



MISSION: READINESS

MILITARY LEADERS FOR KIDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, November 9, 2011

CONTACT: Meghan Moroney

Phone: 415-450-1913, mmoroney@missionreadiness.org

Retired Generals and Admirals from California Issue New Report: Childhood Obesity and Lack of Physical Fitness Endanger National Security

Superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District Kowba Joins Retired Military Brass To Encourage Increased Physical Activity and Better School Nutrition

SAN DIEGO (November 9, 2011) – In anticipation of Veterans Day, members of the national security nonprofit MISSION: READINESS released a report today highlighting the fact that childhood obesity and a general lack of physical fitness among children and young adults in California pose a very real threat to national security. Weight problems have become the leading medical reason why young adults are unable to serve in the military, with one in four young adults in both California and nationwide too overweight to join. Overall, weight problems, poor educational achievement, involvement in serious crime and other problems keep an estimated 75 percent of young Americans from being able to enlist.

In releasing the report, entitled *Unfit to Fight: A Report on California*, Superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District and retired Rear Admiral of the US Navy **William A. Kowba** joined Admiral **Leon A. “Bud” Edney**, US Navy (Ret.) and Major General **James W. Comstock**, US Army (Ret.) at Sandburg Elementary School in calling on schools and communities to do more to encourage moderate-to-vigorous physical activity at school.

Among the major findings in the new report:

- Physical fitness tests show that one third of ninth-grade students in California lack basic aerobic capacity, almost one quarter of students lack basic upper-body strength and more than one third are overweight.
- One third of California 12-year-olds do not participate in daily physical education classes and that increases to 85 percent by age 17.

“Providing students with daily PE and other opportunities for exercise at school can help protect them from becoming obese, improve their health and even improve – not hinder – their academic achievement,” Superintendent Kowba said. “That is good news for all our children and youth, whether or not they later choose to serve in the military.”

“It takes years, not months, to build a strong, healthy body. Good fitness begins in childhood and must continue through the teenage years,” said Admiral Edney. “Even in the midst of today’s obesity crisis, most students do not participate in adequate levels of physical activity.”

(more)

211 Sutter Street, Suite 401
San Francisco, CA 94108

916.405.0883

MissionReadiness.org

MISSION: READINESS is the nonprofit, non-partisan organization of senior retired military leaders ensuring continued American security and prosperity into the 21st century by calling for smart investments in the next generation of American children.

“As former military leaders, we know how critical physical activity is for developing able-bodied citizens who are able to serve their country if they so choose,” Major General Comstock said. “We all need to work together in these efforts to prevent our current child obesity crisis from becoming a national security crisis.”

Mission: Readiness is grateful for the support of The California Endowment, which provided funding for the research and publication of this report. For more information on The California Endowment’s public health initiatives, please visit: <http://www.calendow.org/>

###

www.missionreadiness.org

MISSION: READINESS is the national security nonprofit organization of more than 250 retired admirals, generals 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.