) paints an even starker portrait of the last decade: from 1998 to 2008 the number of states reporting that 40 percent or more young adults were overweight or obese rose from one state to 39.

Turning the tide of obesity in this country will not be an easy task. Certainly, there is no single action that we as a nation can take to remedy this problem. However, it is clear that one immediate step we must take is to improve the quality and nutritional value of food and beverages served in our schools.

The school setting is critical for shaping the lifelong eating and exercise habits of our youth. Research published in *Health Affairs* shows that as much as 40 percent of a child's daily caloric intake occurs at school. What children eat in school can either be part of the problem, or part of the solution to our nation's obesity crisis.

Comprehensive child nutrition reauthorization can address the issue of child obesity by facilitating a healthier school environment. An effective reauthorization proposal should raise the quality of all foods and beverages served on school grounds, promote nutrition education, and help simplify enrollment and increase access to child nutrition programs.

**An overhaul of child nutrition programs cannot wait any longer. Therefore, we respectfully request that you move expeditiously to fund and pass a robust child nutrition reauthorization bill so that these crucial reforms can be enacted before the end of the September work period.**

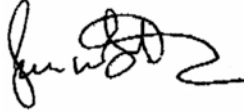
1212 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 30  
Washington, DC 20005

202.464.5224

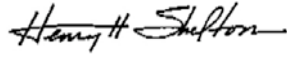
[MissionReadiness.org](http://MissionReadiness.org)

To be sure, our military stands ready to protect against those who would threaten our security. But in order to sustain our military strength in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must ensure that upcoming generations of Americans will be fit to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,



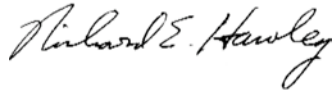
John M. Shalikashvili  
*General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



Henry "Hugh" Shelton  
*General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



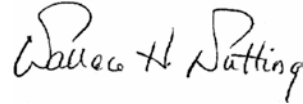
Walter E. Boomer  
*General*  
U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)



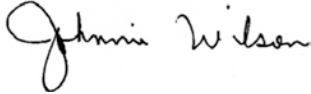
Richard E. Hawley  
*General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)



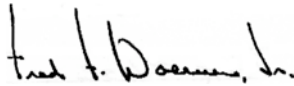
Gregory S. "Speedy" Martin  
*General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)



Wallace H. Nutting  
*General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)




Johnnie Wilson  
*General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



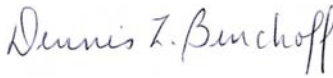
Fred F. Woerner, Jr.  
*General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



Thomas B. Hayward  
*Admiral*  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)



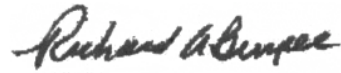
Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr.  
*Admiral*  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)



Dennis L. Benchoff  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



Julius W. Becton, Jr.  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



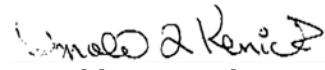
Richard A. Burpee  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Air Force



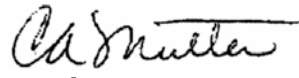
Robert G. Gard, Jr.  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



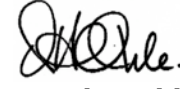
Jerome B. Hilmes  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



Donald L. Kerrick  
*Lieutenant General*  
US Army (Ret.)



Carol A. Mutter  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)



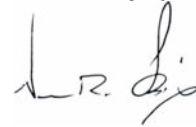
David H. Ohle  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



John P. Otjen  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



Richardo S. Sanchez  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



Norman R. Seip  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

William P. Tangney  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Frederick E. Vollrath  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Robert J. Winglass  
*Lieutenant General*  
U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)

Donald Arthur, M.D.  
*Vice Admiral*  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Edward H. Martin  
*Vice Admiral*  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

James A. Zimble  
*Vice Admiral*  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Earl L. Adams  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Signature Not Available

James B. Allen, Jr.  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Buford "Buff" Blount, III  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Roger R. Blunt  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Ronald E. Brooks  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army National Guard  
(Ret.)

Larry D. Budge  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

George A. Buskirk, Jr.  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Jack Catton  
*Major General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Carroll D. Childers  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Drennan Anthony Clark  
*Major General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

James W. Comstock  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Wesley E. Craig  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

John T. Crowe  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Jay T. Edwards  
*Major General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Frank R. Faykes  
*Major General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Donald R. Infante  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Jerome Johnson  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

James A. Kelley  
*Major General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

John W. Libby  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

William Joseph Lutz  
Major General  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Lester Martinez-Lopez  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Paul D. Monroe, Jr.  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Melvyn Montano  
Major General  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Stephen E. Nichols  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

George W. Norwood  
Major General  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Daniel J. O'Neill  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

H. Douglas Robertson  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Roger W. Sandler  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

George J. Smith  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Thomas J. Thorne  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Jack C. Wheeler  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

James A. Barnett, Jr.  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Robert E. Besal  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Walter H. Cantrell  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Roland G. Guilbault  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Edward K. Kristensen  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

James E. McPherson  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Stuart F. Platt  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

John F. Shipway  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Alan M. Steinman  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)

Robert Sutton  
Rear Admiral  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Clara L. Adams-Ender  
Brigadier General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Robert G. Carmichael  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Signature Not Available  
Julia J. Cleckley  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Michael A. Dunn, M.D.  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Robert E. Gaylord  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Larry W. Haltom  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army National Guard  
(Ret.)

Roy Martin  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Gary M. Profit  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Roger S. Shields  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Chalmers Carr, Jr.  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Augustus L. Collins  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Charles K. Ebner  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Edward H. Gerhardt  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

David Hicks  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

David L. McGinnis  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Velma Richardson  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Harry A. Sieben  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

George N. Clark, Jr.  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Francis R. Dillon  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Pat E. Foote  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

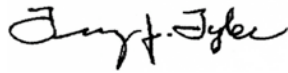
Lawrence E. Gillespie, Sr.  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Ralph E. Leonard  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

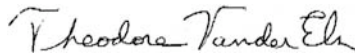
Douglas M. Pierce  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Dennis Schulstad  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

William T. Thielemann  
*Brigadier General*  
U.S. Army Reserve (Ret.)



Terry Tyler  
Brigadier General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



Theodore Vander Els  
Brigadier General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



Augustine A. Verrengia  
Brigadier General  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)



John M. Watkins  
Brigadier General  
U.S. Army (Ret.)



Eric Benken  
Chief Master Sergeant  
of the U.S. Air Force (Ret.)



Frederick J. Finch  
Chief Master Sergeant of the  
Air Force (Ret.)



James L. Herdt  
Master Chief Petty Officer of  
the Navy (Ret.)

Signature Not Available

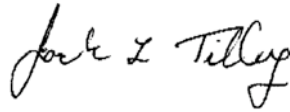
John L. Estrada  
Sergeant Major of the Marine  
Corps (Ret.)



Michele S. Jones  
Command Sergeant Major of  
the Army Reserve (Ret.)



Vincent W. Patton, III  
Master Chief Petty Officer of  
the Coast Guard (Ret.)



Jack L. Tilley  
Sergeant Major of the Army  
(Ret.)



Joe Reeder  
Former Under Secretary of the  
Army



Alford L. McMichael  
Sergeant Major of the  
Marine Corps (Ret.)