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STATEMENT OF

GENERAL JAMES T. CONWAY
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

BEFORE

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERAN AFFAIRS, AND
RELATED AGENCIES SUBCOMMITTEE

ON

6 MAY 2009



General James T. Conway

Commandant of the Marine Corps



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45

46 General Conway was born in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas and is a graduate of Southeast Missouri
47 State University. He was commissioned in 1970 as an infantry officer. His company grade
48 assignments included multiple platoon and company commander billets with both the 1st and
49 2nd Marine Divisions; Executive Officer of the Marine Detachment aboard the USS *Kitty Hawk*
50 (CVA-63); series and company commander at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego;
51 aide to the Commanding General, and Director, Sea School.

52

53 As a field grade officer, he commanded two companies of officer students and taught tactics at
54 The Basic School; he also served as operations officer for the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit to
55 include contingency operations off Beirut, Lebanon; and as Senior Aide to the Chairman, Joint
56 Chiefs of Staff. Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, he was reassigned to the 2d Marine Division as
57 Division G-3 Operations Officer.

58

59 He commanded Battalion Landing Team 3/2 during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT
60 STORM. Selected for colonel, he served as the Ground Colonels' Monitor, and as Commanding
61 Officer of The Basic School. His general officer duties included Deputy Director of Operations,
62 J-34, Combating Terrorism, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.; and President, Marine Corps
63 University at Quantico, Virginia. After promotion to Major General, he assumed command of
64 the 1st Marine Division. In November 2002, Major General Conway was promoted to
65 Lieutenant General and assumed command of the I Marine Expeditionary Force. During 2003-
66 2004, he commanded I Marine Expeditionary Force through two combat tours in Iraq. In late
67 2004, he was reassigned as the Director of Operations, J-3, Joint Staff, in Washington, D.C.

68

69 General Conway graduated with honors from The Basic School, the U.S. Army Infantry
70 Officers' Advanced Course, the Marine Corps Command and Staff College and the Air War
71 College.

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73

74

75 **Introduction**

76 Chairman Edwards, Congressman Wamp, and Distinguished Members of the
77 Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veteran Affairs, and Related Agencies, thank you for
78 the opportunity to report to you on the state of your Marine Corps. My pledge to provide you a
79 candid and honest assessment remains the same, and it is in that spirit that I appear today.

80 First and foremost, I extend deep appreciation for your magnificent support of the Marine
81 Corps and our families — especially those warriors currently engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan.
82 Your Marines are honored and committed to stand between this great Nation and any enemy
83 today and in the future. We will continue to fight the enemy on their land, in their safe havens,
84 or wherever they choose to hide.

85 Today's Marines have raised the bar in terms of their commitment and the quality of their
86 performance. Our success in Anbar Province, Iraq is directly attributable to that performance.
87 These young patriots know well they will soon be in harm's way and yet they continue to join
88 and reenlist at unprecedented rates. As our numbers grow in Afghanistan, Marines and their
89 families have redirected their resolve to answer their Nation's call. There are many challenges
90 ahead, but our Marines embrace the chance to make this country safer. For that, we owe them
91 the full resources required to complete the tasks ahead — to fight today's battles, prepare for
92 tomorrow's challenges, and fulfill our commitment to our Marine families.

93

94 **Recruiting, Retention, and Growth to 202k**

95 The Marine Corps is currently meeting all operational requirements with ready, mission-
96 capable forces. However, sustained combat operations and a high deployment tempo have taken
97 a toll on our multi-capable training readiness. We were authorized to grow our active component
98 by 27,000 Marines to sustain our operations overseas, reduce the stress on our force, and
99 improve our readiness in the traditional skills our Nation expects of us — amphibious operations,
100 combined-arms maneuver, and jungle and mountain warfare.

101 We grew by more than 12,000 Marines in Fiscal Year 2008 and are on pace to reach an
102 active duty end strength of 202,000 by the end of Fiscal Year 2009 — more than two years ahead
103 of schedule. We activated another infantry battalion in Fiscal Year 2008, and increased capacity
104 in our artillery, reconnaissance, engineer, military police, civil affairs, intelligence, and other key
105 units that have seen a significantly high deployment tempo. Our goal remains a 1:2 deployment-
106 to-dwell ratio for our active component and a 1:5 ratio for our reserve component. At these
107 ratios, we will reduce the stress on our force, improve the quality of life for our Marines and

108 families, and sustain our overseas contingency operations. Our peacetime rotations were
109 traditionally at a 1:3 deployment-to-dwell ratio.

