

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Richard Anderson
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Duties and Qualifications

- 1. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASAF(M&RA))?**

The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (M&RA) provides policy, oversight, and supervision for manpower and reserve affairs in the Department of the Air Force (DAF). Title 10 US Code Section 9016 also stipulates that the Assistant Secretaries shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of the Air Force may prescribe. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary of the Air Force and assisting them with the organize, train, and equip responsibilities they have for our nation's Airmen, Guardians, civilian employees, and their families.

- 2. In your view, are the duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASAF(M&RA)) the same for both the Air Force and the Space Force?**

As the leader within the Department for strategic and long-term planning for personnel, I would see my duties as being principally focused on ensuring Department-level guidance is comprehensively implemented in both Services. I acknowledge that the Air Force and Space Force are very different military branches with different service cultures and, if confirmed, will work closely with the HAF/A1 and SF/S1 leadership to ensure comprehensive implementation and/or execution of DAF policies.

- 3. What background and experience do you have that qualify you for this position?**

I spent 30 years in the U.S. Air Force as an active-duty officer and enjoyed assignments all over the country, including staff assignments at then-Strategic Air Command, Atlantic Command, Pacific Command, and in the Pentagon. I was also the national commander of the Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. Out of uniform, I represented Prince William County in the Virginia General Assembly before taking on the responsibility of Chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia.

Ultimately, the job for which I have been nominated is about taking care of our DAF Service members and families. I believe my career shows a long record of taking care of people in very large organizations. If confirmed, I commit to continuing that record of service for the Department of the Air Force.

4. If confirmed, how would you adhere to and further the fundamental principle of civilian control of the armed forces?

I believe very strongly in the principal of civilian control of the military; it is a bedrock principle on which our system of government relies. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the Secretary of the Air Force's vision for the Department and its two military services is communicated thoroughly and would work with the leadership in the HAF/A1 and SF/S1 directorates to verify that the Secretary's direction is being implemented. I also commit to working with this Committee and this Congress as a partner in providing oversight of the DAF through regular and transparent consultations.

Conflicts of Interest

Federal ethics laws, to include 18 U.S.C. §208, prohibit government employees from participating in matters where they, or certain family members or organizations with which they have certain relationships, have a financial interest.

5. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to disclose any potential conflicts of interest, including investments, business ties, family relationships, or other connections that could be perceived as influencing your decision making?

I agree to comply with all conflicts of interest disclosure requirements set forth in the Ethics in Government Act and implementing regulations.

6. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, that if a conflict of interest arises, you will recuse yourself from participating in any decisions regarding that specific matter?

I agree to comply with all conflicts of interest disclosure requirements set forth in the Ethics in Government Act and implementing regulations.

7. Do you commit, without qualification, if confirmed, to decide matters on the merits, and exclusively in the public interest, without regard to private gain or personal benefit?

I commit to deciding matters on the merits based on the public interest, without regard to any private gain or personal benefit.

Major Challenges and Priorities

8. In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the ASAF(M&RA), and how would you address them, if confirmed?

Even as a private citizen with access only to publicly-available information, I can surmise that there are a number of challenges facing the DAF within the SAF/MR portfolio. However, if confirmed, I see three areas on which I will need to focus: 1) recruiting and retention of our skilled warfighters; 2) mental health resources; and 3) sexual assault/harassment prevention and response.

The DAF has enjoyed improved results in recruiting and retention recently, to my knowledge. However, I understand that the Department still needs to get after shortages in critical warfighting career fields, particularly pilots. If confirmed, I plan on conducting my own analysis of what *quality-of-life* and *quality-of-service* initiatives are working and focusing especially on the latter.

As part of mental health resourcing, if confirmed, I plan on receiving a thorough briefing on the full extent of our embedded resources for mental health at the unit level for our Airmen, Guardians, civilians, and their families. I believe that embedded services can help reduce the stigma sometimes associated with seeking mental health assistance. I also want to receive a briefing on where those resources may be lacking, particularly in some of our more remote locations.

