

RECORD VERSION

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Introduction

Chairwoman Gillibrand, Senator Graham, Distinguished Members of this Committee, we thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of America's Army. The United States Army is a values-based organization that exists to serve the American people, to defend the Nation, to protect vital national interests, and to fulfill national military responsibilities. We are now poised to execute a historic drawdown of both our military and civilian personnel, and we are proposing to do it in a deliberate, responsible and careful manner. Thousands of individuals will transition out of military and civil service and deserve quality transition assistance.

While the future Army will be smaller, the Army is implementing a number of changes in force structure and other capabilities to ensure it remains the best led, best trained and best equipped land force in the world today and in the future. Our Soldiers have performed superbly during more than a decade of war, displaying the values, character and competence that make our Army second to none. We must not waver on our commitment to support all those who have served with courage, pride, and honor.

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to ensuring that the needs of our Soldiers, their Families, and our Civilian workforce are met by supporting our personnel initiatives to ensure the sustainment and well being of our All-Volunteer Force.

Strategic Overview

The Army has been in a state of continuous war for nearly twelve years – the longest in our Nation's history. More than 4,800 Soldiers have given their lives on behalf of this Nation. Today we have more than 81,000 Soldiers committed to operations around the world with approximately 58,000 in Afghanistan. Nearly 1.5 million Soldiers have deployed and more than half a million have deployed multiple times -- some as many as six times. Additionally, Army Civilians shoulder a majority of the Generating Force mission, and 30,000 Civilians have deployed into harm's way. Our Soldiers, Civilians and Families remain vital to the strength of our Nation.

Now we will transition to a smaller force, while continuing to remain vigilant of new threats and prepare for new capabilities and requirements. To maintain an All-Volunteer Force of the highest quality Soldiers and achieve our end-strength goal, the Army must responsibly balance force shaping across accessions, retention, promotions, voluntary and involuntary separations, and natural losses. We will leverage the Army Total Force Policy, for full integration of our active and reserve components, maximizing each component's strengths, in order to continue accomplishing our mission in a time of fiscal constraints. We will expand opportunities to women in the Army by opening up previously closed positions and career paths. We will ensure quality assistance to our Soldiers and Civilians who transition from their military and civil service careers to employment in the private sector.

We are currently working with the Veterans Administration to streamline the disability system and improve coordination for health care, compensation, and benefits for our medically separated and retired Soldiers. The Army also continues to focus on assisting our Soldiers and Family Members struggling with depression, substance abuse, and other Health of the Force issues. This year we have implemented "Ready and Resilient," a new comprehensive campaign -- designed to enhance individual and collective resilience and improve readiness.

The American Soldier is the centerpiece of everything we do in the Army. Our efforts must remain focused on the preservation of our most precious resource, our people.

Drawdown / Endstrength

In keeping with the National Defense Strategy, the Army is building our future force to meet the Nation's requirements. The Army is reducing its active component endstrength to 490,000 Soldiers by FY17. The Army has already reduced the additional temporary endstrength increase of 22,000 Soldiers, approved in 2009 by the Secretary of Defense, and is on target to be at an active component endstrength of 530,000 by the end of FY13. In FY14, the Army will begin to take further steps to achieve the endstate force of 490,000 by FY17.

Based on Total Army Analysis of future requirements, the force structure effective in FY17 requires an additional decrease of approximately 5,700 Enlisted Soldiers and 6,900 Officers beyond our current rate of attrition over this same period. Our projected drawdown ramp allows for funding 490,000 of endstrength in the base budget in FY14 and beyond, with all other endstrength resourced with Overseas Contingency Operations funding. This ramp allows for a steady enlisted annual accession mission of about 68,000 and an Active Army Competitive Category officer mission of about 4,600. Our strength projections also incorporates additional Soldier inventory to mitigate the impact of non-deployable Soldiers in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System. Temporary Endstrength Army Medical is present in FY13 and FY14 and fully eliminated by the end of FY15.

