



The Honorable Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senate  
284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rick Scott  
U.S. Senate  
502 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Matt Gaetz  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1721 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Rubio, Scott, and Representative Gaetz:

The brave men and women of our military, and their families, deserve nothing less than for our leaders to uphold the promises made to our servicemembers when they signed up to defend our nation. One core component of that promise is access to childcare. Unfortunately for members of the 7th Special Forces Group (7th SFG) located on Camp Bull Simons at Eglin Air Force Base, that promise is being broken. We need your help and leadership to immediately provide a realistic solution for these servicemembers and their families now, and for future families in the years to come.

As you know, ten years ago, the 7th SFG was moved from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to the northern portion of Eglin Air Force Base near Crestview, Florida. Since the move, the lack of a Child Development Center (CDC) located on Camp Bull Simons has become the command's number one issue. Families are effectively denied the ability to use a CDC given the distance and length of time it takes to reach those on Eglin's main base.

The 7th SFG still has forces deployed in combat zones and in remote locations around the world. Having their families cared for is a huge part of keeping these critical warriors in our ranks and ready for when their unique skills are called upon to protect our national security.

Your previous attention to this issue has been greatly appreciated, but we are calling on you as leaders in Florida and the U.S. Congress to act on behalf of families in need. As leaders in the SOF and veteran's advocacy communities, we feel it incumbent upon us to raise our voices and offer our personal testimony endorsing both the need for these critical services and our sincere disappointment that a solution has been so grievously delayed.

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LTG (Ret.) Fran Beaudette, Former CMDR, United States Army Special Operations Command:

*The Special Forces Family is the impressively resilient, supportive, and world-class foundation that enables select men and women to expertly serve our nation. The chosen profession of their loved ones is extremely demanding; extended and often short notice deployments, combat rotations, and difficult, high-risk training are some of the hallmarks of what they are expected to accomplish. They never fail. These great families must be at their strongest to sustain military service at this level. Access to military childcare on Camp Bull Simons is a key component of that family success. We owe them childcare that is close to home, reliable, understanding of military needs, and affordable. Our soldiers work, live in the barracks, attend chapel services, and shop at the shoppette on Camp Bull Simons. The soldiers of the 7th*



*Special Forces Group deserve the best so that they can keep doing their best. Let's build them a world-class child development center where every unit member comes together to serve.*

COL (Ret.) Stu Bradin, United States Special Operations, and President and CEO, Global SOF Foundation:

*I helped form the Global SOF Foundation, headquartered in Florida, to advocate for the SOF community to ensure our people get what they need to win. Since the 7th SFG relocated to Camp Bull Simons over ten years ago, we have watched the Department of Defense repeatedly fail to provide a CDC to all of the younger enlisted in the Crestview area – one hour from the Eglin CDC. There are over 450 kids in the area from the ages of 0 to 4 that do not have access to a CDC – an entitlement to military families. I have met with and heard hundreds of stories about these younger enlisted having to make financial and career decisions due to a lack of a CDC. We look forward to working with the Congressional SOF Caucus and the Florida Delegation to fix this. These young service members deserve what they were promised.*

COL (Ret.) Robert Connell, Former Deputy Commander, 7th SFG(A):

*As a long-time member of the 7th SFG, I helped plan the move to Eglin Air Force Base over 12 years ago. I clearly remember leadership representatives from the base highlighting the services offered to our families. Critical amongst these was CDC access – a key concern of many that were considering the move. When I returned as the Deputy Commander in 2016, I was shocked to learn of families experiencing problems with CDC access; vividly remembering how they were guaranteed CDC support no matter where they lived. The 7th SFG and its families have raised this issue with Eglin throughout the years as the financial and quality of life impacts continued to intensify. Eglin's leadership has responded with repeated promises and inadequate solutions; one recently consisted of building a third CDC on the main base. Based on this string of unfulfilled promises, spanning multiple changes in leadership, I am certain that there is only one way to support these families – Congressional legislation. I respectfully request that you, our elected federal legislators, break this impasse and provide the requisite support these families so justly deserve.*

Molly Tobin, Family Advocate, 7th SFG:

*As the current Soldier/Family Readiness Group leader for 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG and Special Forces spouse, I have assisted with the care of our families over the span of the last five years. One of the most dreaded concerns that families face when assigned to 7th SFG(A) is childcare. When the subject of childcare is addressed, our families are faced with negotiating multiple waitlists, minimal availability, and empty promises of childcare being provided by the military. As a critical resource for the families, childcare is a subject that is met with frustration and sadness as we are unable to confirm that it will be provided for these families who sacrifice so much with a career consisting of a high OPTEMPO and long hours. Securing childcare for our SOF families is a responsibility that cannot be ignored or delayed any further as it is directly tied to the mental and emotional health of our service members.*

Sincerely,

LTG (Ret.) Fran Beaudette  
Former CMDR, United States Army Special  
Operations Command

COL (Ret.) Stu Bradin  
United States Special Operations  
President and CEO, Global SOF Foundation

COL (Ret.) Robert Connell  
Former Deputy Commander, 7th SFG(A)

Molly Tobin  
Family Advocate, 7th SFG