110 We attribute our accelerated growth, in part, to three factors: quality recruiting,
111 exceptional retention levels, and reduced attrition. Furthermore, based on a recent study of those
112 leaving military service by the Center for Naval Analyses, our higher quality men and women
113 are prime to stay Marine. Our standards have not changed. More than 96 percent of our
114 enlistees in Fiscal Year 2008 had earned their high school diploma — a rate that exceeded the
115 standard for the Department of Defense and the Marine Corps' self-imposed higher standard.

116

117 Recruiting

118 Recruiting is one of our highest priorities. Through screening teams and selection
119 boards, we ensure that only our best and most fully qualified Marines are assigned to this duty.
120 We are committed to maintaining a strong and properly resourced recruiting program. It is
121 through this investment that we continue to exceed quality standards and recruit the best of
122 America into our ranks. The reenlistment of our first-term Marines accounts for more than 70
123 percent of our growth to 202,000. We achieved over 100 percent of our accession goal in the
124 active component for both officer and enlisted in Fiscal Year 2008. We also achieved 100
125 percent of our recruiting goals in the reserve component. Yet recruiting remains a challenging
126 endeavor, and we will continue to need the indispensable support of Congress to sustain our
127 programs.

128

129 Retention

130 Retention is a vital complement to recruiting, especially as we seek to retain the combat
131 experience and leadership that shape our enlisted career force. In Fiscal Year 2008, the Marine
132 Corps achieved unprecedented numbers of reenlistments with both the First Term and Career
133 Force. We established the most aggressive retention goals in our history, and our achievement
134 was exceptional. Our 16,696 reenlistments equated to a first-term retention rate of almost 36
135 percent and a Career Marine retention rate of 77 percent. We attribute this success to a number
136 of factors. First, Marines are motivated to “stay Marine” because they are doing what they
137 signed up to do — fight for their country. Second, they derive fulfillment from our culture,
138 which rewards performance. Third, our reenlistment incentives are designed to retain top quality
139 Marines with the most relevant skill sets. The continued support of Congress will guarantee that

140 we have the necessary number of combat-trained Marines for our overseas contingency
141 operations.

142

143 **Infrastructure**

144 The Marine Corps remains on track with installation development in support of our
145 personnel growth. In Fiscal Year 2009, Congress provided \$1.4 billion for operational facilities,
146 and bachelor and family housing to support our growth to 202k. With the continued support of
147 Congress, we will ensure sufficient temporary facilities or other solutions are in place until
148 permanent construction can be completed.

149

150 **Bachelor Housing**

151 Due to previous fiscal constraints, the Marine Corps has routinely focused on critical
152 operational concerns, and therefore we have not built barracks. With your support, we have
153 recently been able to expand our construction efforts and have established a program that will
154 provide adequate bachelor housing for our entire force by 2014. Additional support is required
155 for our Fiscal Year 2010 program to provide 3,000 new barracks spaces and meet our 2014 goal.
156 We are also committed to funding the replacement of barracks' furnishings on a seven-year cycle
157 as well as the repair and maintenance of existing barracks to improve the quality of life of our
158 Marines.

159 We are constructing our barracks to a two-person room configuration and assigning our
160 junior personnel (pay grades E1-E3) at two Marines per room. We are a young Service; the
161 majority of our junior Marines are 18-21 years old, and assigning them at two per room helps
162 assimilate them into the Marine Corps culture, while fostering camaraderie and building unit
163 cohesion. As Marines progress to noncommissioned officer rank and take on the added
164 responsibilities of corporal (E4) and sergeant (E5), our intent is to assign them one per room.

165

166 **Public Private Venture Housing**

167 The Marine Corps supports the privatization of family housing. To date, the Public
168 Private Venture (PPV) program has been a success story. We have benefited from the
169 construction of quality homes and community support facilities, as well the vast improvement in
170 maintenance services. PPV has had a positive impact on the quality of life for our Marines and
171 families. The feedback we have received has been overwhelmingly positive.