To maintain the highest quality All-Volunteer Army, we will execute the upcoming force reductions in a responsible and targeted fashion while maintaining a ready force. To achieve planned endstrength reductions, the Army expects to use various types of separation authorities across all elements of the force (Officer and Enlisted). The FY12 and FY13 National Defense Authorization Acts provided several incentive authorities to help the Army shape the force over the drawdown period, along with the flexibility to apply them to meet specific grade and skill requirements. Under normal loss rates, the Army will not be able to reach its endstrength goal over the FY13-FY17 period. There is no single force shaping method among the choices of accessions, retention and separations that will achieve the Army's end-strength goals, and there will be good Soldiers who we cannot retain. Reduced accession levels, promotion selectivity and tightened retention standards will help shape our force naturally. Through these processes, we expect to lose some combat-seasoned Soldiers and leaders, but our focus will be on retaining the best individuals in the right grades and skills. As Soldiers depart our active duty formations, the Army is committed to assisting them and their families as they transition to the Army Reserve, National Guard, or civilian life.

Recruiting and Retention (Officer and Enlisted)

Our Soldiers are the Army's most important resource, and our ability to meet the challenges of the current and future operational environment depends on our ability to sustain the All-Volunteer Force. Even as we drawdown the Army, we must continue to bring high quality men and women into the force to grow our future leaders. We must also retain the most talented Soldiers with the experience and skills necessary to meet our future needs.

Despite the challenges of an ongoing conflict, future drawdown plans, and budgetary constraints, the Active Army and the Army Reserve once again exceeded their enlisted retention missions in FY12. Focusing on required grades and skills, the Army National Guard reduced their retention mission in FY12 to avoid exceeding their congressionally mandated endstrength limits. The active component achieved its FY12 recruiting mission and accessed over 96% high school diploma graduates, with the lowest number of waivers and test category IV enlistments ever. The Total Army's percentage of new enlisted Soldiers with a high school diploma was well above historic rates. Additionally, the Army achieved over 99% Military Occupational Specialty requirements. In addition, recruits scoring 50-99% on the Armed Forces Qualification Test exceeded the DoD standard of 60%, while recruits who scored in the lower range (30% and below) were at a record low in FY12. We are currently on track to achieve the FY13 recruiting mission, with the exception of the US Army Reserve mission. However, a tougher recruiting environment and impacts of sequestration have already caused a decline in the FY14 entry pool.

Upcoming reductions in Army operating budgets will likely have significant impact on recruiting operations. While the Army can mitigate many of the fiscal constraints by focusing cuts to preserve operational capabilities at the tactical level, the impact of reductions across multiple funding lines poses the greatest threat to the Army's ability sustain the All Volunteer Force.

In FY12, Combined Active Army (AC) and Army Reserve Component (RC) enlistment and reenlistment incentives totaled slightly over \$1.03B compared to \$1.23B in FY11. Entering FY13, the combined Active and Reserve Components will spend slightly over \$1.009B: AC recruiting (\$237M), AC retention (\$237M); Army National Guard recruiting and retention (\$348M); USAR recruiting and retention (\$187M). A large part of the FY13 incentives budget is a result of obligations for enlistment bonuses occurring from fiscal years 2008-2011. As a result of lower recruiting missions and prior year success, the percentage of Army recruits receiving a bonus dropped from over 62% of all recruits in FY09 to 3% in FY13. Enlistment and reenlistment bonuses are only used to incentivize longer term enlistments in a small percentage of critical skills. These incentives ensure the success of the total Army recruiting and retention missions and shape the force to meet specific grade and skill requirements. The amount budgeted for contractual payments is anticipated to decrease until at least FY15.