Finally, sexual assault/harassment prevention and response must always be a priority. Even as the latest open-source reports suggest a 4% drop in sexual assaults in 2024, we can all agree that the work is far from finished. If confirmed, I commit to analyzing the latest data to see what actions the DAF is taking on this matter that may be contributing to this trend, and I commit to sharing the results of my assessment with this Committee.

Personnel Policy Implementation

- 9. If confirmed, what Air Force and Space Force personnel policies and processes would you implement or change to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources management—both military and civilian—across the Department of the Air Force?**

If confirmed I plan to first review Department of the Air Force personnel policies to ensure they align with the President's and Secretary of Defense's priorities and direction to increase lethality and warfighter readiness across the Department of Defense.

- 10. What is your understanding of your responsibility, if confirmed, to inform and consult with this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress, on the implementation of Department of the Air Force personnel policies directed by law?**

I understand my role and responsibility to consult, as well as keep this Committee and others informed of changes to the Department of the Air Force personnel policies directed by law. If confirmed, I'm committed to continuing the strong relationship between the Department of the Air Force and all of our Congressional oversight committees.

11. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to ensure consultation with the Committee on significant changes to Air Force and Space Force personnel policies, including when the changes are not directed by law?

If confirmed, I would prioritize proactive and continuous engagement with all defense oversight committees, ensuring a strong line of communication. This would include establishing regular touchpoints, such as scheduled staff briefings and information exchanges on Capitol Hill to keep all stakeholders informed. Additionally, I would integrate a systematic process for Congressional notifications into the review and approval cycle for any significant personnel policy changes, ensuring that the committees are fully informed.

12. What is your understanding of the time period within which the Department must implement personnel policies directed by law?

The Department is required to implement personnel policies directed by law within the timeframes specified in the legislation itself; if no specific deadline is provided, implementation is expected within a reasonable period, consistent with legislative intent and oversight expectations.

The Air Force recently reintroduced the Warrant Officer Corps career path to address critical operational needs, while maintaining highly perishable skills, and leverage the unique expertise and capabilities of Warrant Officers.

13. What is your assessment of the need for, and the success of, this program?

I believe, given the ever-changing environment of the threats from our adversaries, it is commendable for the Air Force to look at different ways to use our national security assets. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the implementation of the Warrant Officer Corps. In addition, I am interested in learning the Air Force's views on success and evaluating the efficacy of the Warrant Officer Corps in supporting critical operational needs.

14. In your view, does the Air Force need any additional legislative changes to fully implement this program?

I am aware that Congress enacted a change in last year's National Defense Authorization Act that will enable the Air Force to directly generate warrant officers. At this time, I am not aware of any additional legislative changes needed. If

confirmed, I will work closely with Congress on pressing issues that impact our Airmen, Guardians, and civilians.

Non-Deployable Service members

- 15. In your view, should airmen and guardians who are non-deployable for more than 12 consecutive months be subject either to separation from the service or referral to the Disability Evaluation System, as is current Department policy?**

Military Service has physical and mental health standards that enable Airmen and Guardians to execute the core mission of national defense and power projection. Extended periods of non-deployability often signal an inability to meet these standards. If confirmed, I will ensure that non-deployability policies prioritize readiness and mission needs, balancing operational effectiveness with fairness and care for our service members. I will collaborate closely with leadership to maintain a strong, capable, and mission-ready force.

- 16. Under what circumstances do you believe the retention of an airman or guardian who has been non-deployable for more than 12 months be in the best interest of the Air Force or Space Force?**

The decision to retain a non-deployable member should consider the impact on mission readiness and operational effectiveness and overall needs of the DAF. It is a complex decision that demands careful consideration of the unique situation, the mission needs, and available resources. I believe decisions regarding retention must be fair and consistent. If confirmed, I will collaborate with DAF leaders to thoroughly understand the current policies and ensure that all decisions prioritize the DAF's mission and readiness requirements.

- 17. What are your ideas for addressing the challenges of medical non-deployability in the Department of the Air Force reserve components?**

If confirmed, I commit to working diligently to identify and address the underlying causes of non-deployability within the Reserve Component. Maintaining medical readiness across the Air Force, including the Reserve Component, is crucial for overall force effectiveness.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

- 18. In your view, how adequate and effective are Department of the Air Force policies, programs, and training in regard to the prevention of and response to sexual assault in the force?**

While I believe DAF has made progress, sexual assault prevention and response activities will always require sustained vigilance and continuous improvement. If confirmed, I would review these programs and make adjustments, if needed.