172 PPV has been integral to accommodating existing requirements and the additional family
173 housing requirements associated with the growth of our force. By the end of Fiscal Year 2007,
174 with the support of Congress, the Marine Corps privatized 96 percent of its worldwide family
175 housing inventory. By the end of Fiscal Year 2010, we expect to complete our plan to privatize
176 97 percent of our existing worldwide family housing inventory.

177 We again thank the Congress for its generous support in this area. In Fiscal Years 2008
178 and 2009, you provided the funding to construct or acquire nearly 3,000 additional homes and
179 two related Department of Defense Dependent Schools through this program; and by 2014, PPV
180 will result in all of our families being able to vacate inadequate family housing.

181

182 Water and Energy Conservation

183 The Marine Corps believes in good stewardship of water and energy resources aboard our
184 installations. We have instituted policies and procedures to integrate energy efficiency and water
185 conservation into our day-to-day operations and long-term programs. We have taken steps to
186 support our Nation's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce dependence on foreign
187 oil.

188 In Fiscal Year 2009, we will publish a campaign plan for energy management and water
189 conservation aboard our installations. Our intent is as follows: reduce the rate of energy use in
190 existing facilities; increase energy efficiency in new construction and renovations; expand the
191 use of renewable resources; reduce usage rates of water on our installations; and improve the
192 security and reliability of energy and water systems.

193

194

195 **Taking Care of Our Marines and Our Families**

196 We extend our sincere appreciation for Congress' commitment to this Nation's wounded
197 warriors and their direction for the establishment of Centers of Excellence within the Department
198 of Defense that address Traumatic Brain Injury, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, eye injuries,
199 hearing loss, and a joint Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs Center
200 addressing loss of limbs.

201

202 **Family Readiness Programs**

203 In 2008, we started a multi-year plan of action to transition family support programs to a
204 wartime footing. We listened to our families and heard their concerns. We identified
205 underfunded programs operating on the strength and perseverance of hard-working staff and
206 volunteers. We also discovered that our commanders needed more resources from us to provide
207 the appropriate care for their Marines and families or to refer them to available internal or
208 external support services.

209 To address the above concerns, we have established full-time Family Readiness Officer
210 billets in more than 400 Marine Corps units and have also acted to expand the depth and breadth
211 of our family readiness training programs. The Family Readiness Officer is supported by the
212 Marine Corps Community Services Program. For the families, communication with their
213 deployed Marines is their number one quality of life requirement. With the Family Readiness
214 Officer serving as the focal point, we have used information technology to expand the
215 communication between Marines and their families.

216 These initiatives and others demonstrate the commitment of the Marine Corps to our
217 families and underscore the significance of family readiness to mission readiness. We thank
218 Congress for the supplemental funding during Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009 that enabled initial
219 start-up. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2010, the funding required to maintain these critical programs
220 will be part of our baseline budget.

221

222

223 Casualty Assistance

224 Our casualty assistance program is committed to ensuring that families of our fallen
225 Marines are treated with the utmost compassion, dignity, and honor. Additionally, we have
226 taken steps to correct the unacceptable deficiencies in our casualty reporting process that were
227 identified in congressional hearings and subsequent internal reviews.

228 Marine Corps commands now report the initiation, status, and findings of casualty
229 investigations to the Headquarters Casualty Section, which has the responsibility to ensure the
230 next of kin receive timely notification of these investigations from their assigned Casualty
231 Assistance Calls Officer.

232 The Headquarters Casualty Section is a 24-hour-per-day operation manned by Marines
233 trained in casualty reporting, notification, and casualty assistance procedures. These Marines
234 have also taken on the additional responsibility of notifying the next of kin of wounded, injured,
235 and ill Marines.

236 In October 2008, we implemented a mandatory training program for Casualty Assistance
237 Calls Officers that includes a Web-based capability to expand the reach of the course. This
238 training covers notification procedures, benefits and entitlements, mortuary affairs, and grief and
239 bereavement issues. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of these changes and make
240 adjustments where warranted.

241

242 Wounded Warrior Regiment

243 We are deeply committed to the care and welfare of our wounded, ill, and injured, and
244 their families. Our Wounded Warrior Regiment reflects this commitment — through all phases
245 of recovery. We provide active duty, reserve, and separated Marines with non-medical case
246 management, benefit information and assistance, resources and referrals, and transition support.