Recruiting is expected to be more difficult in FY14. The Army and the nation still face challenges such as rising obesity rates as we recruit the All-Volunteer force. In today's environment, fewer than one in four 17-24 year-olds are eligible to serve in the Army without a waiver. One in five youths age 12-19 are currently overweight, compared to 1 in 20 in the 1960s, and this trend is projected to grow to one in four by 2015. More than 20% of high school students fail to graduate, a critical milestone in becoming competitive to serve in highly skilled positions.

In FY12, the Active Army reenlisted 64,012 Soldiers. The Army Reserve reenlisted 14,377 Soldiers, exceeding their annual goal by 9%. The Army National Guard fell short of their mission, achieving 93% of their assigned mission, reenlisting 49,272 Soldiers, again purposely under producing to avoid exceeding endstrength limits.

During FY12 and into FY13, retention bonuses were carefully monitored and adjusted to ensure that the Army met its retention goals while remaining fiscally responsible. During FY13, the Active Component retention program is on track to successfully retain a quality force that supports Army endstrength and readiness requirements. As we posture for future reductions in the size of our force, the Army is using lessons learned

from past reductions to ensure that today's decisions maintain the viability of tomorrow's All-Volunteer force. Retention policies will emphasize retention of Soldiers with high potential coupled with appropriate force alignment and structure.

Transition Assistance Program

Our Nation entrusts its best and brightest to the Army to support the All-Volunteer force. Therefore, the Army has a responsibility to help our transitioning personnel prepare for post-active duty life by providing the training and tools to enable their success. We must help them use their Army training, education and experience to successfully return to civilian life and to become gainfully employed. With thousands of Soldiers possessing diverse skills, and scheduled to depart over the next few years, the Nation has a motivated, disciplined and work-ready force to employ. The re-designed Transition Assistance Program (TAP)- entitled "Transition GPS" (Goals, Plans, Succeed)- will assist our Soldiers in understanding and communicating what great skills and abilities they do bring to our Nation's workforce. To be successful in their transition, we must provide the assistance, curriculum, training, skills building and tools our members need so they are prepared and most importantly, career ready to achieve their goals in civilian life. Transition GPS includes the following elements:

- **Pre-Separation Assessment and Individual Counseling:** Through the new transition program, separating service members will have a one-on-one counseling session to discuss their transition needs and goals. Each service member will develop an Individual Transition Plan that documents their personal transition, as well as the deliverables they must attain to meet the new transition program's Career Readiness Standards.
- **5-Day Core Curriculum:** The five day Transition GPS Core Curriculum will include a financial planning seminar, a workshop offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs on the available veterans' benefits, and a re-designed employment workshop offered by the Department of Labor. Transitioning service members will also undertake a Military Occupational Code Crosswalk to translate

their military skills, training, and experience into civilian occupations and credentials.

- **Career-Specific Additional Curriculum:** In addition to completing the Transition GPS Core Curriculum, transitioning service members will also have the option of participating in a series of two day tailored tracks within the Transition GPS curriculum: (1) an Education track, for those pursuing college education; (2) a Technical Training track, for those seeking to attend technical school or earn a credential; and (3) an Entrepreneurship track, for those wanting to start a business.
- **CAPSTONE Event:** At least 90 days before their separation from military service, service members will participate in a CAPSTONE event, which will verify that transitioning service members completed the Transition GPS curriculum and achieved Career Readiness Standards. Service members who require additional assistance will be referred to additional or remedial training opportunities. In addition, through the CAPSTONE event, all service members will be offered a “warm handover” to government agencies and organizations that will be able to provide them continued benefits, services, and support as veterans.
- **Military Life Cycle Transition Model:** The new transition program will incorporate career readiness and transition preparation into the entire span of a service member’s career. In the past, transition and preparation for the civilian workforce occurred late in a service member’s lifecycle – near the point of separation. Under this new program, these concepts will be incorporated earlier as a way to ensure that the counseling, assessments, and access to resources to build skills or credentials occur at earlier stages.

