

1 HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
2 PERSONNEL PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
3 IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
4 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021
5 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

6
7 Wednesday, March 11, 2020

8
9 U.S. Senate
10 Subcommittee on Personnel
11 Committee on Armed Services
12 Washington, D.C.

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14 The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m.
15 in Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Thom
16 Tillis, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

17 Subcommittee Members Present: Senators Tillis
18 [presiding], McSally, Scott, and Gillibrand.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. THOM TILLIS, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM NORTH CAROLINA

3 Senator Tillis: The hearing will come to order.

4 The Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel
5 meets this afternoon to receive testimony on the personnel
6 programs of the Department of Defense.

7 We are fortunate today to have witnesses from the
8 Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and
9 Readiness, the services' Assistant Secretaries for Manpower
10 and Reserve Affairs, and the services' personnel chiefs to
11 discuss the Department's program.

12 On panel one, we will hear from the Honorable Thomas
13 McCaffery, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health
14 Affairs; Ms. Virginia Penrod, Acting Assistant Secretary of
15 Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Mr. Thomas
16 Constable, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for
17 Readiness; and Elizabeth Van Winkle, Executive Director of
18 the Office of Force Resiliency. Welcome to you all.

19 I will introduce the second panel in transition.

20 The topics we will discuss today are vital to the
21 health and effectiveness of our all volunteer force. As
22 our nation faces a very complex global security
23 environment, DOD's military personnel programs and policies
24 must be agile and adaptable, always capable of responding
25 to uncertain threats we face. And those programs and

1 policies must increasingly appeal to the nation's best and
2 brightest young people, provide greater stability and
3 flexibility to service members in their professional and
4 personal lives, and provide compensation commensurate with
5 the level of responsibility inherent to a military career.

6 I hope the P&R team will discuss the Department's
7 efforts to prevent sexual assault and harassment, reduce
8 service member and family suicides, combat domestic
9 violence and child abuse, and assure beneficiaries have
10 access to high quality medical care either in military
11 hospitals and clinics or in the TRICARE provider network.

12 Finally, I look forward to hearing from the services
13 about their efforts to improve recruitment and retention of
14 military personnel, to improve military personnel and
15 family readiness, to improve military housing, to enhance
16 child care services, and to improve employment
17 opportunities for military spouses.

18 I want to thank all the witnesses for being here
19 today. I look forward to your testimony.

20 Ranking Member Gillibrand?

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM NEW YORK

3 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Senator Tillis. I
4 want to join with you today in welcoming our witnesses as
5 we begin the subcommittee's review of the Department's
6 fiscal year 2021 budget request.

7 The administration's budget submission begins this
8 process, but it is not the end of it, which is good because
9 I find the administration's budget request for military and
10 civilian personnel programs of the Department of Defense to
11 be lacking.

12 While the budget request rightfully provides for a
13 fully funded pay raise for military service members of 3
14 percent, it only provides a 1 percent pay increase for
15 civilian personnel, far below the rate of inflation.

16 Moreover, the administration's budget, once again,
17 calls for cuts to federal employee retirement benefits and
18 health care.

19 While this latter issue is not within the
20 subcommittee's jurisdiction to change, it does have a
21 sobering impact on the Department's professional civilian
22 workforce, their morale, and the ability of the Department
23 to recruit and retain highly qualified, highly talented
24 individuals for federal service. As the National Defense
25 Strategy states, in order to achieve its many missions, the

1 Department requires a motivated, diverse, and highly
2 skilled civilian workforce. End of quote. I agree, but
3 the administration's budget request does not support that
4 aim.

5 I am equally disappointed in the administration's plan
6 to reduce funding for our military children in Department
7 of Defense education activity schools not by cutting
8 overhead but by cutting teachers and teachers' aides, 172
9 of them, in the 2021-2022 school year. The Defense-wide
10 review calls for cutting, quote, lower priority, end of
11 quote, programs like DODEA to pay for, quote, higher
12 priority, end of quote, items in the National Defense
13 Strategy even as the Department itself diverts funds from
14 NDS priorities to fund such things as the border wall. The
15 administration prioritizes DOD funding for a border wall
16 over the education of military children.

17 Further, I am deeply concerned about the impact of
18 Secretary Esper's recent changes to priority placed on the
19 process for DOD-run child care development centers, which
20 will allow military members to displace civilian employees
21 who already have children in the system even mid-year.
22 While I appreciate that we should give priority to active
23 duty military members, taking child care away from civilian
24 employees mid-year does not seem to strike the right
25 balance of access versus stability. Our solution to the

1 shortage of child care within DOD should be solved without
2 sacrificing the needs and stability of students. We must
3 increase the capacity within the system dramatically in
4 order to really be able to address the issue.

5 On a positive note, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to
6 working with you this year as we examine the
7 recommendations of the National Commission on Military
8 National and Public Service, which will release its report
9 in a couple weeks, as we look for ways to celebrate and
10 incentivize service of all types in the nation, including
11 military service. As we have heard all too often in the
12 past and probably will hear again this year and here again
13 today, the portion of the nation's youth both eligible and
14 willing to serve continues to be far too low, resulting in
15 military services competing against each other for the same
16 small pool of qualified applicants and competing against
17 the rest of the government for talented civilian employees.
18 I hope to hear today from our witnesses how we can better
19 incentivize service to the nation in all forms and increase
20 the pool of qualified applicants for military service.

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.

23 Secretary McCaffery, I think you have an opening
24 statement and then we will move to questions.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS P. McCAFFERY, ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR HEALTH AFFAIRS; ACCOMPANIED BY:
3 VIRGINIA S. PENROD, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4 FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS; THOMAS A. CONSTABLE,
5 ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR READINESS; AND
6 DR. ELIZABETH P. VAN WINKLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF
7 FORCE RESILIENCY

8 Mr. McCaffery: I do. Chairman Tillis and Ranking
9 Member Gillibrand, thank you for the opportunity appear
10 before you today. It is our distinct privilege to
11 represent the total force, men and women, military and
12 civilian, who serve our nation in the armed forces in the
13 Department of Defense.

14 We are grateful for Congress' strong support for the
15 fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization and Defense
16 Appropriation Acts. This important legislation supports
17 vital investments in our military's readiness and
18 modernization, enabled the creation of the Space Force, and
19 provided our service members with the largest pay increase
20 in a decade. Your continued support is vital to ensuring
21 our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, civilians, and
22 members of our newest service, the Space Force, have the
23 tools, resources, and support to carry out their missions.

24 Secretary of Defense Esper reaffirmed that the 2018
25 National Defense Strategy is our road map to address the

1 reemergence of long-term strategic competition from near-
2 peer competitors, such as China and Russia.

3 In implementing the strategy, the Office of the Under
4 Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is
5 consistently focused on lethality, partnerships, and
6 reform.

7 We also are emphasizing Secretary Esper's renewed
8 focus on taking care of our people and our families.

9 Readiness and lethality begin with our most valued
10 asset, our people, who are inextricably linked to
11 readiness. To attain and sustain readiness against the
12 spectrum of threats, the Department needs to recruit and
13 retain the best people America has to offer.

14 The Department understands we are facing a competitive
15 job market and recruiting from a digital generation. With
16 technology changing modern warfare, we are actively
17 pursuing innovative recruiting and retention measures to
18 attract and keep technologically inclined and savvy
19 individuals. The Department's talent management enterprise
20 must also keep pace with 21st century developments. Rather
21 than using outdated models where personnel are treated like
22 interchangeable parts from a bygone era, the Department is
23 ushering in a new age of talent management that recognizes
24 the unique talents that service members bring to the fight.

25 With regard to partnerships, persuasive authority is

1 oftentimes as powerful as any weapon in our arsenal. And
2 building coalitions and partnerships through personal
3 engagements is at the forefront of our efforts. Increasing
4 partner nation access to U.S. PME programs is one strategic
5 arena that greatly contributes to establishing mutually
6 beneficial relationships, developing enduring personal
7 connections with future leaders, and exposing participants
8 to American values. We are ensuring rigorous vetting for
9 partner nation participants much like we do for the U.S.
10 recruits with whom they train. Expanding participation for
11 our PME programs ensures we are capturing the best military
12 minds in the U.S. and around the world.

13 We are also executing Department-wide reforms to
14 ensure more effective and efficient processes that optimize
15 the operation of our enterprise and free up resources for
16 the warfighter.

17 Currently we are undertaking the most significant
18 changes to the military health system in decades. The
19 overarching direction of this reform is to increase the
20 readiness of our force, better integrate health care
21 delivery throughout the Department, and ensure all
22 beneficiaries have continued access to high quality medical
23 care. The reform includes consolidation of the
24 administration and management of our military hospitals and
25 clinics under the Defense Health Agency, the continued

1 implementation and standardization of enterprise-wide
2 activities in support of global medical actions, and the
3 restructuring of the Department's medical personnel end
4 strength. We understand that there are a lot of moving
5 parts with this transformation. However, one guiding
6 principle that is foundational is ensuring all
7 beneficiaries continue to have access to high quality
8 health care while reforms are being implemented.

