



December 17, 2020

Hon. Christopher C. Miller  
Acting Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Acting Secretary Miller,

On behalf of Mission: Readiness, a nonpartisan organization of nearly 800 retired admirals and generals, we write to draw your attention to language included in the Senate Armed Services Committee's accompanying report for the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act that calls for the development of an interagency task force to address factors that impact military recruitment. Specifically, the Committee stated the following:

*The committee recommends that the Secretary of Defense collaborate with the Secretaries and Administrators of relevant Federal departments and agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice, with the purpose of taking a holistic approach to addressing issues that ultimately impact the ability of the military services to recruit new servicemembers.*

As you know, 71 percent of young Americans between the ages of 17 and 24 are currently ineligible for military service, primarily because they are too poorly educated, too overweight, or have a history of crime or substance abuse. These factors largely fall outside of the Department of Defense's purview, but have an immense impact on the ability of the military to recruit new servicemembers as well as a significant monetary impact on the Department. Without coordinated action, these trends pose a significant threat to the future of the all-volunteer force.

**Mission: Readiness specifically urges you to immediately stand up an advisory committee on military recruitment in conjunction with the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice, as recommended by the Senate Armed Services Committee.**

By working closely with this interagency task force, the Department can create a long-term strategy to address the biggest disqualifiers for military service and ensure that more young Americans are able to join the military if that is the path they wish to take. We believe this is a critical step to the sustainability of the all-volunteer force and critical for our future strength and national security.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Mission: Readiness National Director Ben Goodman, at [bgoodman@missionreadiness.org](mailto:bgoodman@missionreadiness.org).

Very respectfully,

General (Ret.) William M. Fraser, III  
U.S. Air Force

Admiral (Ret.) James M. Loy  
U.S. Coast Guard