247 Our programs and processes are evolving. For example, we have transferred auditing
248 authority for pay and entitlements from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Kansas
249 City directly to the Wounded Warrior Regiment, where there is a comprehensive awareness of
250 each wounded Marine's individual situation. We have also designed and implemented a Marine
251 Corps Wounded, Ill, and Injured Tracking System to maintain accountability and case
252 management for the Marine Corps Comprehensive Recovery Plan. To ensure effective family
253 advocacy, we have added Family Readiness Officers at the Regiment and our two battalions to
254 support the families of our wounded, ill, and injured Marines.

255 We are reaching out to those who may need assistance. Our newly established Sergeant
256 Merlin German Wounded Warrior Call Center not only receives calls from active duty and
257 former Marines, but also conducts important outreach calls. In the past year, we added battalion
258 contact cells, which make periodic outreach calls to Marines who have returned to duty in order
259 to ensure their recovery needs are being addressed and that they receive information on any new
260 benefits. The call centers between them have made over 40,000 calls to those Marines injured
261 since September 2001 to assess how they are doing and offer our assistance.

262 To enhance reintegration, our Job Transition Cell, manned by Marines and
263 representatives of the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, has been proactively reaching
264 out to identify and coordinate with employers and job training programs to help our wounded
265 warriors obtain positions in which they are most likely to succeed and enjoy promising careers.
266 One example is our collaboration with the U.S. House of Representatives to establish their
267 Wounded Warrior Fellowship Program for hiring disabled veterans to work in congressional
268 offices.

269

270 Military Construction for our Wounded Warriors

271 The Marine Corps plans to invest over \$121 million in new construction to support
272 Wounded Warrior programs at Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, and MCB Quantico. Congress
273 generously funded more than \$58 million in military construction during Fiscal Year 2008 for
274 our Wounded Warrior BEQs at Camp Pendleton (\$26 million) and Camp Lejeune (\$27 million),
275 as well as for our headquarters space at MCB Quantico (\$5 million).

276 We have requested another \$63 million in the 2009 Overseas Contingency Operations
277 Supplemental Request. This supplemental funding will provide Marine Resource and Recovery
278 Centers at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune (\$25 million apiece). These facilities will support
279 wounded, ill and injured Marines and Sailors and their families during rehabilitation and
280 transition to back to active duty or separation from military service. Additionally, this
281 supplemental request (\$13 million) will provide permanent administrative and support buildings
282 at the headquarters of our Wounded Warrior Battalions at Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton.

283 We are very grateful for the support of Congress, and I especially would like to thank you
284 for your personal visits to our wounded warriors.

285

286 Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

287 With 2,700 new cases of Marines with TBI entered into the Department of Defense and
288 Veteran's Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) in Calendar Year 2008, we continue to see TBI as a
289 significant challenge that we are confronting. Many of these new cases represent older injuries
290 that are just now being diagnosed, and our expectation is that, with the institution of the
291 Automated Neuropsychological Assessment Metrics (ANAM) for all Marines, we will discover
292 mild Traumatic Brain Injuries more promptly post-deployment. While the Marine Corps is
293 providing leadership and resources to deal with this problem, we cannot solve all the issues on
294 our own.

295 The Marine Corps continues to work closely with Military Medicine, notably DoD's
296 Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, to advance our
297 understanding of TBI and improve care for all Marines. We are grateful for your continued
298 support in this area through the funding of multiple research initiatives that explore ways to
299 provide better treatment for our injured Marines. For our part, we are using multiple venues to
300 broadcast these trials to our Marines and their families so that they can make individual
301 decisions, along with their health care providers, regarding possible participation in a research
302 protocol.

303

304 Combat Operational Stress

305 Marine Corps commanders are fully engaged in promoting the psychological health of
306 our Marines, Sailors, and family members. The message to our Marines is to look out for each
307 other and to know that it is okay to get help. While culture change is hard to measure, we feel
308 that the efforts we have made to reduce the stigma of combat stress are working.