9 The Department is also fully committed to
10 strengthening and promoting the resiliency and readiness of
11 the total force. Among our top priorities are to stop the
12 crime of sexual assault and prevent suicides, which are
13 devastating tragedies. We are committed to increasing
14 awareness and prevention of domestic violence and ensuring
15 prompt reporting and response for child abuse and neglect.

16 The Department also understands that issues such as
17 military spouse employment and access to quality child care
18 are quality-of-life issues that allow our service members
19 to remain mission-focused and incentivizes retention during
20 their military careers.

21 Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before
22 this committee. With continued collaboration with and
23 support from Congress, we will do all we can to ensure our
24 people have the resources, the education and training, and
25 the full range of support needed to accomplish their

1 missions.

2 My colleagues and I look forward to responding to your
3 questions.

4 [The prepared statement of Mr. McCaffery, Ms. Penrod,
5 Mr. Constable, and Dr. Van Winkle follows:]

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1 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. McCaffery, and thank
2 you all for being willing to be here today.

3 Mr. McCaffery, I have a question. The President's
4 fiscal year 2021 budget request included a little over \$33
5 million in savings from beginning the implementation of
6 right-sizing military hospitals and clinics. I believe
7 this decision came out of the Defense-wide review that you
8 mentioned.

9 The question I have -- as somebody who spent most of
10 my career doing right-sizing in the private sector, you got
11 to go through and do an analysis. The question is after
12 you capture the data, figure out how to right-size and
13 smart-size, then you go through and try to identify the
14 sources of the savings.

15 So can you give me a little sense of how the
16 Department went about identifying what are the key sources
17 of savings that serve as the basis for the \$33 million
18 savings?

19 Mr. McCaffery: Sure. So as you indicated, this was
20 part of a directive coming out of the NDAA 2017, as well as
21 the Defense-wide review. And in essence, the review that
22 was directed was to look at all of our military hospitals
23 and clinics to ensure that they were matched with their
24 readiness requirement. What I mean by that is our
25 hospitals and clinics are there and exist for two primary

1 missions, to ensure that it is a training platform to train
2 our providers so that they are skilled and those efforts
3 that they are required to do their job down range, and it
4 is also to ensure our service members have quick and easy
5 access to health care so that they too are ready to do
6 their jobs down range.

7 So we looked at all of our U.S.-based facilities.
8 From that initial look, we did a deep dive on about 77.
9 And the key thing, in terms of making any proposed changes
10 to better match the services that are provided in those
11 MTFs to that readiness requirement, is the ability for that
12 civilian health care community around that MTF, their
13 ability to receive additional caseload. Our commitment in
14 any of these changes is while we do these reforms,
15 including this MTF right-sizing, that we will continue to
16 commit to providing access to our beneficiaries. And we
17 made it very clear in our submission to Congress that as we
18 implement these changes, if that access is not there, we
19 will rethink our approach.

20 With regard to the savings that are in the budget,
21 roughly \$36 million, for the end of fiscal year 2021, that
22 is based on looking at the roughly 48 facilities that we
23 proposed some level of reduced services being provided. We
24 believe in those areas with the most robust civilian health
25 care market in place, that can take on additional caseload,

1 those would be the first facilities that would actually see
2 this implementation. And that is our projection of what we
3 could see by the end of fiscal year 2021. Those numbers
4 will be updated as we continue this process over the next 2
5 to 3 years.

6 Senator Tillis: Thank you. I understand as part of
7 the methodology you engaged an outside firm to assess some
8 of the private provider market, and I am sure that you have
9 tiered it in terms of risk, low to high risk. And I think
10 that we have had a couple of facilities in North Carolina
11 designated.

12 I am more interested the nationwide impact, and maybe
13 our offices can get together and talk specifically about
14 the ones where you are moving forward because you think the
15 risk is low. The provider networks are there. So thank
16 you for that. I just want to be able to provide assurance
17 to those who potentially would be affected that we have
18 done the homework and that we can realize the savings where
19 it makes sense and the risk is low.

20 One area that I have opined a little bit about in
21 various Armed Services hearings is military housing. This
22 is an area that I have focused a lot of attention on
23 because we had absolutely unacceptable conditions down at
24 Camp Lejeune, over at Fort Bragg, and to a lesser extent
25 some of the other bases in North Carolina.

1 So I guess one thing that I really want to get ahead
2 of -- I do these town hall meetings, and sometimes they are
3 surprised. Sometimes I give them a few weeks. And all the
4 time, the providers do a wonderful job of draining the
5 queue before I get there. But I still hear these stories
6 of people that, at least over the past year, have been in
7 settings that were unhealthy. And so I am trying to get an
8 idea of the guidance that has come out of DOD to let these
9 housing providers know if you tell somebody to shut a door
10 and maybe tape it shut because it is unsafe to go in there,
11 that is probably a house that should not be lived in with
12 the adults or children.

13 So have the providers gotten the message that if I go
14 down to Fort Bragg or Camp Lejeune again and I hear another
15 story like that or a dehumidifier that is about the size of
16 a dishwasher that is in a hallway literally capturing so
17 much moisture that they are piping into the tub because the
18 retainer tub fills up too quickly, can I be reasonably
19 assured that the DOD has let them know that is
20 unacceptable?

21 Mr. McCaffery: I believe you can be reasonably
22 assured. And actually the health system role in making
23 that connection is when we have patients that present into
24 one of our medical facilities, we are very clear in our
25 guidance to our hospitals and clinics what to be looking

1 for. If a patient comes in and complains that they perhaps
2 have a health condition tied to a household exposure
3 hazard, not only do we do all the appropriate medical
4 screening and treatment, but one of the key things, in
5 terms of direction, is for our provider to make sure that
6 the installation commander and the military department is
7 aware that that individual, based upon their housing, has
8 registered that concern and that complaint so that there is
9 a back end communication so that we can track then to
10 follow up on dealing with the actual source of the
11 exposure.

12 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

13 My time has expired. If I have an opportunity, I may
14 come back and ask about readiness for coronavirus and a few
15 other questions.

16 Senator Gillibrand?

17 Senator Gillibrand: The purpose of the Department's
18 Defense-wide review was to find savings and programs deemed
19 lower priority or not supportive of the goals of the
20 National Defense Strategy.

21 As I mentioned in my opening statement, one program
22 identified as a low priority source is the Department of
23 Defense's Education Activity and specifically the number of
24 teachers employed. According to the Defense-wide review,
25 the Department plans to reduce 172 teachers and aides for

1 school 2021 and 2022, yielding savings of \$18.6 million.
2 This funding will be realigned to higher priorities.

3 Would you characterize the education of our military
4 children a lower priority?

5 Ms. Penrod: Senator Gillibrand, absolutely not.
6 Education of our children is absolutely a higher priority,
7 and I can tell you in meeting with Secretary Esper himself,
8 he will tell you that is one of his top priorities,
9 supporting our families.

10 When we were asked to look at our programs to possibly
11 reduce our programs for modernization and readiness, we
12 were asked to look at where could we possibly tighten our
13 belts but not harm our programs. What we did is looked at
14 our teacher-to-student ratio and staff ratio and found that
15 we could add about 2.2 students per class and still be
16 under what the public schools offer. We do not think we
17 will have degraded classrooms, and we think we still will
18 provide a high quality education for our dependents.

19 Senator Gillibrand: Well, I do not know that
20 increasing pupil-to-teacher ratio increases performance in
21 classrooms, and I think all educational experts agree that
22 having a smaller class size is beneficial for kids.

23 I know that the DODEA schools -- we have got 16 in
24 North Carolina. We have got two in New York. So are we
25 then asking service members who are deployed to smaller

1 bases in remote locations to sacrifice the quality of their
2 children's education with these cuts?

3 Ms. Penrod: No, ma'am. I do not believe we are
4 sacrificing the education with these cuts. In many cases,
5 we looked at schools where we had classrooms with 10
6 students in them. And as you looked across our programs,
7 we felt we could increase the student-teacher ratio size
8 and still provide a quality education.

9 Senator Gillibrand: This is for both Ms. Penrod and
10 Mr. Constable. Last year when President Trump raided the
11 DOD budget to fund border wall construction, there were
12 hundreds of millions of dollars in the DODEA budget, school
13 construction budget, that were diverted. In fact, 15
14 percent of the total amount was diverted from military
15 schools. Many of these schools are half a century old, and
16 some were slated to be replaced altogether.

17 Can you discuss the importance of quality schools for
18 military children and the impact that has had on retention
19 and readiness?

