

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF MID-COAST MAINE AND BEYOND

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Building a strong future

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I read with great interest the recent guest editorial by retired Marine Lt. Gen. Robert Winglass regarding the fact that 75 percent of young Americans are unable to serve in the U.S. armed services because of high rates of high school dropouts, obesity and criminal involvement. As a business leader, I believe these same issues weaken our current and future work force as well.

To strengthen our current and future work force, we need to make smart, early investments in America's children. High-quality early education programs have a phenomenal 16-to-1 return on these investments, and study after study has shown that children participating in these programs have lower dropout rates, higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance, and higher incomes than children who do not participate.

These programs help ensure that children will graduate "work ready" when they're ready to work.

The solid research supporting smart investments in children and youth is why I, and other business leaders in the Mid-coast area and across Maine, have joined a new national organization called America's Edge.

We believe that dollars invested in high-quality early childhood programs will provide great returns for our economy and help build the strong future work force we all need and want. We add our voices to those of Gen. Winglass and his colleagues.

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