In December 2011, the Army published an Execution Order for transition policy which changed our program to a “Commander’s program” to ensure Soldiers have their Commander’s support and take advantage of transition services. We have established

a Transition Strategic Outreach Office to synchronize job connection efforts between Soldiers and industry. In November 2012, the Army implemented the “Veterans’ Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act” and has begun efforts to implement recommendations from the Veterans’ Employment Initiative Task Force. As part of this effort, the Army increased its ACAP counselor support within the Warrior Transition Command from 30 to 41 counselors. Through the revamped Transition Assistance Program, the Army is working to maximize job opportunities by leveraging private industry contacts and local governments to remove barriers to job-related licenses and certifications wherever possible.

To support these recent changes in legislation and policy, we reinforced the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) and demobilization platforms with a total of nearly 700 contractors and civilian personnel comprised of transition and finance counselors, administrative support staff, and information technology support team. We established a new ACAP center in Kuwait. We have created 25 regionally-located transition support teams to support the USAR and ARNG in the Soldiers’ hometowns. We plan to add 65 education counselors at the end of FY13. The legislative and policy mandates present a 300% increase in participation and focus our program on compliance.

Civilian Workforce / Endstrength

Consistent with the reductions of our authorized endstrength for active duty and the Army National Guard, we expect to reduce the civilian workforce from 272,000 to 255,000 by the end of FY17. The rate of reductions for the civilian work force will be based on the understanding that it will take 2-3 years after our troops redeploy from Afghanistan to adequately reset our personnel, families, and equipment.

To help mitigate the Army’s budget execution risks, on January 22, 2013 a hiring freeze went into effect. The memorandum that established the freeze also directed commanders to terminate temporary employees and to let the appointments of term employees lapse upon the expiration of their current appointments. To date, we have

released over 1,800 temporary and term employees and expect to release a total of 3,100 by the end of this fiscal year.

Recognizing the inevitable risks of decreased civilian employee productivity and morale, we may need to furlough up to 250,000 civilian employees this fiscal year. In addition to the hardship the pay loss poses to our dedicated workforce, this furlough will have an immediate trickle-down effect as the majority of these civilians are located throughout the U.S. on our posts and stations, and their spending directly impacts local economies and contributes towards state and local taxes. Although we will endeavor to protect critical services as much as possible, any furlough will have an immediate impact on important Army services.

Implementing the Army Total Force Policy

Approved by the Secretary of the Army in September 2012, the Army Total Force Policy is an important milestone in our Army's history because it lays out a roadmap for the full integration of our active and reserve component forces. The Active Army, the Army National Guard (ARNG), and the Army Reserve (USAR) each serve vital roles in our National Security Strategy, and it is imperative that we use each component's strengths to accomplish the Army's missions in a time of fiscal constraint. The essence of the Total Force Policy is to manage risks by maintaining appropriate levels of readiness while balancing immediate response capabilities with operational and strategic depth.

The Total Force Policy establishes formal guidance for integrating the diverse regulations that govern how the Army mans, trains, equips, and sustains Active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve forces. To employ active and reserve component forces most efficiently, the Army will establish common standards for unit training and readiness validation; a common deployment period policy; standard procedures for mobilizing and deploying reserve component forces using new activation authorities under Title 10, 12304b, and will complete fielding of the Integrated Pay and Personnel System. The Army Total Force Policy will reshape the Army and ensure the Total Force provides the nation the best balance of readiness and depth.

Women in the Army

On January 24, 2013, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) eliminated the Direct Ground Combat Assignment Rule. While this resulted in all positions being opened to women, the Army must notify Congress through the CJCS and Office of the Secretary of Defense and complete the Congressional notification period prior to recruiting, reclassifying or assigning women to these positions. There are significant documentation requirements as the Army proposes opening further positions and completes the required validation of occupational standards prior to January 1, 2016.

