

Summary: U.S. Department of Defense data indicate that a full 70 percent of all 17- to 24-year-olds in Illinois, and in the entire nation, are ineligible for military service, primarily because they are too poorly educated, physically unfit, or have disqualifying criminal records. A shrinking pool of eligible recruits is a threat to our national security, and **Mission: Readiness** is calling on states to take immediate measures to help young Americans grow up to be educated, healthy, and fit to do the work of our nation, whether in or out of uniform.

The Problem

The retired military leaders of Mission: Readiness care about reducing tobacco use among young Americans because it is a readiness and fitness problem for the Armed Forces.

- Tobacco use is higher in the military than in the civilian population. According to a 2011 survey published by the Department of Defense (DoD), close to half of all military service members (49.2%) used a nicotine product in the past 12 months.
- Tobacco use is banned during basic training because service members who use it are more likely to drop out. They are also more likely to sustain injuries and have poor vision, both of which compromise troop readiness.
- Tobacco use costs the DoD an estimated \$1.6 billion annually in medical costs and lost work time.
- Tobacco use will cause an estimated 175,000 current Active Duty Service members to die from such use unless they quit, according to the DoD.



MISSION: READINESS is the national security organization of hundreds of retired generals, admirals and other senior military leaders who support policies and investments that will help young Americans succeed in school and later in life, thus enabling more young adults to join the military if they choose to do so.

Support Tobacco 21 - HB 4297(Lilly)/SB 2332 (Morrison)

Our membership here in Illinois supports raising the age to legally purchase tobacco products to 21, as outlined in House Bill 4297 and Senate Bill 2332. Increasing the age to legally purchase tobacco products and e-cigarettes is one of the most promising, large-scale strategies we have for reducing tobacco use among young Americans – including young service members. With this legislation, we predict a 25 percent drop in teen tobacco use and a 12 percent reduction in adult smoking rates. By supporting this legislation, we can dramatically lower the number of people who start smoking and become addicted to it.