

## Leaders in Obesity Policy Applaud Introduction of Senate’s Bipartisan “Fit to Serve” Act

**(Washington, DC)** Responding to current challenges to national security posed by the nation’s obesity epidemic – and noting that today, more than one in four military age recruits are denied enlistment into the Armed Services because they weigh too much – Senators Mark Udall (D-CO) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) today introduced the “Fit to Serve Act of 2013”. The measure, applauded by the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund and other leading public health advocacy interests, helps to facilitate “joint use” agreements between military installations and surrounding communities whose members will be able to access safe facilities for physical activity. It also would ensure that would-be military recruits receive information about healthy weight through every U.S. military recruiting office and website.

According to data compiled by Mission: Readiness, obesity is a leading reason that 75 percent of Americans aged 17-24 denied enlistment into the military, leaving an estimated 26 million young adults unfit for service. Moreover, TRICARE – the Pentagon’s health insurance program – spends an estimated \$1.1 billion each year to treat conditions of military personnel and their families associated with obesity.

We commend Senators Udall and Murkowski for advancing an important measure to help improve the nation’s fitness and the readiness of our military capabilities, providing millions of young Americans with vital information regarding healthy weight and creating tools so that millions more families in military communities may gain access to safe places to be physically active.

More specifically, the Fit to Serve Act would provide cost effective and concrete steps to help increase physical activity and healthy weight in potential recruits and military families, including steps to:

- **Facilitate joint use agreements:** The bill would increase access to safe and well-equipped active environments by facilitating joint use agreements between military athletic facilities and surrounding community organizations.
- **Educate recruits and military personnel about healthy weight:** The measure would provide for the dissemination of information on healthy weight through recruiting facilities – enabling the military to play an active role in educating potential recruits about their weight status and what it means for their potential enlistment in the Armed Services.

The undersigned organizations support this legislation and urge other Members of Congress to help advance the Fit to Serve Act.

***The following organizations have signed on to the above statement:***

***Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund***

***American Council on Exercise***

***American Heart Association***

***American Hiking Society***

***Healthcare Leadership Council***

***National Association of Chronic Disease Directors***

***National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity***

***Partnership for Prevention***

***Sports & Fitness Industry Association***

***Trust for America's Health***

***United States Soccer Foundation***

***United States Tennis Association***

***University of Wisconsin Hospital & Clinics and American Family Children's Hospital***

***Vivus, Inc.***

***YMCA of the USA***