20 Ms. Penrod: Yes, ma'am. First, I believe when we
21 looked at our schools and what we could, we say, move to
22 the right as far as construction, there were schools that
23 were not ready to begin construction. So as we programmed
24 construction, we look at those programs that we can
25 actually start in that fiscal year or calendar year.

1 We are improving our schools. We are building new
2 schools. We still believe we have the highest quality of
3 education in the country in our DODEA schools as witnessed
4 by reaching the best in the country on the report card for
5 fourth grade and eighth grade math and science.

6 Senator Gillibrand: Mr. Constable?

7 Mr. Constable: Thank you, Senator.

8 In the course of the decision to reprogram, the
9 Secretary turned to the Chairman who did a full assessment
10 of force readiness and looking at the accounts that would
11 be used to transfer, determined that the transfer would not
12 have immediate or foreseeable impacts to defense readiness.

13 Senator Gillibrand: In 2018, the Air Force Academy
14 adopted a policy of not punishing cadets for minor
15 infractions such as drinking or fraternization if the
16 discovery resulted from reporting a sexual assault. This
17 year's Academy report showed a 73 percent increase in
18 reports of sexual assault at the Air Force Academy, while
19 reporting, was flat for the previous 2 years. While there
20 was an increase at both West Point and the Naval Academy,
21 they were negligible when compared to the Air Force
22 Academy.

23 I introduced language in the fiscal year 2020 NDAA to
24 expand this policy to the entire DOD, and we have identical
25 in the House. Yet, this language was removed in conference

1 in favor of a report. The academies' reports show that
2 while we are waiting for implementation reports, dozens of
3 assaults have been unreported.

4 Ms. Penrod, would you agree such a dramatic increase
5 shows that there was a large number of not only cadet but
6 service members who are not reporting sexual assault for
7 fear of the impact it will have on their career?

8 Ms. Penrod: Senator Gillibrand, I will defer that
9 question to Dr. Van Winkle.

10 Dr. Van Winkle: So I think that the safety report
11 policy is a good one because it addresses collateral
12 misconduct, and your support of it has been beneficial in
13 that space.

14 As with everything in my portfolio, there are some
15 legal nuances to it. So specifically why we do hear from
16 some victims that that protection will give them the
17 confidence and the assurance to come forward and report,
18 which we need considering the vast majority of our sexual
19 assault survivors do not report. We also know there are
20 some victims who say that they would like to face the
21 discipline for any infraction so that the defense cannot
22 use that as a reason for why they are coming forward with a
23 report. So that is the legal nuance there.

24 Overall, I think the safety report policy is a good
25 one and appreciate your support to it. We just want to

1 make sure we get the language right to support both sides.

2 Senator Gillibrand: We might be able to do that in
3 the next NDAA too. Thank you.

4 Senator Tillis: Ms. Penrod, one thing I would be
5 interested in, we have been tracking closely any of the
6 military construction money that was affected by the
7 executive order in North Carolina. In one case it was a
8 school that I think had been determined that -- a project
9 for a school that they determined they were not moving
10 forward with. I think it would be very helpful if we could
11 run down the construction projects you were saying that
12 provided future funding. It is not disrupting the ultimate
13 time that these schools will come on line. It would be
14 very helpful if we could get that report specifically for
15 the schools in the U.S.

16 Ms. Penrod: Senator Tillis, I would be happy to
17 provide that report.

18 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

19 Senator McSally?

20 Senator McSally: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
21 appreciate it.

22 Thanks, all, for being here today.

23 Dr. Van Winkle, good to see you again. I want to talk
24 about active duty military suicide rates. When I was a
25 cadet at the Air Force Academy, one of my fellow cadets in

1 my squadron took his own life. Since then, we have each
2 had way too many experiences of our fellow service men and
3 women who survived combat, who survived the enemy trying to
4 take their lives, and they come back home and they take
5 their own lives.

6 And just like sexual assault, saying that the
7 prevalence in society is a similar rate is not acceptable.
8 Once they are under our watch, once they are a part of our
9 team, we are responsible for making sure that they have
10 everything they need in order to live a good life and to
11 get the care that they need in order to prevent these
12 tragedies from happening.

13 The rates keep going up, and I find this just so
14 utterly unacceptable and unconscionable, both active duty
15 and veterans.

16 I met with a veteran last week, Zach, who survived --
17 I should not have said his name. Sorry. I am not giving
18 you his last name, but either way, a number of his fellow
19 service men did not survive deployments that he was on. He
20 survived, but several of his other teammates took their own
21 lives when they came back home. And he shared this
22 harrowing story of him hitting that point himself, but
23 somehow the gun did not go off. And he is still with us
24 today by the grace of God.

25 But hearing stories like that -- and again, the ones

1 that we each know personally as well -- it is urgent and we
2 have got to do more together between active duty and the
3 VA. I appreciate the President creating a task force last
4 year on this. The report is overdue. It is urgent. There
5 are lives on the line every day.

6 So what is being done? What have we learned from the
7 task force? What else can we do to address this urgent
8 issue?

9 Dr. Van Winkle: Senator, I appreciate the question.
10 And you are right on all accounts.

11 We released the first-ever annual suicide report and
12 saw a few things in the data. We saw the increased risk in
13 our 17 to 24-year-olds and our youngest military members.

14 We also saw a concerning trend within the National
15 Guard that we are also supporting.

16 In order to get after this, we are doing a number of
17 things. Within the Department for military members, there
18 are a few things we have to address that we are going
19 after. The first is making sure that we are giving our
20 youngest service members the skills, the basic, fundamental
21 skills in terms of problem solving, managing crises,
22 emotional regulation.

23 We also need to make sure that we start to remove
24 barriers to getting help, to receiving care. That is
25 extremely complicated. And I would say across my

1 portfolio, I do not necessarily need anybody to go to one
2 of our official resources to get help. There are a number
3 of other resources they can go to that are confidential,
4 including chaplains. So we are really working with our
5 youngest folks to understand what resources are out there
6 for them, understanding that as humans we all face crises
7 and tragedies and that we can get through it and get
8 through it stronger.

9 The PREVENTS Task Force that you mentioned is
10 obviously co-led by the VA and the White House, but we are
11 an integral part of that. I cannot speak to when the
12 report will be released, but I can say that once it is
13 released, that is not the end. And I work very closely
14 with Dr. Van Dahlen on enduring efforts to take this on in
15 the nation writ large.

16 Senator McSally: Great. Thank you.

17 I want to follow up also on sexual assault. Working
18 together with you last year and the task force that was
19 created, we got 17 of those 18 provisions in my bill into
20 the NDAA. So I would like to hear about implementation of
21 those and then also one of them we did not, which was
22 criminalizing of sexual harassment which the task force
23 recommended. But we did say we wanted you to report back
24 to us on progress on this and what else needs to be done.
25 So can you share an update?

1 Dr. Van Winkle: Absolutely. And I want to start by
2 thanking you for your initiative and your partnership on
3 that task force. I have been a part of lot of efforts in
4 the DOD on this, and this was one of the more rewarding
5 efforts that I have been a part of.

6 As you know, we had 22 recommendations. They all were
7 approved into policy. So we are now working on the
8 implementation. The sexual harassment one -- we are on
9 track to deliver that report to you. In the meantime, we
10 have submitted language for an executive order so we could
11 get this moving. That is currently with the Federal
12 Register for public comment. We are expecting that back in
13 April, and I would be happy to come back out and speak to
14 you about the status of the recommendations that we have.

15 Senator McSally: Great. Let us do that. Thank you.
16 I yield back.

17 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Senator McSally.

18 If we can go back, I think Senator Gillibrand is also
19 interested in this. With the spread of the coronavirus, I
20 spoke with General Rocco before we got started here talking
21 about how they are standing up and making people aware down
22 at Parris Island. But what is the DOD doing across the
23 globe to ensure best measures are taken to avoid it and
24 provide treatment and testing where it is necessary?

25 Mr. McCaffery: So, Senator Tillis, a good question,

1 and maybe I can spend a couple of minutes with the status
2 in terms of what we are doing across the DOD.

3 As you can quite imagine, when we look at this virus,
4 the threat and what we need to do, we have three
5 priorities. Basically we want to make sure that we maintain
6 the health and safety of our military forces and our
7 civilians. Very importantly, we want to make sure that we
8 maintain that staff to support mission assurance. And then
9 finally, we are obviously part of the whole-of-government
10 effort in looking at how we as a government combat the
11 virus.

12 In January, we issued force health protections
13 guidance very much along the lines of CDC, going after the
14 field in terms of what folks need to be aware of, self-
15 hygiene, prevention efforts and screening. We at the DOD
16 need to go a little bit beyond that, and we have issued
17 guidance across the globe to installation commanders with
18 regard to what they need to be doing based upon their
19 unique circumstance in their particular location. It is
20 very consistent. We have authorities under existing DOD
21 policy on public health emergency management, and we have
22 outlined guidance that is basically risk-based so that,
23 again, based upon the situation on the ground, gives
24 guidance to commanders to take actions to prevent the
25 spread.

