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MDRC STUDY FINDS NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH CHALLENGE PROGRAM PRODUCES LASTING IMPROVEMENTS FOR FORMER DROPOUTS

Final Results Indicate ChalleNGe Graduates More Likely to Receive Diploma or GED, Earn College Credits, Be Employed and Earn More Money

WASHINGTON – On a panel on Capitol Hill today, Chief of the National Guard Bureau Gen. Craig McKinley, U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu and Dan Bloom of MDRC, a national education and social policy research organization, discussed the recently released results of MDRC’s multi-year comprehensive evaluation of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program. The report illustrates that the ChalleNGe Program is effective in combating the dropout rate.

The report, “Staying on Course: Three-Year Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation,” shows that, three years after entering the program, ChalleNGe graduates were more likely to earn their high school diploma or GED, obtain college credits, and were more likely to be employed and have substantially higher earnings than high school dropouts who were eligible, but did not participate in the ChalleNGe Program.

"It's very gratifying to see the results of the MDRC study," **said McKinley.**

"I'm proud of the National Guard for helping these young people by giving them the tools to become successful in life as productive members of society."

“The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program is a strong program and it’s very encouraging to see such positive results from the MDRC study,” **Landrieu said.** “With 1.3 million kids dropping out of school each year, the dropout epidemic is a real challenge for America. The Youth ChalleNGe Program is effective in making positive changes in these kids’ lives.”

“These results from ChalleNGe are quite encouraging because very few ‘second chance’ programs for high school dropouts have produced lasting improvements for participants,” **said MDRC’s Dan Bloom, director of the study.**

The evaluation is funded by U.S. Department of Defense and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the MCJ Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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The ChalleNGe Program is a 17-month comprehensive intervention program that offers adolescents between the ages of 16 and 18 who have dropped out of school the opportunity to obtain their high school diploma or GED while learning the skills necessary to succeed as adults. The program focuses on addressing the underlying problems that lead youth to drop out. The National Guard Bureau currently operates 33 programs in 27 states and Puerto Rico. More than 100,000 students have graduate from ChalleNGe.

The full report of the 36-month evaluation is available at mdrc.org.

About The National Guard Youth Foundation

The mission of the National Guard Youth Foundation is to foster program awareness, advocate for the program goals and funding, and provide scholarships, training and workforce transition assistance to the graduates of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program. To learn more about the ChalleNGe Program and its Cadets, please visit our website at www.ngyf.org.

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