309 The Marine Corps Combat and Operational Stress Control Program encompasses a set of
310 policies, training, and tools to enable leaders, individuals, and families to prepare for and manage
311 the stress of operational deployment cycles. Our training emphasizes ways in which to recognize
312 stress reactions, injuries, and illnesses early and manage them more effectively within
313 operational units. Our assessments of stress responses and outcomes are rated on a continuum:
314 unaffected; temporarily or mildly affected; more severely impaired but likely to recover; or
315 persistently distressed or disabled. Combat stress deserves the same attention and care as any
316 physical wound of war, and our leaders receive extensive training on how to establish an
317 environment where it is okay to ask for help.

318 Military Medicine seeks the ability to handle increased workload as we continue to make
319 asking for help acceptable. Operational support and current treatment facility demands have

320 already stretched our mental health professional communities to their near breaking point, and
321 we are actively engaged in the discussions about the way ahead. The Marine Corps is grateful
322 for the continuing effort Congress has put into deployment-related health issues and concerns.
323 We will continue to do the same so that we can further improve our knowledge and treatment of
324 these injuries.

325

326 Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)

327 Last year, I reported on our intent to establish a continuum of care for our EFMP
328 families. We are actively helping more than 6,000 families in the Exceptional Family Member
329 Program gain access to medical, educational, and financial care services that may be limited or
330 restricted at certain duty stations. We have assigned case managers to all of our enrolled EFMP
331 families, obtained the help of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and TRICARE to resolve
332 health care concerns at several bases, and directed legal counsel to advise the EFMP and our
333 families on state and Federal entitlements and processes. Additionally, we are refining
334 assignment policies that will further facilitate the continuum of care.

335 While no family should have to endure interruptions in care, gaining access to services
336 can be most challenging to families who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). We sincerely
337 appreciate the support of Congress for our ASD families and others who are entitled to the
338 TRICARE Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) program. For Fiscal Year 2009, you have
339 increased the monthly reimbursement rate for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) — a specific
340 therapy that our Marine families value.

341 However, there is still more to do. While appropriate TRICARE reimbursement rates are
342 important, the highly specialized services these families require are not always available. We are
343 evaluating how we can collaborate with other organizations to increase the availability of these
344 specialized services in areas where resources are currently lacking.

345

346 Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

347 Sexual assault is a crime. We take every reported incident very seriously. The impact on
348 its victims and the corrosive effect on unit and individual readiness are matters of great concern.
349 A recent Government Accountability Office study reported several shortcomings in our program.
350 To address these findings, we are refreshing our training program and assessing the requirement
351 to hire full-time Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program coordinators at installations
352 with large troop populations. We have trained more than 3,200 victim advocates to provide

353 assistance. All Marines receive sexual assault prevention and awareness training upon entry and
354 are required to receive refresher training at least annually. We have also incorporated sexual
355 assault prevention into officer and noncommissioned officer professional development courses
356 and key senior leader conferences and working groups. At the request of our field commanders,
357 we have also increased the number of Marine Corps judge advocates who attend specialized
358 training on prosecution of these crimes and have assembled a mobile training team to teach our
359 prosecutors how to better manage these cases.

360

361 Suicide Prevention

362 With 42 Marine suicides in 2008, we experienced our highest suicide rate since the start
363 of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The number of confirmed Marine
364 suicides has increased from 25 in Calendar Year 2006, to 33 in 2007, to 42 in 2008. Through
365 March 2009, we have 8 presumed suicides this year, which place us on a trajectory for 32 this
366 calendar year. Our numbers are disturbing; we will not accept them, or stand idle while our
367 Marines and families suffer.

368 Our studies have found that regardless of duty station, deployment, or duty status, the
369 primary stressors associated with Marine suicides are problems in romantic relationships,
370 physical health, work-related issues such as poor performance and job dissatisfaction, and
371 pending legal or administrative action. This is consistent with other Services and civilian
372 findings. Multiple stressors are usually present in suicide.