1 So, for example, the Indo-Pacific geographic combatant
2 command, based upon that guidance, has done things like
3 restricting all non-official travel to the Republic of
4 Korea, China, and Mongolia. They have also directed that
5 all U.S. naval vessels maintain a minimum 14-day period
6 between port calls in their area of responsibility. They
7 are limiting non-mission essential travel, increasing
8 guidelines with regard to access to installations and
9 screening the folks before they get onto those
10 installations. A number of other geographic combatant
11 commands are taking similar steps in terms of limiting
12 travel for their military members outside of their area of
13 responsibility and basically providing direction with
14 regard to canceling meetings that are non-essential,
15 restricting large group activities, everything that we can
16 do to contain the spread of the virus.

17 In addition, the DOD -- we have 16 laboratories around
18 the world. 13 of the 16 laboratories have the CDC-approved
19 test kit, and they are all up and running in terms of
20 providing that testing ability. In the three that are not
21 yet running, we anticipate having them up and running
22 either at the end of this week or next week to ensure we
23 have that testing capability for our force.

24 Senator Tillis: Do we have any specific data on -- I
25 know that we have the reports. In South Korea, I think one

1 or two cases of South Korea military personnel. Do we keep
2 DOD data on the rate of tests or any other confirmed
3 infections to date?

4 Mr. McCaffery: Yes. So right now, as of last night,
5 so last evening, our current across-the-board DOD cases are
6 a total of 11, and these are confirmed cases. Of that,
7 four are active duty. One is a civilian. We have five
8 dependents and one contractor. We are regularly updating
9 that. As the virus spreads, we anticipate getting more
10 cases and tracking those and providing the guidance with
11 regard to what these folks need to do in terms of self-
12 isolation for a 14-day period.

13 Senator Tillis: When a case is reported, do you --
14 you know, if it happens back in North Carolina off a
15 military base, the health department gets involved. They
16 try to determine the contacts and track down and notify
17 potentially candidates for testing. Do you engage the CDC
18 for that, or is that a protocol that gets executed within
19 the DOD?

20 Mr. McCaffery: We can do that. In terms of the
21 testing, we can do that now within the DOD among our labs.
22 With regard to, for example, any civilian case in
23 Virginia's civilian employ of the DOD, we would report not
24 only internally but, of course, we would report to local
25 public health authorities. And either they, if it is a

1 civilian outside of DOD, would be doing that contact
2 tracing. We do the same thing internally if it is on a
3 base overseas.

4 Senator Tillis: Okay. Thank you.

5 And, Senator Gillibrand, if you will indulge, I have
6 just got one other question for Ms. Penrod.

7 Ms. Penrod, we know that we always have the challenge
8 of on-boarding and hiring personnel. We are trying to do
9 our best to provide flexibility, as we did in the last
10 NDAA, to provide direct hire authorities and special
11 compensation tools, the toolkit that we embedded in the
12 NDAA, and some exceptions to the OPM laws and regulation.
13 But it seems to me with respect to hiring personnel, we
14 have not seen a lot of those authorities taken advantage
15 of, at least from an outsider's perspective.

16 So one of two questions. Am I wrong? Are they taking
17 advantage of them and we are not seeing the benefits yet?
18 Or do we need to do training and get expertise out there so
19 that the broader DOD hiring experts or subject-matter
20 experts know what kind of flexibilities they have and are
21 looking forward to implementing them?

22 Ms. Penrod: Well, yes, Senator. Well, first of all,
23 you are never wrong.

24 But I will say that we want to thank the Congress
25 because the flexibility with those authorities have been

1 amazing. I know in one of the naval shipyards, the hiring
2 time was cut in half, reduced to 43 days. Our civilian
3 experts are using the authorities. However, they were not
4 using the authorities as much as we would like. Secretary
5 Esper recognized that. He required the services to report
6 on these direct hiring authorities and why they were not
7 using them as much. We have increased the number of usage
8 of those authorities and reduced the hiring time across the
9 Department.

10 When we implemented the authorities, one thing that we
11 found is it was a little bit confusing because some of the
12 authorities overlap. The rules are different depending on
13 the direct hire authority. So, again, we thank the
14 Congress for the fiscal year 2020 NDAA that simplified
15 those authorities.

16 We also found that if we could gain authority for the
17 Secretary of Defense to provide a direct hire authority for
18 those critical skill sets, that it would provide more
19 flexibility.

20 I also believe the services will be able to talk about
21 how they have implemented those authorities. Thank you.

22 Senator Tillis: Thank you very much.

23 Senator Gillibrand?

24 Senator Gillibrand: Just a follow-up on the
25 coronavirus issues. You said you have 16 facilities up and

1 running. Is that what you said? With three more to come
2 online.

3 Mr. McCaffery: We have 13 of our 16 labs up and
4 running.

5 Senator Gillibrand: And three to come online. Okay.
6 So 16 total.

7 How many tests can you do a day given your 13 labs?

8 Mr. McCaffery: We have that data. I do not have it
9 handy. I can get back to you on it. But we have
10 projected, based upon staffing and volume, what we can do
11 in terms of the turnaround time of the test results. I can
12 get back to you with that information.

13 Senator Gillibrand: Do you have an approximation in
14 your head? Is it like 100 a day or 1,000 a day?

15 Mr. McCaffery: I do not. So I do not want to --

16 Senator Gillibrand: So please give me updated data,
17 and as it changes, just keep updating me so I know what our
18 capacity actually is.

19 The Department has been engaged in a process of
20 downsizing health personnel, the closure of military
21 medical treatment facilities, the shifting retiree military
22 family member care to TRICARE. In many of these areas,
23 treatment facilities may not be capable of handling the
24 increased patient load. These cuts are happening at the
25 same time as an outbreak of coronavirus and obviously a lot

1 of pressure on our system.

2 Has the DHA taken the impact of service members and
3 their families into account while making these changes?

4 Mr. McCaffery: Most definitely. And as I mentioned,
5 the whole effort on what we call right-sizing our footprint
6 in terms of hospitals and clinics and what level of
7 services they are providing -- it is all contingent upon --
8 if we are proposing a change and some down-sizing any
9 services of an MTF, it is contingent upon the ability of
10 that local community to absorb that additional patient.
11 And from my prior life in the private sector in the health
12 industry, we are doing the same thing that is done in the
13 commercial industry. And that is, before you make that
14 kind of change and you start planning to move folks from
15 one provider base to another, you do the on-site working
16 with our providers to see --

17 Senator Gillibrand: But you obviously did all that
18 work before the coronavirus hit. So have you done any
19 subsequent work to see are we going to have enough beds,
20 are we going to have enough ventilators, do we have enough
21 capacity?

22 Mr. McCaffery: So you are correct. The work that
23 went into the right-sizing proposal was done in advance of
24 the coronavirus. So it is a point in time. But what we
25 have said is it is conditions-based, and so part of that

1 will --

2 Senator Gillibrand: Okay. So you can ramp up if you
3 need to.

4 Mr. McCaffery: Part of that will be, if in the future
5 our assumptions that went into our proposals have changed,
6 then we will need to change what we proposed.

7 Senator Gillibrand: So keep looking, please.

8 Have you guys changed any of the travel restrictions
9 for military civilian personnel to areas affected by the
10 coronavirus?

11 Mr. McCaffery: So there have been -- by geographic
12 combatant command, there have been specific restrictions,
13 as I mentioned in the Indo-Pacific, restrictions in terms
14 of travel to and from Korea, China, other places. And it
15 pretty much aligns with where the CDC has issued travel
16 health notices in terms of countries based upon their level
17 of risk and level of spread of disease. We mirror that in
18 terms of controlling and monitoring travel to and from.

19 Senator Gillibrand: Grateful for the information.
20 Will you update this committee weekly on how we are doing
21 on all measurables for coronavirus?

22 Mr. McCaffery: Be happy to.

23 Senator Gillibrand: Will that be all right, Mr.
24 Chairman?

25 Senator Tillis: Yes, I think so. Particularly we are

1 very interested -- the disease seems to have a reasonably
2 short time frame. So we are particularly interested not
3 only in reporting the incidents and the tests on the front
4 side, but the disposition of the --

5 Senator Gillibrand: And capacity for testing because
6 one of the problems is -- you know, New York has the
7 highest number of cases now, and our Governor is using our
8 National Guard to deliver food and medical supplies. So
9 the tax that will be placed on our service members writ
10 large will be more significant than now, and it will
11 continue to grow. So I just want to make sure you have
12 enough testing labs, you have enough access, you have
13 enough supplies, you have enough personnel. And I would
14 like you to be aggressive in updating us if you are
15 concerned that you will not have what you need.