Sexual Harassment

19. What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the military sexual harassment programs of the Department of the Air Force?

Sexual harassment erodes the military culture and cannot be tolerated. I understand the DAF implemented changes to the military sexual harassment response program to permit restricted reporting options. If confirmed, I will review our military sexual harassment program and work with DoD and Air Force and Space Force leaders to implement any needed changes.

Suicide Prevention

In 2023, the Department of Defense released the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC) report which included recommendations to the Department to improve quality of life, aid in building healthy climates and cultures, and better address stigma as a barrier to help-seeking, amongst other things.

20. If confirmed, what efforts, if any, from the SPRIRC report implementation will you continue to prioritize?

If confirmed, I will review the recommendations from the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee, as well as the DAF approach to preventing and responding to death by suicide. I will work with Department leadership, the OSD, and Congress to implement recommendations that will continue to reduce deaths by suicide.

21. If confirmed, what additional efforts would you undertake to strengthen the Department of the Air Force's suicide prevention programs to reduce the number of suicides among service members, including in the reserve components, and their families?

If confirmed, I would focus on expanding Service member access to mental health support, while continuing to champion warfighter programs that support mental well-being, eliminate barriers to mental health resources, and remove the stigma of seeking help.

United States Air Force Academy

22. What is your assessment of the efficacy of the policies and processes in place at USAFA to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment?

I understand sexual assault and harassment have been issues at the Military Service Academies. If confirmed, I would ensure the Air Force Academy is in full compliance with the DoD and DAF policy on preventing and responding to sexual assault and harassment. If it is determined that policy, process, or resource adjustments are necessary, I am committed to making those changes.

23. What is your assessment of the efficacy of suicide prevention programs at USAFA?

I am aware of recent public reporting and understand the Academy continues to take this critical issue seriously. If confirmed, I will assess the efforts taken to date, looking for ways to further improve these programs.

24. How is USAFA adjusting its cadet development model to account for its role of commissioning officers into the Space Force?

The space mission is not new to USAFA, and USAFA continually adapts and/or expands its education and training to meet the changing needs of the Department of the Air Force. If confirmed, I will review how the Academy has adjusted its curriculum to ensure cadets are prepared to commission into the Space Force.

Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC)

25. In your view, does the Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC) program remain a viable source of officer accessions for the Air Force and Space Force?

The Senior ROTC program provides an officer accessions pipeline necessary to ensure the continued readiness of both the Air Force and Space Force. If confirmed, I will review Senior ROTC to ensure it is an effective and viable source of officer accessions.

26. In your view, should the Department of the Air Force continue to operate SROTC units at colleges and universities that fail to meet their minimum annual commissioning requirements? If not, please explain the factors you believe should be used to determine which units should be terminated.

I understand the Department continuously evaluates the Senior ROTC program to optimize policies and processes necessary to thrive in the fierce competition for

talent. In my view, the decision to discontinue operating a ROTC unit should not be solely based upon a single factor. If confirmed, I will ensure a thorough review of all available criteria that could/should inform such a decision.

27. How would you modify the SROTC scholarship program to attract the top talent that our armed forces need to meet national defense?

ROTC scholarship programs should be designed to enable the Department to be competitive in attracting and retaining our Nation's best talent for commissioned officer ranks. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Department leadership, the OSD, and Congress to ensure ROTC scholarship programs are oriented as such.

Space Force Personnel Matters

The FY24 National Defense Authorization Act established the Space Force Personnel Management Act (PMA). The PMA allows the Space Force to design an alternative single military personnel management system that integrates active component Guardians and AFR Airmen serving in space-focused career fields into a unified service, offering both full- and part-time work roles.

28. Where does the Space Force currently stand in the implementation of the Personnel Management Act, and what milestones have been achieved so far?

If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about and prioritizing implementation of the Space Force Personnel Management Act (PMA). Thanks to the vision of Congress, the PMA has equipped the Space Force to manage its unique military force more effectively to meet current and evolving mission requirements, while delivering unmatched space capabilities.

