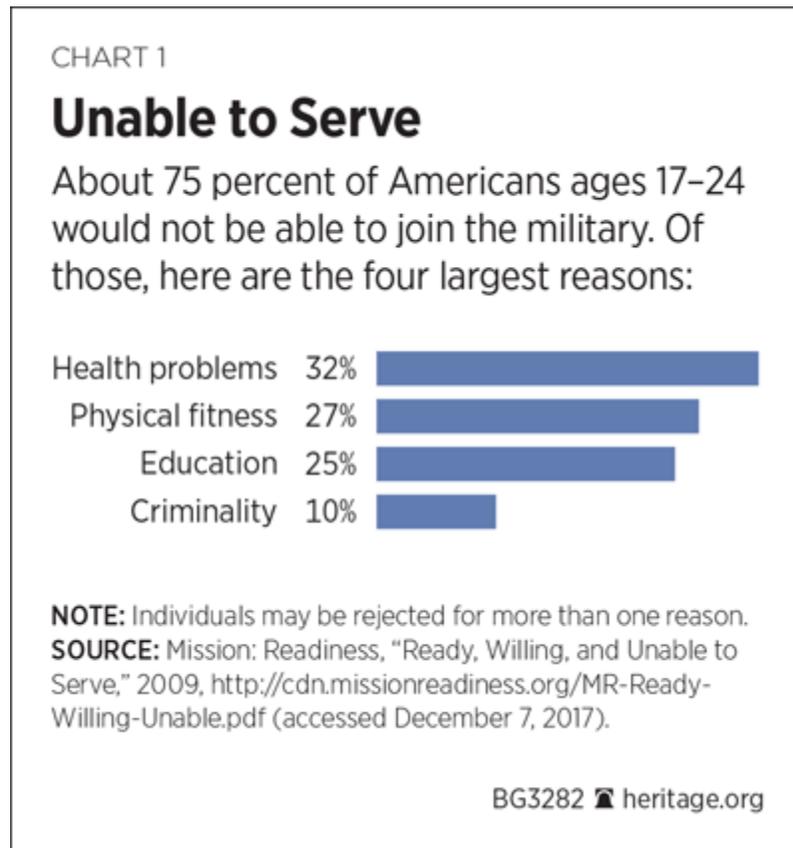


Full article: <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-looming-national-security-crisis-young-americans-unable-serve-the-military>



Health Issues

According to the former commander of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, Major General Allen Batschelet, the biggest culprit keeping young adults from qualifying to serve in the United States military however is health concerns, mostly obesity.³²

Today’s military recruiting leaders echo these calls for schools to institute concrete changes that promote healthy habits. Major General Snow says, “It really starts with something as simple as what our kids are fed in schools. Changing meals is one of the ways to address that. I think a second aspect to that is really working with those who work with the education department to emphasize the importance of not doing away with physical education programs in elementary school and high school, because that’s important.”⁴⁵

Emily Balli, “General: Army Struggles to Meet Goal of 80,000 Recruits,” *Tennessean*, December 1, 2016,

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/nation-now/2016/12/01/general-army-struggles-meet-goal-80000-recruits/94757310/> (accessed January 4, 2018).

Today, who are the role models for American youth to emulate in the area of physical fitness? None come to mind. National figures and celebrities, athletes and actors, should all be using their prominence and popularity to raise awareness of the importance of good health and fitness. Children and adults alike need to understand and integrate quality nutrition, frequent exercise, less time on the couch, and more time outdoors in order to improve their quality of life and health. Not only will this help fight the obesity trend,

it may also increase the number of eligible military recruits. Healthy habits instilled in young people early on are more likely to stick with them later in life.

Recommendations

The executive branch should:

- **Initiate an integrated and comprehensive public awareness and advocacy program** to promote awareness of the problem of the inability of young Americans to qualify for basic military service. The executive branch should actively seek appropriate role models to help promote this campaign; and
- **Promptly appoint leading influential role models to serve as chairmen and members of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition**, and direct them to develop a plan with specific outcomes to reverse the downhill fitness trend.