16 Mr. McCaffery: Yes.

17 Senator Gillibrand: And then, Dr. Van Winkle, with my
18 remaining time, can you talk a little bit about the most
19 recent SAPRO report and what you think the best ways to
20 stem the tide? We saw an increase, obviously, in sexual
21 assaults and unwanted sexual contacts. We saw a decrease
22 in the percentage of cases that actually went to a trial.
23 We saw a decrease in the conviction rate in raw numbers and
24 by percentage. So under any measurable, we are not getting
25 better at this. Do you have any suggestions about things

1 that you think we can do to improve our performance?

2 Dr. Van Winkle: Thank you for the question.

3 In many ways, you are absolutely right. While we saw
4 progress for a certain time frame over 10 years where we
5 saw our rates cut in half and reporting go up, in 2016 we
6 saw an increase at the service academies. In 2018, we saw
7 another increase in the service academies and an increase
8 in the active duty. So we really tried to look at the data
9 to see what are we doing wrong here, what efforts were we
10 doing that may have worked a while back but are not working
11 now. Again, what we saw as the driver for the increase is
12 that 17 to 24-year-old group that I talked about.

13 And one of the things we are trying to do, as well as
14 continuing to focus on the response system, the launch of
15 the CATCH program to look at repeat offenders, we really
16 are now laser-focused on the prevention side. So one of
17 the things I am doing at my level is the Prevention
18 Collaboration Forum, which has recently been approved by
19 the Under Secretary for Charter, and starting to look at
20 prevention across my entire portfolio, so the sexual
21 assaults, harassment, discrimination, hazing, bullying,
22 substance use, as well as suicide prevention. And we are
23 looking to create a -- we are developing right now a
24 violence prevention policy across all of those starting to
25 understand the interconnections between them, so really

1 starting to focus on preventing this from occurring in the
2 beginning.

3 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

5 Well, thank you all for testifying today and the work
6 that goes into preparing for the hearing. We appreciate
7 the information you have shared with us, look forward to
8 the information we requested follow-up on. So thanks again
9 for your service. We will transition to the second panel.

10 I want to thank the witnesses on the second panel for
11 being here today. I understand some of you may have
12 changed some travel plans to be present, and I appreciate
13 that.

14 On the second panel, we will hear from the Honorable
15 Casey Wardynski, Secretary of the Army for Manpower and
16 Reserve Affairs; the Honorable Gregory Slavonic, Assistant
17 Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Mr.
18 John Fedrigo, performing the duties of the Assistant
19 Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve
20 Affairs; Lieutenant General Thomas Seamands, Deputy Army
21 Chief of Staff for Personnel; Vice Admiral John Nowell,
22 Chief of Naval Personnel, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations
23 for Manpower, Personnel, Training, and Education;
24 Lieutenant General Brian Kelly, Air Force Deputy Chief of
25 Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services; and Lieutenant

1 General Michael Rocco, Deputy Marine Commander for Manpower
2 and Reserve Affairs.

3 Thank you all for being here, and we will begin at the
4 left and go down the line for opening statements.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. E. CASEY WARDYNSKI, ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS;
3 ACCOMPANIED BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS C. SEAMANDS,
4 DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, G-1, UNITED STATES ARMY

5 Dr. Wardynski: Chairman Tillis, Ranking Member
6 Gillibrand, and other distinguished members of the panel,
7 thank you very much for this opportunity to come before you
8 today and talk about Army programs for our people.

9 General Seamands and I have already submitted a
10 written statement that covers that breadth of our
11 portfolio, but today I would like to address some key areas
12 that speak to things you have raised in your points at the
13 beginning. They get to the business at heart of acquiring
14 talent in the Army, retaining it, developing it, and
15 employing it.

16 Last year, the Secretary of the Army and Chief of
17 Staff and our Sergeant major of the Army signed the Army's
18 first-ever People Strategy that brings those key elements
19 together in a very systematic way to drive forward
20 innovation in the Army. With this strategy, we see that
21 acquiring talent, which gets to your point, Senator, about
22 recruiting, as being the foundation of efforts. We do not
23 do lateral entry in any large manner. Therefore, the way
24 we begin is very much going to shape the way we go. We
25 need to bring in a very strong starting group of folks.

1 The foundation of this is our new marketing effort in
2 Chicago. There we established the Army Marketing
3 Enterprise Office, a short distance away from our new team
4 at DDB, which is our marketing firm. This group has
5 already launched a very engaging new campaign, "What's Your
6 Warrior," that is designed to show the breadth and depth of
7 opportunities in the Army, as well as the benefits afforded
8 to our members. Many of those, of course, flow from the
9 efforts of this panel or this committee.

10 Taking note of your guidance in section 512 of the
11 2020 NDAA, which pertains to the Junior ROTC, we are re-
12 imagining our efforts there. This includes bringing online
13 computer science and cybersecurity instruction that we
14 believe from the level of AP to honors to general education
15 for delivery in 2022 at selected schools as a pilot
16 program. Our effort here is designed to capture the
17 imagination of young adults and redress the issue of what
18 many believe is only 30 percent of young adults are
19 eligible and could enter the military. We need to begin
20 educating them much earlier about the opportunities
21 afforded in the military, the benefits of service, and the
22 challenges of services so that as they form their set of
23 life course alternatives, military service can be in there
24 early enough to shape their behaviors throughout high
25 school so by the time they graduate, they can avail

1 themselves of those opportunities.

2 This past fall, we implemented a talent-based market
3 for assignments. This is the foundation of our employee
4 talent component of our strategy. This innovation is most
5 likely the most significant modernization of our personnel
6 system since the beginning of the all volunteer force. It
7 relies on the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army,
8 IPPS-A, as its foundation technology. This system is now,
9 by the end of this month, fully implemented across all 54
10 Guard and Reserve elements in the 54 States and
11 territories. By 2022, it will be online throughout the
12 Reserve and active component. With that, we will finally
13 be able to see the talent across our formations in the
14 active, Guard, and Reserve and bring them to bear both
15 through assignment through temporary duty and virtual
16 connection to those who have a need for their services.

17 Of course, Army recruiters play a unique role in this
18 process. We are, therefore, innovating in that area as
19 well. We are going to begin a process of talent management
20 assessments for our new sergeants to identify those NCOs
21 who have a gift for both inspiring young adults to serve
22 and for identifying a good fit among those young adults to
23 make sure when they enter the service, they have the grit
24 and capacity to dominate the challenges of soldiering.

25 The quality of life for our soldiers and families, of

1 course, is a key enabler of all of this. Thanks to
2 authorities you provided in the 2018 NDAA, we continue to
3 improve our quality of life programs across our
4 installations. These include enhancements to spouse
5 employment, particularly in the area of licensure, child
6 care so that our parents have the ability to work,
7 dependent education, as well as improvements for family
8 support and readiness.

9 All of these efforts are the work we now undertake in
10 our people space. We share your passion for our people,
11 and our people remain our greatest resource.

12 Chairman Tillis, Ranking Member Gillibrand,
13 distinguished members of the committee, General Seamands
14 and I thank you for your generous and unwavering support
15 for our talented Army soldiers, civilians, and families.

16 [The prepared statement of Dr. Wardynski and General
17 Seamands follows:]

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1 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

2 Mr. Slavonic, welcome back.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. GREGORY J. SLAVONIC, ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS;
3 ACCOMPANIED BY: VICE ADMIRAL JOHN B. NOWELL, JR., USN,
4 DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS FOR MANPOWER, PERSONNEL,
5 TRAINING, AND EDUCATION, N-1; AND LIEUTENANT GENERAL
6 MICHAEL A. ROCCO, USMC, DEPUTY COMMANDER FOR MANPOWER AND
7 RESERVE AFFAIRS

8 Mr. Slavonic: Thank you, sir.

9 Chairman Tillis, Ranking Member Gillibrand,
10 distinguished members of the subcommittee, it is my
11 privilege and honor to be here today and share the table
12 with Vice Admiral Nowell, Lieutenant General Rocco, as well
13 as senior leaders from our sister services, all here
14 representing our nation's finest.

15 I always appreciate any opportunity to talk about what
16 I believe to be our most significant and critical assets to
17 the advancement of our mission: our sailors, marines, both
18 active, reserve, their families and civilian men and women
19 who together are globally engaged in the full spectrum of
20 operations while being prepared to win against the future
21 threats they deploy.

22 We are an integrated team collectively demonstrating
23 talent and dedication second to none. We are always
24 vigilant, collectively shouldering responsibilities and
25 achieving the National Defense Strategy. The Navy and

1 Marine Corps team has risen to meet challenges of our
2 competitors, a team that is bonded together by almost 250
3 years of tradition and deep-seated sense of duty to our
4 nation.