Female Soldiers have demonstrated their ability to excel in combat over the last ten years. The Army is committed to ensuring all Soldiers have career opportunities that enable them to reach their highest potential without regard to gender. The expansion of opportunities for women will improve overall Army capability and readiness. With the removal of the collocation restrictions in FY12, this enabled the Army to open an additional 13,139 positions and six additional military occupational specialties previously closed to women. Women may now serve in leadership positions previously closed to them; allowing them to be competitive with their male peers as they gain new experiences.

Diversity and Inclusion

The diversity of our Army is a continuous source of strength as we recruit Soldiers and Army Civilians from an increasingly diverse America. We must take full advantage of opportunities to bring new ideas and expanded capabilities to the mission by reaching out to diverse communities and building relationships that will support the Army's human resource requirements. To this end, we have developed and fully implemented a strategy for conducting outreach activities to our Nation's diverse communities on an Army-wide basis. In the first year of execution, nine commands and the Army Staff coordinated 35 outreach events for the Total Army. We will continue to build on this strategy in the future.

Our ability to be inclusive of the Nation's diverse citizenry while sustaining a high performance Army requires the engagement of senior leaders and continuous diversity education throughout the Force. The Army Diversity Roadmap outlines a unique approach to an enterprise-wide diversity and inclusion initiative over the coming years and guides our actions in the areas of leadership, people, structure and resources, training and education, and inclusive work environments. Within the Roadmap, we are implementing an intra-Army council of senior leaders to advise the Secretary and provide a forum for collaboration and sharing ideas in connection with implementation of the Army Diversity Roadmap and execution of components of our strategy. In addition, the Council will facilitate delivering the diversity and inclusion message throughout the Army, while receiving direct feedback from senior leaders on recommended priorities and areas of emphasis.

Our initial diversity training and education efforts have focused on practitioners who support our commanders and other leaders. We continue to ensure high quality initial training for Military Equal Opportunity and Equal Employment Opportunity professionals. Over the past four years, over 600 general officers and civilian senior executives have completed a diversity education program that emphasizes inclusive leadership, self-awareness, leading change, and other topics that ensure a successful diversity and inclusion strategy for the Army. In this program senior leaders are presented with challenges and opportunities and participate in experiential exercises that enhance understanding and perspective.

We will continue to invest in diversity education and inclusive leadership by seamlessly integrating the training for senior leaders into their initial leader development programs. Ultimately, we will also reach every Soldier and Army Civilian through the Army's institutional professional development system.

We must position the Army to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people our Nation has to offer. Critical to our global mission is an understanding of the cultures, languages and social norms of the people in locations where we deploy as well as in

our own ranks. This diversity and inclusion initiative is integral to the Army's long-term vision for human capital and our understanding of the human dimension of leadership and global engagements.

The Army Disability Evaluation System

Fiscal Year 2012 was the first full year in which the Army used the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) Army-wide. Under IDES, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) use a single set of general and specialty medical examinations and a single-source disability rating to execute their respective responsibilities. This results in more consistent, less contentious evaluations, faster fitness determinations, and timely benefits delivery for our medically retired or separated Soldiers. As a result, the VA can deliver benefits in the shortest period allowed by law following discharge, thus reducing the "benefit gap" that previously existed under the legacy process. IDES also provides assistance to Soldiers as they transition from the military to the services and benefits the VA offers, and has eliminated many of the sequential and duplicative processes found in our respective legacy systems.

The IDES has been strategically successful in reducing the post-separation benefit gap; however expansion of IDES across the Army has been challenging. Historically, several factors have hindered the processing of Soldiers through the IDES, including: ineffective governance structure, inadequate capacity to meet demands, lack of standardization, and a lack compliance with established policies and guidance.

Over the last year, the Army has devoted an extraordinary amount of time, attention, resources, and leadership to improve the IDES. In addition to adding staff to our Medical and Physical Evaluation Boards to support current operational demands, the VA and the Army have implemented a number of initiatives to improve the performance of IDES. These improvements have resulted in the following:

- Since February 2012, the Army has reduced the number of cases over 400 days by 24%.