29. Given the complexities of implementation, what challenges has the Department of the Air Force encountered in rolling out the Personnel Management Act, and how are these challenges being addressed?

If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about implementation of the Space Force PMA, including any challenges so that I can prioritize addressing and resolving impediments to implementation, all in partnership with Department leadership and the Congress.

30. What role does technology play in the implementation of the Personnel Management Act, and how is the Department of the Air Force modernizing its Human Resource systems to better manage personnel under this new framework?

I am currently not aware of specific technologies the DAF is using to implement the PMA. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the efforts underway for the PMA, including implementation through personnel policies and management

systems, and balancing the risk and cost associated with modifying legacy systems versus establishing new systems to support PMA implementation.

31. In your view, is the current Air National Guard structure, which supports Space Force operations, sufficient to enable the Space Force to meet mission requirements?

It is my understanding that the section 514 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 directed the “Transfer to the Space Force of Covered Space Functions of the Air National Guard.” If confirmed, I will engage with DAF leaders to learn about current planning efforts to implement the law. In addition, if confirmed, I will support a successful transition of space functions and Air National Guard personnel who volunteer to transfer to the Space Force.

Military Compensation

32. Do you agree that the primary purpose of a competitive military pay and benefits package is to recruit and retain a military of sufficient size and quality to meet national defense objectives?

Yes. The Department of the Air Force requires a competitive pay and benefits package to meet Air Force and Space Force end strength with the talent necessary to execute mission objectives.

33. The 14th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, released in January 2025, concluded that the current military compensation package is strongly competitive with the civilian labor market. What is your assessment of the current military pay package and its adequacy in recruiting and retaining servicemembers?

In an all-volunteer force, the overall compensation package must be competitive enough to attract and retain talent. I understand Congress enacted a significant junior enlisted pay increase last year. If confirmed, I will assess the need for any further changes to the overall military compensation and benefits package.

34. In recent years, Congress worked toward a substantial pay raise for junior enlisted troops, which culminated in a 14.5 percent increase in basic pay for grades E-1 to E-4 and a 4.5 percent across-the-board annual pay increase for the rest of the military in the FY25 NDAA. What changes, if any, would you recommend to the current military pay and benefits package, if confirmed?

I understand that the Air Force and Space Force are both meeting current recruiting and retention goals, an indicator that the current compensation package is meeting the needs of the DAF. If confirmed, I will assess the effect of the junior enlisted pay increase and determine whether there is a need for additional change.

35. What specific recommendations do you have for balancing rising military personnel expenditures with other defense spending priorities, such as procurement and modernization?

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and leaders across the Department of Defense to address rising personnel costs. I will do so in a way that not only addresses military compensation and benefits, but also examines the force management and overall personnel mix decisions that affect overall costs.

The FY24 NDAA authorized a pilot program for the Air Force to help retain qualified and experienced pilots. The primary goal of this aviation retention bonus is to address pilot shortages by increasing monetary retention bonuses to \$50,000 per year and incentivize pilots to renew their contract earlier in their career.

36. Given the increasing competition from the civilian sector, do you believe that raising aviation retention bonuses and modernizing aviation contract lengths at critical junctures in a pilot's career would help retain skilled Air Force pilots? Why or why not?

If confirmed, I will assess the situation and determine whether an additional course of action has merit at this time. I appreciate the Congress' attention on this issue and willingness to authorize pilot programs and unique authorities to enable the Air Force to remain competitive in retaining pilots.

37. How can the Department of the Air Force utilize targeted bonuses and incentives to reward and retain personnel in critical skill areas?

If confirmed, I will assess the situation and determine whether an additional course of action has merit at this time. I appreciate the Congress' attention on pilot retention and other critical career fields where the Department competes with the civil sector for talent. I look forward to working with Department leaders and the Congress to ensure the DAF is able to retain critical skill sets needed for the future force.