5 Today we face an unprecedented intense threat of our
6 way of life, coupled with complex systems, advancing
7 technologies. Our nation needs a strong, well trained,
8 well equipped Navy and Marine Corps to address the diverse
9 array of challenges and threats they face every day. We
10 must leverage our talent to retain our competitive edge and
11 our technological dominance.

12 The changing strategic landscape demands we manage our
13 talent, military and civilian, ensuring we are good
14 stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. Our naval force is in
15 the midst of a sweeping transformation replacing decades'
16 worth of unchanged processes and outdated technology with a
17 modern personnel talent management delivery system from
18 recruitment to retirement, improving the quality of service
19 to sailors, marines, and their families.

20 Sailor 2025 modernization complements the programs of
21 our ships, submarines and aircraft. We must improve work-
22 life balance, including health and wellness, while creating
23 an environment built on trust, transparency, inclusion,
24 connectedness among our sailors, marines, and their
25 families.

1 The rising threat environment, coupled with low
2 unemployment presents incredible challenges in our ability
3 to recruit and retain high performing, highly skilled
4 talent in both the Navy and the Marine Corps. The services
5 have achieved tremendous success meeting all enlisted and
6 officer recruiting goals. We will continue leveraging
7 special pays and bonuses to ensure adequate numbers of
8 qualified personnel are available in hard-to-fill
9 specialties. Most services have areas of challenges in
10 recruiting and retaining critical talent, and incentive
11 pays are vital to our success and viability in retaining an
12 innovative skilled force.

13 Achieving dominance in the great power competition
14 demands an agile force focused on increasing lethality and
15 building capacity. To that end, we must continue to invest
16 in the mechanisms which ensure the services are to meet
17 their recruitment and end strength goals for the
18 foreseeable future. Right now, we enjoy a force of
19 unprecedented quality, the finest and most advanced sailors
20 and marines, civilian employees, including world renowned
21 scientists and patent holders.

22 If we are to maintain a credible and modern, forward-
23 leaning global presence, we must leverage all the
24 capabilities our nation affords to secure excellence in our
25 human capital talent. To ensure our future success, we

1 need to plan and develop and manage better our human
2 assets. Taking care of our people as they take care of our
3 nation is paramount to any and all mission success.

4 I enlisted in the Navy in 1971 followed by two
5 deployments to sea. I earned a commission as a Reserve
6 officer. Then after a 54-year naval career, including
7 several recalls to active duty, I recognized the magnitude
8 and responsibility of raising your right hand to take the
9 oath to serve your country, preserving these freedoms and
10 safeguarding our nation.

11 I understand the stresses and challenges placed on our
12 service members and their families every day. I understand
13 the importance of a spouse who supports the service member
14 who has a responsibility to care for the family when he or
15 she is deployed. In my humble opinion, being a spouse of a
16 service member is one of the most undervalued and difficult
17 jobs there is. The high tempo, high stress environment
18 appears to be the new normal for the Department of the
19 Navy. Our people consistently step up and perform superbly
20 in times of greatest need.

21 With your sustained support, we will be able to
22 continue to recruit, develop, and retain the best and
23 brightest our nation has to offer for years to come. These
24 men and women who will preserve peace, ensure our national
25 security which our nation deserves. I take this

1 opportunity to be here today, and I stand ready to take any
2 questions. Thank you.

3 [The prepared statement of Admiral Nowell follows:]

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1 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

2 Mr. Fedrigo, did I pronounce your name properly?

3 Mr. Fedrigo: Yes, Chairman, you did.

4 Senator Tillis: Fedrigo.

5 Mr. Fedrigo: Yes, sir.

6 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

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1 STATEMENT OF JOHN A. FEDRIGO, PERFORMING THE DUTIES
2 OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR MANPOWER
3 AND RESERVE AFFAIRS; ACCOMPANIED BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL
4 BRIAN T. KELLY, USAF, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR MANPOWER,
5 PERSONNEL AND SERVICES

6 Mr. Fedrigo: Chairman Tillis, Ranking Member
7 Gillibrand, it is an honor to speak with you today. We
8 appreciate the continued interest, support, and advocacy
9 this committee provides to our air and space force.

10 While multiple topics are covered in our prepared
11 statement, I will use this short introduction to highlight
12 three key areas of effort: building a lethal and ready
13 Department of the Air Force; developing our nation's air
14 and space professionals; and finally, improving and
15 sustaining family readiness.

16 The Department of the Air Force must compete, deter,
17 and win in an increasingly complex global security
18 environment. We must continue to sharpen our competitive
19 edge by developing and building a lethal and ready air and
20 space force. At its core, building the force we need is
21 about people. Our air and space professionals, both
22 military and civilian, and their families remain our most
23 important asset.

24 To this end, I cannot overemphasize how important
25 stable and predictable budgets are to morale and readiness.

1 They give us the ability to build combat-capable forces
2 ready to compete, deter and, if deterrence fails, defeat
3 adversaries set on disrupting our way of life. Investments
4 in end strength and properly resourcing the Space Force
5 will pay dividends to our nation's security well into the
6 future.

7 In this era of near-peer competition, rapidly evolving
8 technology and an increasingly complex operational
9 environment, we realize our talent management systems must
10 evolve to be more agile, responsive, and effective at
11 empowering and driving performance. These attributes are
12 the bedrock for increasing lethality and developing
13 exceptional leaders. They are also the filters we use to
14 evaluate the effectiveness of new reforms or initiatives.

15 The Department of the Air Force has taken significant
16 steps to transform our talent management systems to ensure
17 we can attract, recruit, develop, evaluate, and retain the
18 air and space professionals needed to support our future
19 force requirements. We recognize the talent marketplace is
20 more competitive than ever. New congressional authorities
21 have augmented existing tools providing increased
22 flexibility and efficiency in managing both our military
23 and civilian workforce. We ask for your continued advocacy
24 by providing the statutory framework and resources
25 necessary to field a ready and resilient military and

1 civilian workforce.

2 In addition to our military and civilian force, our
3 families are critical to ensuring we remain the world's
4 greatest air and space force. We are focused on family
5 readiness and resilience to ensure our personnel can focus
6 on the mission knowing their family members are supported
7 with a robust network of people and capabilities dedicated
8 to their wellbeing.

9 In fiscal year 2019, our 76 airmen and family
10 readiness centers responded to almost 3 million service
11 requests, hosted more than 26,000 workshops with 360,000-
12 plus participants, and sponsored over 40,000 outreach
13 events connecting with almost 1.5 million attendees. While
14 we are proud of the support we provide, we remain committed
15 to improving our capabilities especially in the exceptional
16 family member, child care, and spouse employment arenas.

17 Chairman Tillis, Ranking Member Gillibrand, and
18 distinguished committee members, a ready and resilient
19 military and civilian force is the bedrock of our service.
20 The Department of the Air Force is evolving to compete,
21 deter, and win in the air, space, and cyber domains. We
22 look forward to continuing to partner with Congress on
23 initiatives to remain competitive as an employer of choice.
24 We rely on and are grateful for your efforts to protect and
25 support our service members and their families. The

1 Department of the Air Force welcomes your continued
2 commitment to these causes.

3 Thank you again for this opportunity to represent our
4 incredible professionals and their families. We look
5 forward to your questions.

6 [The prepared statement of Mr. Fedrigo and General
7 Kelly follows:]

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1 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

2 Mr. Slavonic, I understand the child care availability
3 is lacking in areas, particularly in Virginia Beach and San
4 Diego. And I know that a lot of the families are utilizing
5 the fee assistance program while they are on a wait list
6 for a CDC to go out into a private provider network. I
7 believe I am right, and I want to be corrected if I am
8 wrong. But I think the Navy is the only service that right
9 now does not seem like it is budgeting adequately for the
10 fee assistance program. Do you have an update on that, and
11 what we can look forward to going forward to correct it?

12 Mr. Slavonic: Senator, thank you for that question.

13 As you know, right now we have approximately I believe
14 9,000 unfilled seats at child care centers. There is a
15 shortage in that area from what I understand, and we are
16 trying to go out into the public area and try to solicit
17 and find areas where we can plug those individuals in, take
18 care of them.

19 As far as the funding, I am not sure on the funding.
20 I think we do need more funding. We need to look at it.
21 Admiral Nowell may have a better number for me on that to
22 know, but I think we are getting closer to where we need to
23 be.

24 Senator Tillis: Admiral Nowell?

25 Admiral Nowell: Mr. Secretary, thank you. And

1 Chairman, thank you.

2 We share your concern there and we know that we
3 recruit the sailor but we retain the family. And we know
4 that child care is an important part of that. We are going
5 to add a thousand new spaces this year. We have budgeted
6 for 4,000 new spaces next year, and as the Secretary
7 mentioned, we are also using these public-private venture
8 partnerships, things like schools with excess capacity
9 where we come in and manage and get them. So we are going
10 after this aggressively. But we acknowledge that we are
11 not where we need to be right now.