- Over the last year, the Army increased its capacity from 1,200 to 3,000 cases per month. Consequently, Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) output has exceeded input for the last eight months, and the MEDCOM reduced its inventory of MEB from over 5,000 to 2,300 cases.
- MEB output has exceeded input for the last 8 months; the average days to complete the MEB Phase have improved 46% from 146 days in March 2012 to 112 days at the end of February 2013. Time to complete the Narrative Summary (NARSUM) has improved from 51 days in March 2012 to 22 days in February 2013 (56% improvement).
- The Physical Evaluation Boards (PEBs) achieved DoD's 120-day goal for the last four months. The average number of days to complete the PEB Phase has also decreased from 126 days in March 2012 to 104 days at the end of February 2013, an 18% improvement.

Soldiers starting IDES today will complete the process in less than 295 days. With the added capacity and process improvements in place, the Army expects to meet the DoD's goal of completing 70% of AC cases in 295 days and RC cases in 305 days by January 2014. More importantly, we remain committed to making this process more accessible to our Soldiers and their Families.

Ready and Resilient Campaign

For the Army to continue to improve, and increase capability and performance, we must continue to build resilience in our total force. We have a historic opportunity to understand the lessons of the last 12 years and make our force even stronger. Thus on February 4, 2013, the Secretary of the Army issued a Directive requiring the Army to move forward with its Ready and Resilient Campaign (R2C) plan. The R2C will address the challenges that stress the Force, and integrate and synchronize the multiple efforts and programs designed to improve the readiness and resilience of Soldiers (Active, Reserve and National Guard), Army Civilians and their Families.

The R2C is a far-reaching, comprehensive campaign, designed to enhance individual and collective resilience and improve readiness. This initiative will integrate and synchronize existing and emerging Army programs that focus on improving physical, psychological and emotional health. The goal is to ensure that individuals understand and have access to effective programs and feel empowered to seek help if and when they need it; free from stigma related barriers.

The success of the Ready and Resilient Campaign depends on commanders and leaders at all levels acting with unity of effort and emphasizing the campaign's importance to sustaining Army readiness in the future. This campaign will guide the Army's efforts to build and maintain resilience across the Total Army to improve unit readiness and further reinforce the Army Profession. The Ready and Resilient Campaign Execution Order (EXORD) will follow the Campaign Plan with specific tasks and details for the execution of the campaign. We expect every leader to fully support the campaign by incorporating resilience training into all educational and professional development programs. Soldiers of all ranks must practice the skills that build resilience as part of our collective effort to build a strong Army team. Success will come from a cultural change in the Army by directly linking personal resilience to readiness and emphasizing the responsibility of personnel at all levels to build and maintain resilience.

Health Promotion Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention

The Army continues to institute a multi-disciplinary, holistic approach to readiness and resilience and suicide prevention. Increased emphasis remains on developing and implementing targeted training programs as well as funding for support programs that impact the entire Army Family. This approach is also reflected in the various senior leader forums that are conducted throughout the Army: the Army Vice Chief of Staff-led Senior Suicide Review Group; the Health Promotion Risk Reduction Council; and the Community Health Promotion Councils at posts, camps, and stations.

Key elements of the Army's approach are: 1) Prompt access by Soldiers to quality behavioral health care; 2) Multi-point screening and documentation of mild Traumatic Brain Injuries / Post Traumatic Stress Disorders; 3) Improved leader and Soldier awareness of high-risk behavior and intervention programs; and 4) Increased emphasis on programs that support Total Force (Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members) readiness and resilience.