Professional Military Education

A recent RAND report on Air Force Professional Military Education (PME) found an imbalance in the assignment of Air Force officers to PME programs. Specifically, RAND found that a greater proportion of officers who are ranked lower by the central developmental education board are assigned to PME at Air University than those higher in the rankings, who tend to be assigned to non-Air Force schoolhouses or fellowship programs. Survey results also show that Air Force officers view PME at Air Force schools less favorably than other options, and few perceive Air University options as top quality.

38. If confirmed, what actions would you take to improve the quality of education at Air University?

I have not yet had the opportunity to see today's Air University in person (I graduated from the Air War College in 1998 and the Air Command and Staff College in 1993), nor deep dive into their educational programs or other factors that may be driving PME attendance, but I do believe the development of Airmen and Guardians is vital to our national security. If confirmed, I will look into ways to improve experiences and programs at Air University for all service members. As an alumnus, I remain committed to ensuring that Air University is a respected, prestigious educational institution.

39. What actions would you take to enhance the perception of Air Force officers about the quality and value of the Air University?

If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with experts inside and outside the Department about the findings of the 2021 RAND report. In addition, if confirmed, I look forward to better understanding the report's recommended improvements for Air University, whether any of the recommendations have been implemented, and the impacts.

Recruiting and Retention

The 2024 National Defense Strategy Commission stated that “The DoD workforce and the all-volunteer force provide an unmatched advantage. However, recruiting failures have shrunk the force and raise serious questions about the all-volunteer force in peacetime, let alone in major combat.” In addition, DOD studies indicate that only about 23% of today's youth population is eligible for military service, and only a fraction of those who meet military accession standards are interested in serving.

40. In your view, what are the main reasons that less than a quarter of 17 to 24-year-olds are eligible for military service, and how would you propose increasing the size of that pool without degrading the quality of recruits?

I understand that factors such as being overweight, using illegal drugs, and having mental and physical health problems are among the factors that disqualify many youth in this age group. If confirmed, I will work within DAF and across DOD to increase the propensity to serve in young Americans qualified for military service, and improve programs that improve suitability for borderline recruits, in order to sustain the all-volunteer force and ensure DAF is mission-ready in defense of our nation.

41. If required to choose between maintaining high recruitment and retention standards and achieving authorized end strength levels, which would be more important, in your view?

The Department of the Air Force must maintain its readiness while simultaneously building the force of the future that each Service needs through data-informed recruiting and retention initiatives. If confirmed, I will assess our standards and policies to ensure they support the Department's readiness and warfighting needs.

42. Similarly, why do you believe that the propensity of youth to serve continues to drop and is at its lowest level (about 10 percent according to DOD data) in years?

To improve the efficacy of our recruiting programs, the DAF must look at new ways to reach America's youth. Today, fewer Americans have a personal connection to the military than at any time in recent decades, and the gap between the American people and their military continues to grow wider. If confirmed, I will work within DAF and across DOD to increase the propensity to serve in young Americans qualified for military service.

43. What impact do current medical and other qualifications for enlistment in the Air Force have on the number of individuals eligible for military service? If confirmed, what changes to such qualifications, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of individuals eligible for service without degrading the quality of recruits?

I currently have no reason or data to doubt the current standards and criteria. If confirmed, I will review the current standards to understand if they are keeping pace with medical science and record keeping approaches that enable better information than in prior generations in evaluating recruits' medical history. If confirmed, I will review the current needs of the Air Force and Space Force and ensure the implementation of DoD standards to recruit the forces we need to accomplish the mission.

44. In your view, should existing medical and other qualification standards be reconsidered to accommodate youth willing to enlist for service in certain high-demand specialties, such as remotely piloted aircraft pilots or the cyber workforce?

I have no reason to doubt current medical and personnel standards and criteria. In my view, continuous evaluation of all qualification standards is crucial to maintaining personnel readiness and mission effectiveness. If confirmed, I will review the Air Force and Space Force needs to ensure our standards and qualification requirements attract and retain high-quality recruits capable of succeeding in demanding technical roles. In addition, I am committed to collaborating with Department leadership, the OSD, and Congress to strengthen the all-volunteer force and expand interest and eligibility for military service among today's youth.

45. Rather than relying solely on ever-higher compensation for a shrinking pool of volunteers, what creative steps would you take, if confirmed, to expand the pool of eligible recruits and improve Air Force recruiting?