12 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

13 And this will be for Mr. Slavonic and Mr. Wardynski
14 and the chiefs where appropriate. You got to give the Air
15 Force credit for recently publicizing your methodology on
16 your intention of moving forward with the inclusion of
17 education and military spouse licensure reciprocity and the
18 future base scoring process. As somebody who led the State
19 house in North Carolina, I was constantly looking for ways
20 to be as military-friendly as possible. I think this is a
21 great way to send the message that you welcome us, we may
22 come visit you. But I do not think that the Navy, Marine,
23 or Army has moved forward with this.

24 Is it your intention to do that? When would put
25 forward that kind of implementation plan?

1 Dr. Wardynski: Senator, actually we are moving
2 forward with that, and the schools are obviously a very
3 important part of that, spouse licensure reciprocity as
4 well. And we have added a few other items to our
5 consideration set. And our Army Analysis Agency has
6 already begun the work of gathering that data, and to some
7 degree, I think we may be transferring that work to West
8 Point given the nature of it.

9 Senator Tillis: Well, good. I tell you for my part -
10 - and I will be constantly looking at whether or not North
11 Carolina is tied down and got a good story to tell there.
12 So the sooner we get that out there, the sooner I will be
13 calling the Senate Leader and the Speaker of the House for
14 any deficiencies that I see there to make sure that we are
15 doing the right thing down in North Carolina, whether it is
16 Seymour Johnson, Lejeune, Cherry Point, New River, Fort
17 Bragg, or any part in between.

18 And so the Navy, Mr. Slavonic?

19 Mr. Slavonic: Yes, sir. I echo the Secretary. Thank
20 you for increasing the fee from \$500 to \$1,000. That has
21 been significant. That has helped us a lot. But we are
22 still needing to do more with our spouses on our licensing,
23 and we are looking at it and trying to move as quickly as
24 we can to make sure that we are doing what we need to do
25 for the spouses.

1 Senator Tillis: Well, I would like to, again, make
2 sure that we are keeping pace. It looks like, in this
3 particular case, the Air Force is a little bit ahead of the
4 curve, but I cannot imagine there would be any different
5 policy. This is something that should be common and shared
6 among the service lines. So I look forward to prompt
7 action on that.

8 And actually this is a question again for Mr.
9 Slavonic. I think the Navy's active duty end strength has
10 grown from 323,600 in fiscal year 2015 to 340,500 in fiscal
11 year 20. The budget request has the Navy growing faster
12 than any other service and requests an additional 7,300
13 sailors. But at the same time, we have lowered enlistment
14 standards for new recruits and relaxed retention timelines
15 for experienced sailors.

16 I just want to get a read on this. I know the
17 personnel business is a pretty complicated business, but
18 how can you reassure this committee that as the Navy
19 continues to grow, it will not let recruiting and retention
20 standards slip? Or tell me why that is perception and not
21 reality.

22 Mr. Slavonic: So, Senator, as you know, we have a
23 commitment to build a 355-plus ship Navy, and to get there,
24 we must keep our attrition -- our recruitment up to the
25 level it needs to be to reach those goals. And Admiral

1 Nowell's team is doing a great job in heading that
2 direction. Some of the individuals -- if they decide to
3 leave active duty, we are rolling them into the reserves so
4 we maintain that talent.

5 But we hope that we would be able to keep that growth.
6 I think this year we are going to grow 4,600, if I am not
7 mistaken. I think our recruiting goal is 4,800.

8 Senator Tillis: Admiral Nowell, are we lowering the
9 bar?

10 Admiral Nowell: Mr. Chairman, thank you for that.
11 And I assure you we are not lowering the bar, nor are we
12 lowering the bar for retention.

13 I will tell you -- and the Secretary touched on it --
14 Sailor 2025, as we look at managing talent differently, as
15 we look at modernizing, as we look at delivering that
16 customer service going to mobile apps, going to more
17 options, flexibility, you hear us talk about a detailing
18 marketplace. That is giving us the highest retention that
19 we have ever seen. We are at about 77 percent across all
20 zones. That is how we are doing that growth. We are not -
21 - not -- sacrificing our standards while we do that, sir.

22 Senator Tillis: I think that is very important. I am
23 glad to hear that.

24 General Rocco. Senator Gillibrand, if you would not
25 mind, I just have one other question on personnel. The

1 Commandant's Plan and Guidance says the current manpower
2 system throws talent away at the point it is most
3 productive and highly trained. How is the Marine Corps
4 planning to revise its personnel policies to achieve the
5 Commandant's manpower objectives?

6 General Rocco: Chairman, thank you for that question.

7 So in conjunction with the Commandant's Planning
8 Guidance, we have implemented a few different manpower
9 approaches. This is all under the umbrella of force
10 design, which is underway right now. And some of the
11 things we have looked at and we just instituted on the last
12 promotion board was merit reorder. That is something that
13 the other services have done in the past. We have not done
14 that. And it is basically, to put it into the normal
15 vernacular, below zone promotions. It is something similar
16 to that. So what we do is we look at the promotion grades
17 for majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels, and we break
18 out those high performers and put them at the top of the
19 list, something that has not been done in the past for the
20 Marine Corps, something that is new. We just did it. We
21 are now looking at the analysis of these promotion boards
22 to see if we want to expand it or just how effective it has
23 been.

24 The other thing we have done is we have given
25 reenlistment incentives to the commanding generals out in

1 the operation of the fleet marine force. So in the past,
2 all of the reenlistments would have to come to manpower.
3 Now what we have given them is a percentage that they can
4 take their high performing marines and they can actually
5 reenlist them. Not only can they reenlist them, but they
6 can reenlist them early, which again for us is -- we have
7 never done that in the past. So that is just a few things
8 that we have done.

9 We have also recognized the fact, specific in the
10 Commandant's Planning Guidance, it is industrial age. We
11 want to move to information age. We have to modernize our
12 manpower systems. The other services have a talent
13 management marketplace. We do not have that. We do not
14 have that ability. We do not have that ability. We do not
15 have the computer power and network to do that. We are
16 developing that to try to come to something that is more to
17 LinkedIn type approach to how we do manpower.

18 So those are just some of the initiatives to line up
19 with the Commandant's Planning Guidance.

20 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

21 Senator Gillibrand?

22 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 For Mr. Wardynski and General Seamands, the Army
24 combat fitness test is set to replace the current Army
25 physical fitness test beginning in October. Although I

1 applaud the Army's focus on a more lethal force, I am
2 concerned at the impact this test may have on recruiting
3 and retention in the force, especially among specialty
4 occupations such as doctors and mental health
5 professionals. ACFT also seems to disproportionately
6 affect women, especially those who have recently given
7 birth. My office has heard concerns from officers and
8 soldiers from all over the force about this.

9 Are you worried about the impact that the ACFT will
10 have on the Army's ability to recruit and retain
11 professionals in STEM careers? And are you worried about
12 losing service members to the Air Force and Marines who
13 have made significant adjustments to the physical standards
14 to address similar concerns? And what impact will ACFT
15 have on integrating women into combat arms?

16 General Seamands: Senator, thank you very much for
17 the question.

18 The six-event ACFT Army combat fitness test is in a
19 diagnostic stage right now where we are gathering
20 information. It's pre-decisional. No decisions have been
21 made in terms of what the standards are across the board.
22 This year in fiscal year 2020, the entire Army will take
23 two PT tests to establish a baseline across the board. It
24 is much more challenging physical fitness test. It lines
25 up better with lethality, as you stated, things like the

1 dead lift is more akin to picking up a stretcher and
2 carrying it across the battlefield, et cetera.

3 We are concerned or are aware that you could have a
4 disproportionate impact on a gender or an age because it is
5 age-neutral as well. That is why I want to gather the
6 data. There are no decisions that have to do with a current
7 three-event PT test, how to phase in the six-event PT test,
8 what are the rewards and consequences because promotions
9 and separations are based off it. It is a challenging
10 test.

11 But if you do not mind, Senator, my sergeant major is
12 sitting behind me. Last year he had major back surgery.
13 About 4 months ago, we took the new PT test together and he
14 did about a dozen leg tucks, which is the most challenging
15 piece of it.

16 So what we want to do is bring the test on board,
17 allow people the opportunity to take the test, reduce the
18 angst across the force, establish a baseline that measures
19 fitness, as well as rewards those who go above and beyond.

20 Senator Gillibrand: Right. But you are setting
21 yourself up for failure because -- I will give you a couple
22 fact patterns. Imagine that you have an Army physician who
23 has been serving for 15 years, has two children, fully
24 operating in a clinical schedule and is otherwise stellar,
25 in excellent physical condition, but cannot perform the leg

1 tuck. You are going to lose all that training and all that
2 seniority. She has not been asked to do it for 15 years.
3 She is being asked to do it now.