The Army had 324 potential suicides during 2012 – the highest annual total on record. Of those, 184 deaths occurred within the AC and RC (Army National Guard [ARNG] / U.S. Army Reserve [USAR]) on Active Duty. This total exceeds the previous Active Duty high of 166 in 2009 and 2011. The RC not on Active Duty total of 140 is the second highest on record, exceeded only by the 2010 not on Active Duty total of 146. While most Army suicides continue to be among junior enlisted Soldiers, the number of suicides by Non-Commissioned Officers has increased over each of the last three years. By far, most Army suicides were in the 21-30 age range, a trend that held each year from 2010 to 2012.

In November 2012, the Army published the "2020 Army Strategy for Suicide Prevention" as Annex C of the "Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) EXORD 037-13, Ready and Resilient Quick Wins." It is deliberately and closely synchronized with the "2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention" in order to promote coordinated implementation. It features four major lines of Effort: 1) Healthy and Empowered Individuals, Families, and Communities - Prevention; 2) Clinical and Community Support Services – Intervention; 3) Treatment and Recovery Services – Postvention; and 4) Surveillance, Research, and Evaluation. The references to Prevention, Intervention and Postvention tie the 2020 Army Strategy back to extensive work done over many preceding years, while at the same time it presents a forward-looking way-ahead in step with the National Strategy.

Army Substance Abuse Program

The Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) is a commander's program that uses prevention, education, deterrence, detection, and rehabilitation, to reduce and eliminate alcohol and drug abuse. It is based on the expectations of readiness and personal responsibility.

In March 2010, the Army conducted a counselor requirements analysis based on each installation's average daily client census with a ratio of one counselor for 30 patients. Patient caseload was as high as 60 patients per counselor at some installations. The Army has shifted to a 1:30 ratio as an acceptable ratio based on literature and counselor input. Applying this ratio yielded a requirement of 563 counselors assuming a 20% growth in number of patients over a five year period.

An Army priority in this area includes the hiring of more counselors. There is a finite pool of qualified substance abuse counselors nationwide and the Army is competing for this scarce talent with private industry, the Veteran's Administration and state and local governments. As of March 20, 2013, the Army has hired 436 of the 563 counselors needed. The Army is increasing the use of recruiting, relocation, and student loan reimbursement incentives to attract more qualified candidates, and is developing a ASAP Counselor Internship Program which will allow students with Master's degrees to work in a supervised internship for up to two years as they obtain their licenses and substance abuse counselor certifications.

The Confidential Alcohol Treatment and Education Pilot (CATEP), began in July 2009 and offers confidential alcohol treatment and education to eligible Soldiers. This pilot was initially offered at Fort Lewis, Fort Richardson, and Schofield Barracks. The Secretary of the Army directed that the pilot be expanded to include Forts Carson, Riley and Leonard Wood with successful treatment outcomes at these sites.

Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program

Over the last year, the Army made great strides to institutionalize our Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program to enable Army readiness, combat sexual violence and reinforce the Army's commitment to create a climate where Soldiers live the Army Values, thereby eliminating sexual assault and sexual harassment.

As we assess our efforts, results from our recent Operational Troop Survey indicate a significant increase (28% in 2009 to 42% in 2012) of female Soldier survey respondents who indicated they experienced a sexual assault and reported the crime. This increase in Soldiers propensity to report this crime is critical to ensure commanders can provide support to survivors, take appropriate action against offenders, and effectively address command safety issues.

The Army's goal is to eliminate sexual violence through cultural change, thereby, creating a professional climate where every member of the Army family (Soldiers, Civilians, and Family members) trusts their leaders to treat them with dignity and respect. The Army is aggressively pursuing this goal through the integration of policies, training, communication and a unity-of-command approach to our sexual harassment and sexual assault response and prevention efforts.

Highly trained SHARP staff are key to achieving SHARP goals. The Army trained approximately 19,000 command-selected program personnel on a prevention-focused 80-hour program certification course. The Army is institutionalizing this training at the command level by establishing 73 full-time SHARP 80-hour certification course trainer positions within our Active and Reserve components. The Army is aggressively pursuing DoD certification of more than 10,000 SHARP personnel by the end of FY13.

