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Retired Generals from Minnesota Meet with Rep. Kline to Voice Support for Improvements in Early Learning and Physical Education As a Matter of National Security

BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA (September 29, 2011)—Two retired generals from Minnesota met with U.S. Rep. John Kline (R-MN) in Burnsville today to voice their support for quality early learning and improved physical activity for students as essential to our future national security.

Rodney R. Hannula, Major General, US Army (Retired) of St. Paul and Dennis W. Schulstad, Brigadier General, US Air Force (Retired) of Edina met with Rep. Kline, the Chairman of the House Education and the Workforce 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.

“Department of Defense data show that 75 percent of young Americans are unable to join the military and a major reason is poor educational achievement,” said Gen. Schulstad. “A proven approach to help kids do well in school and graduate on time starts early in life with high-quality early education programs.”

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 rational policy choices.

“One in four young Americans is too overweight to join the military,” said Gen. Hannula. “Providing students with regular exercise in school can help protect them from becoming obese, improve their health and even improve their academic achievement. That is good news for our youth, whether or not they later choose to serve in the military.”

Generals Hannula and Schulstad are members of the executive advisory council of MISSION: READINESS, the national security organization led by over 200 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.

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