4 Second example. A woman who has to give a C-section.
5 You slice every stomach muscle you have when you have a
6 C-section. So the leg tucks can be really hard within 6
7 months of a C-section because those muscles take at least 3
8 months to heal, and then it is going to take you months to
9 recover the ability to do those physical exercises.

10 So I think there is going to be a disproportionate
11 harm on certain talented service members that you need in
12 STEM fields that have been serving for a long time and have
13 not been forced to do this and you need for their missions
14 and for what they actually have been trained to do. And
15 you may have a disproportionate impact on women.

16 We have heard anecdotally that in your tests among the
17 women who have taken it in the last few, something like 84
18 percent failure rate among women. So I would like to see
19 the results of the fiscal year 2019 field testing if you
20 have them available. But you do not want to lose people
21 that you have been training and serving for years who are
22 combat-ready and who do a great job. So I just would be
23 mindful about what you are creating and some unintended
24 consequences, which means you will lose service members.

25 The other thing I am a little worried about is Fort

1 Drum. You know the weather in Fort Drum is very harsh in
2 the winter. You get about 110 inches of snow. Dan
3 Sullivan has the same problem in Alaska. Are you concerned
4 or preparing to update and improve their fitness
5 facilities? Because they cannot train outside during the
6 winter. And their current fitness facilities do not have
7 the things you are going to need to train properly,
8 particularly the drag. They do not necessarily have those
9 facilities. So I would look and review that people who
10 have tough conditions and cannot train outside can have
11 access to inside training. You might need to update their
12 facilities.

13 General Seamands: Yes, ma'am. I think our approach
14 is nested exactly in what you are saying. We are being
15 slow. We are being deliberate. We are gathering the data
16 before we make any decisions and acknowledge the weather
17 conditions in a place like Fort Drum or Alaska that we need
18 to account for.

19 Senator Gillibrand: Yes, because we have heard again
20 anecdotally that some of our service members are spending
21 upward of \$2,000 to create their own gyms so they can be
22 ready for the test. I mean, that is absurd. Providing a
23 really state-of-the-art gym for our service members should
24 not be that hard. So that is just a red flag for you.

25 As you review, I would like you to give a letter to

1 the committee giving us an assurance that you are not going
2 to leave the female force behind and you are not going to
3 leave members who have been serving for over a decade,
4 particularly in STEM fields.

5 General Seamands: Yes, ma'am. Will do.

6 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

7 General Seamands: I am the father of a daughter, a
8 captain, who calls me on a regular basis and asks what is
9 going on with the ACFT. So it is personal for me as well.

10 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. I appreciate it.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Senator Tillis: Thank you.

13 Our senior committee staff here, Al, was telling me he
14 was working out recently. Maybe if we have time at the end
15 of the hearing, we will see how many leg tucks he can do.

16 [Laughter.]

17 Senator Gillibrand: Yes. I want to see how many I
18 can do. I want to see if I can pass your test.

19 Senator Tillis: We have got another question. I know
20 that a lot of times we ask you all to focus on priorities
21 that are very important, but oftentimes we fail to provide
22 the resources for those priorities. So I get that you are
23 trying to move things around and work with whatever
24 authorities you have to do that. So take this next
25 question in that context.

1 Mr. Slavonic and General Rocco, in fiscal year 2020,
2 the NDAA authorized Marine Corps' end strengths of 186,200.
3 It looks like you are going to miss the authorized end
4 strength by about 1,600 marines. The cynic would say you
5 are missing that because it frees up about \$150 million to
6 be used for other items that may not have been directly
7 authorized. But I am not necessarily cynical when it comes
8 to the folks wearing stars on their shoulders.

9 So I would like to, number one, understand was it just
10 a miss. Was it, some would say, an intentional miss? What
11 the money is going to be used for. And then, number two,
12 like I said, how they were applied. And then more
13 importantly, as we go into the next cycle, what should we
14 expect in terms of end strength and hitting closer to the
15 mark? General Rocco?

16 General Rocco: Senator Tillis, sir, yes, we will. We
17 are within the margins. We are not being fast and loose.
18 And we do appreciate the support that we receive certainly
19 from the Congress and your committee specifically.

20 What we are doing is General Berger has started the
21 force design, and what he is looking at is force that is a
22 2030 force. So recognizing the fact that we can say now,
23 put into place takes years to develop. So that is what we
24 are looking at. So we are looking at basically redesigning
25 the force to be that force in 2030, and this miss in end

1 strength is really the first tranche of looking at
2 divesting ourselves of legacy systems that we do not need
3 and investing in systems that will be that 2030 force.

4 Senator Tillis: Well, I think we had -- I think it
5 was the Army. I had a similar discussion with then-
6 Secretary of the Army where we hit some end strength
7 targets. And it is just so important to get right so that
8 your next estimates are taken seriously and fulfilled. So
9 that is why I raised the question. But thank you for the
10 answer.

11 Mr. Fedrigo and General Kelly, you all have asked for
12 new end strength authorization for the Space Force of 6,434
13 personnel for fiscal year 2021. I do not believe the
14 committee has received any specific substantiation for the
15 request. And the reason that is important, we are getting
16 in the hearing cycle now for the markup. And the sooner we
17 get that information the better we can work to justify it
18 and understand the justification for it. Can you give us a
19 heads-up, number one, on the justification for the need
20 just in response to the question? Number two, when we
21 would see a formal communication of the need.

22 Mr. Fedrigo: Yes, Senator. Thank you very much for
23 that question.

24 So the actual transfer of the manpower positions is
25 what it is. This is transferring positions from the

1 Department of the Air Force that were previously in the Air
2 Force to the Space Force. So that 6,400 that you are
3 talking about represents about 3,500 on the civilian side,
4 about 6,400 on the military side. So it actually ends up
5 to about almost 10,000 in total. And it includes --

6 Senator Tillis: Just to clarify, would that be more
7 or less a net? So what is the base that evolves an
8 organizational transfer, people doing similar jobs within
9 the Space Force? And then what is in that incremental
10 need?

11 Mr. Fedrigo: It is basically everything that used to
12 be the Air Force Space Command before. The 2020 NDAA
13 redesignated the Air Force Space Command to be the United
14 States Space Force. And it is transferring all of those
15 authorizations into the Space Force with a couple of
16 additions.

17 The additions that we asked for in end strength
18 increase in fiscal year 2021. You will see an increase of
19 900 on the active duty side. 140 of that 900 active duty
20 would go to the Space Force to start increasing
21 capabilities for space operators, range operators, folks
22 who will start to flush out the Space Force operating in a
23 contested domain. There are also 84 positions in there
24 that are the beginnings of transfers from the Army and Navy
25 on personnel who were working on space to come over into

1 the U.S. Space Force as well.

2 Senator Tillis: Good. I think that material -- the
3 sooner we get it to the committee to just show that you are
4 doing the organizational transition, that is where the
5 majority of the baseline is, and then the description of
6 the net incremental resources I think will be helpful as we
7 move forward.

8 Mr. Fedrigo: It has been submitted. I think it is
9 working its way through approval to get to you.

10 Senator Tillis: Okay.

11 Well, thank you all for being here. Any closing
12 comments from anybody? Is there anything that we did not
13 ask you that you want to talk about? I got all night.

14 [Laughter.]

15 Mr. Slavonic: Senator, I have one comment. Trying to
16 help Admiral Nowell and the good work his team has done on
17 implementing our MPT, our manpower, our transition, we
18 would appreciate any support you could provide. We had a
19 mark on MP-2 which is our program which helps with the
20 permeability from going from reserves to active duty and
21 back. And so any support we might receive from you on that
22 would be most appreciated.

23 Senator Tillis: Well, let us make sure we get with
24 the staff and get in the office to discuss it.

25 Senator Gillibrand, did you have any other questions?

1 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for
2 holding this hearing. Thank you all for your service.
3 This is a time of great need for our country, and I think,
4 as you respond to the needs of the coronavirus and
5 protecting our service men and women, I would be grateful
6 for your attention and dedication to keeping our force
7 strong. Thank you.

8 Senator Tillis: And I want to thank you all. I hope
9 that you know in these committee hearings, you can only
10 cover so much material. But our office -- and I am sure I
11 speak for Senator Gillibrand -- is wide open to any ideas
12 or feedback particularly within the lanes of the Personnel
13 and Readiness Subcommittee. We want to do everything we
14 can to make your job easier so you can keep our men and
15 women safer. Thank you very much.

16 We will keep the record open, and we will also,
17 without objection, include any outside statements received
18 for the official record.

19 Thank you all.

20 The hearing is adjourned.

21 [Whereupon, at 3:55 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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