373 In November 2008, the Marine Corps Executive Safety Board, chaired by the Assistant
374 Commandant of the Marine Corps, reviewed our suicide awareness and prevention program and
375 directed the development of a leadership training program targeted at noncommissioned officers.
376 As in combat, we will rely upon our corporals and sergeants to chart the course and apply their
377 leadership skills to the challenge at hand. This program includes high-impact, engaging videos,
378 and a web-ready resource library to provide additional tools for identifying their Marines who
379 appear at risk for suicide. Further, during March 2009, we required all of our commanders to
380 conduct suicide prevention training for 100 percent of the Marines under their charge. This
381 training educated Marines on the current situation in our Corps; it taught them how to identify
382 the warning signs; it reinforced their responsibility as leaders; and it informed them of the
383 resources available locally for support.

384 The Marine Corps will continue to pursue initiatives to prevent suicides, to include
385 reevaluating existing programs designed to reduce the stressors most correlated with suicidal

386 behavior; developing and distributing new prevention programs; and refreshing and expanding
387 training materials.

388

389 Child Development Programs

390 To ensure Children, Youth, and Teen Programs continue to transition to meet the needs
391 of our families, a Functionality Assessment was conducted in June 2008 to identify program
392 improvements, such as the development of staffing models to improve service delivery, as well
393 as recommendations to explore and redefine services to meet the unique and changing needs of
394 Marines and their families living both on and off our installations. In addition, the Marine Corps
395 has expanded partnerships to provide long and short-term support for geographically dispersed
396 Marines. We can now provide 16 hours of reimbursed respite care per month for families with a
397 deployed Marine. We are expanding our care capacity in many ways, including extended hours
398 as well as through partnerships with Resource and Referral agencies, off-base family child care,
399 and Child Development Home spaces.

400 We are currently providing 11,757 child care spaces and meeting 63.6 percent of the
401 calculated total need. It is important to note that the Marine Corps has initiated rigorous data
402 collection and analysis improvements. As a result, it will be necessary to correct the 2007 annual
403 summary due to identified reporting errors. Our reported rate of 71 percent of potential need last
404 year is more accurately stated as 59.1 percent. We are not satisfied with our progress to date,
405 and have planned for ten Child Development Center Military Construction projects in Program
406 Years 2008 through 2013. Two of those projects were executed in Fiscal Year 2008, and one is
407 approved for Fiscal Year 2009. These approved projects will provide an additional 915 spaces.

408 We also are considering additional modular Child Development Centers, subject to more
409 detailed planning and availability of funds. Planned MILCON and modular centers would add
410 approximately 2,600 spaces, and although our need is expanding, based on our current
411 calculations, this expansion would bring us much closer to the Department of Defense goal.
412 Between the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the 2009 Overseas
413 Contingency Operations Supplemental Request, the Marine Corps plans to invest over \$98
414 million in new construction for Child Development Centers. This investment will yield a total of
415 1,670 spaces. Continued Congressional support will help us provide these needed facilities. As
416 the needs of our families change, our program is committed to grow and adapt to meet these
417 developments.

418

419 School Liaison Program

420 The education of more than 51,000 school-age children of Marine parents has been
421 identified as a readiness and retention issue of great concern. Our Marine children, who are
422 often as mobile as their military parent, face additional stress and challenges associated with
423 frequent moves between schools with differing educational systems and standards. Exacerbating
424 this is the varying degree of satisfaction Marines and their spouses have with the quality and
425 sufficiency of local education systems. The Marine Corps is addressing this issue by
426 establishing national, regional, and installation level School Liaison capability. The School
427 Liaison will help parents and commanders interact with local schools, districts, and state
428 governments to help resolve educational issues. The increased family readiness funding has
429 allowed us to establish a School Liaison position at each Marine Corps installation.
430 Complementing our local effort, the Marine Corps is working with the Department of Defense to
431 establish an “Education Compact” with states to enable reciprocal acceptance of entrance,
432 subject, testing, and graduation requirements. The Education Compact has been enacted in
433 North Carolina and Arizona, and is under varying stages of consideration in the other states with
434 Marine Corps installations.

435

436 Conclusion

437 Your Marine Corps is grateful for your support and the support of the American people.
438 Our great young patriots have performed magnificently and written their own page in history.
439 They have proven their courage in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their resiliency, dedication, and sense
440 of self-sacrifice are a tribute to this great Nation. They go into harm’s way knowing their
441 country is behind them. On their behalf, I thank you for your enduring support. We pledge to be
442 good stewards of the resources you most generously provide and remain committed to the
443 defense of this great land. Thank you again for the opportunity to report to you today.