The Army also continues to expand our SHARP Life-Cycle Training. The training is designed to improve the capabilities of our force to address sexual assault at every level of career progression.

While the primary objective is prevention, when an incident occurs, the Army is committed to providing the best possible support and protection of the survivor through our advocacy efforts. In 2012, the Army implemented the requirement to have two full-time program personnel to serve as Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) and Victim Advocates (VA) at brigade and equivalent units. To institutionalize these efforts, the Army is resourcing 829 military and civilian full-time SARC and VA positions at AC / RC brigade and equivalent units and thousands of collateral positions at battalions and below.

In 2012, the Army began executing its executive agent role to train military investigators / prosecutors from all Services at the US Army Military Police School 80-hour Special Victim Unit Investigation Course. The course includes the ground-breaking Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview technique developed by the Army. This interviewing technique reduces the survivor's risk of re-traumatization during interviews and produces stronger case evidence.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal/Extending Benefits to Same Sex Partners

The Army, in coordination with the DoD, is proceeding with the planning necessary to implement the extension of benefits to same sex domestic partners.

With the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell," discrimination based on sexual orientation no longer has a place in the military. All Soldiers who serve our nation deserve to be treated with equal dignity and respect. As such, on February 11, 2013, the Secretary of Defense, directed the Services to develop plans to extend family member and dependent benefits that can be lawfully provided to the same-sex domestic partners of Military Service members and their children.

These 22 family member and dependent benefits identified by the Joint Benefits Review Working Group require policy revisions, training, and technical upgrades to our automated personnel identification system. However, the Army will be ready to make

these benefits available to same-sex domestic partners by August 31, 2013 as directed by the Secretary of Defense.

While our work is focused on changing our policies and practices in accordance with current law to ensure fair and equal treatment of all our members and their Families, we will ensure we implement this change in the same disciplined manner that has characterized the Army's service for the past 237 years.

Congressional Assistance

As the Army continues the deliberate and methodical reductions in the force, we will need Congressional support to drawdown accurately and efficiently while maintaining readiness. The Army will maximize voluntary measures, but will need congressional support as it resorts to inevitable involuntary measures in the coming fiscal year. The continued support of Congress for competitive military benefits and compensation, along with incentives and bonuses for Soldiers will remain critical to the All-Volunteer Army's efforts to recruit, retain, and support the highest caliber of individuals. The Army must retain the flexibility to offer incentives to attract and retain talent. The continued funding of these programs by Congress is absolutely critical. These incentives assist in shaping the force for both quality and specific talent required. Finally, predictability in the authorization and appropriation bills that are aligned with the President's budget request would help the Army tremendously in preparations for the force of the future.

Conclusion

We have invested a tremendous amount of resources and deliberate planning to develop and preserve the All-Volunteer force. People are the Army, and our enduring priority is to preserve the high quality, All-Volunteer force – the essential element of our strength.

While we transform to a smaller Army, we remain dedicated to improving readiness, and building resilience in our Soldiers, Civilians and their Families. The Army will not sacrifice readiness as it draws down. We must draw down wisely to preserve the health

of the force and prevent breaking faith with the brave men and women who serve our Nation. The Army has gained the trust of the American public more now than at any other time in recent history, while fulfilling our responsibilities toward those who serve.

The well-being of our force, regardless of its size, is absolutely dependent upon your tremendous support. The Army is proud of the high caliber men and women whose willingness to serve, is a credit to this great nation. To conclude, we wish to thank all of you for your continued support, which has been vital in sustaining our All-Volunteer Army through an unprecedented period of continuous combat operations and will continue to be vital to ensure the future of our Army.

Chairwoman Gillibrand, Senator Graham and members of the subcommittee, we thank you again for your generous and unwavering support of our outstanding Soldiers, Civilian Professionals, and their Families.