



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: David Carrier

Phone: 202-464-5362 (desk), dcarrier@missionreadiness.org

**Retired Generals Meet with Sen. Alexander to Voice Support for Improvements
in Early Learning and Physical Education As a Matter of National Security**

WASHINGTON, DC (October 6, 2011)—Two retired Army generals met with U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) today to voice their support for quality early learning and improved physical activity for students as essential to our future national security.

Burwell B. Bell, General, US Army (Retired) of Ooltewah and George Alexander, MD, Major General, US Army (Retired) met with Sen. Alexander, a key member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, on their support for expanding the scope of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to include a greater focus on high-quality early learning and to include provisions in the Act to ensure that schools report on the quality and quantity of physical education as compared to widely accepted national recommendations.

“Seventy-five percent of young Americans are unable to join the military and a major reason is because they lack the proper education,” said General Bell. “Early learning is a proven strategy to help young people achieve personal and career success.”

Research shows that quality early learning can improve school readiness and raise high school completion rates by as much as 44 percent. School-based physical activity programs can help children get the right amount of exercise; unfortunately, the data indicate that most students do not participate in adequate levels of physical education. Encouraging states and local school districts to report on the quality and quantity of physical education will empower parents to decide whether their districts are doing enough to combat childhood obesity and make informed policy choices.

“Obesity is the leading medical reason why applicants fail to qualify for military service, with one in four young Americans too overweight to join,” said Major General Alexander. “As the former Deputy Surgeon General for the Army National Guard, I know how important regular exercise is for helping protect youth from becoming obese and improving their health.”

Generals Bell and Alexander are members of the executive advisory council of MISSION: READINESS, the national security organization led by over 250 retired generals, admirals, and other senior military leaders who work to ensure continued American security and prosperity by calling for smart investments in the next generation of American children.

###

1212 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005

202.464.5224

MissionReadiness.org