



January 25, 2018

New Mexico Senate
State Capitol
290 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Senator,

As retired generals from New Mexico and members of the nonpartisan national security organization Mission: Readiness, we are deeply concerned that 74% of young people ages 17 to 24 in New Mexico, and 71% nationwide, are ineligible to serve in the military, according to the Department of Defense. This shrinking pool of recruits threatens our military readiness and national security.

That is why it is so important that state lawmakers continue to champion and invest in evidence-based programs that are proven to get kids on the right track early in life during this legislative session. New Mexico has made significant and consistent gains in funding evidence-based, voluntary home visiting programs in particular over the last several years. This year, our state has the opportunity to continue its leadership by providing more of New Mexico's families with the parenting skills needed to support strong child development.

Evidence-based, voluntary home visiting programs have been shown to generate long-term benefits, such as a reduction in the number of children who need special education, decreased behavioral problems, and fewer children who experience child abuse and neglect. Additionally, studies have shown that high-quality home visiting programs can increase the number of children in the range of normal cognitive development. These are basic, fundamental aspects needed early in life to ensure youth become contributing members of society and have the option of military service.

New Mexico's voluntary home visiting programs are currently funded at \$18 million, but they would be fully funded at \$44 million. We urge state lawmakers to increase the current investment in these vitally important programs.

Above all, our national security is protected by the men and women who bravely choose to serve in our Armed Services. We must invest in our youth today to strengthen our national security in the years to come.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melvyn S. Montano".

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas J. Murray".

Brigadier General (Ret.) Douglas J.
Murray
U.S. Air Force
Roswell

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Regner C. Rider".

Brigadier General (Ret.) Regner C.
Rider
U.S. Air Force
Albuquerque