I understand the Air Force and Space Force are on track to meet FY25 requirements with record high recruiting. If confirmed, I will work with our services to evaluate our recruiting force, our marketing strategies, and our recruiting policies and programs to attract the talent needed to meet our warfighter readiness.

46. What steps, if any, should be taken to ensure that current operational requirements and tempo do not adversely impact the overall recruiting, retention, readiness, and morale of airmen and guardians?

The DAF must always answer the Nation's call. If confirmed, it will be my responsibility to evaluate the current operational requirements, recruiting, retention, and readiness to ensure we are prioritizing strategic force management, investing in quality-of-life initiatives, fostering a warrior ethos, and leveraging technology and innovation. I will be tireless in my advocacy and support for Airmen and Guardians to ensure they have the resources, training, and support they need to be successful.

47. Several Services have reported record high retention rates to Congress in the last year. While retention has helped to offset recruiting challenges in recent years, how will you ensure the DAF's retention efforts are not only meeting end strength goals, but also ensuring retained personnel possess the right skills, experience, and readiness to meet future operational demands?

If confirmed, I will ensure that Department force management and retention programs are focused not only on supporting end strength goals, but that we have the right skill sets in the right grades to support the future force.

Department of the Air Force Reserve Components

Historically, the reserve components have been positioned as a strategic reserve to be used in the event of significant armed conflict involving the United States. In the post-9/11 era, reserve forces have been used more extensively to support both contingency operations and ongoing military requirements in a garrison environment. Today, in addition to being an operational reserve, members of the reserve component are used continuously as a part-time workforce for the Department of Defense to perform its ongoing training and readiness requirements.

48. In your view, should the reserve components serve as a part-time workforce, an operational reserve, a strategic reserve, or some combination of those?

Under the NDAA, the Air Reserve components have a significant utilization rate. The appropriate relationship between the Active Air Force, the Air National Guard, and

the Air Force Reserve is one of robust interoperability. The Air National Guard is the nation's indispensable combat-ready air reserve. The Air Force Reserve provides immense strategic depth and operational capacity as a reserve component to active-duty forces. Seamless integration across the components enhances overall mission capability and readiness of the Total Force. The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves are, along with a properly-configured regular Air Force, the cost-effective solution for an uncertain future. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force to evaluate and understand the current dynamics of this relationship. This will enable me to identify the best approaches to leverage the unique structure and strengths of each component.

49. In light of your answer, do the reserve components require increased levels of full-time support and oversight by the active component, including improved equipment, increased training, adequate compensation and reimbursement, effective career management, balanced Professional Military Education requirements, and higher levels of overall resourcing for readiness going forward?

The Reserve Component provides experience, expertise, and depth that is vital to the Services. Their training, equipment, compensation and reimbursement, career management, and education should reflect the contribution they provide as part of the Total Force. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force to evaluate and understand the Reserve Component needs to identify the best approach to leverage the unique structure and strengths of the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard.

50. In your view, is the Air Force executing existing authorities to improve permeability between the active and reserve components to the fullest extent?

I believe the Air Force utilizes all existing authorities that are available to facilitate transition between components. If confirmed, I would review the processes and procedures, and I will work to address any issues identified.

51. In your view, are the current requirements for becoming a Joint Qualified Officer appropriate for reserve component officers? If not, how should they be revised to better meet the needs of reserve component officers?

I believe joint experience is important to a mission ready force. The purpose of the Reserve Officer Joint Qualification program is to ensure that Reserve Component officers are educated, trained, and experienced in joint matters, enhancing the joint war fighting capability of the United States. Although I am not currently familiar with the specific requirements, if confirmed I will work with senior leaders, across the DAF, to examine qualifications and make any recommendations necessary to ensure the requirements are aligned with development requirements to support operational priorities.

52. In your view, what legislative reforms, if any, should be made in order to facilitate easier transitions for members of all components between active and reserve status?

I support reducing barriers that prevent members of all components from transitioning easily between active and reserve components. If confirmed, I will carefully examine existing legislative authorities and work with the appropriate staffs to determine any additional legislative needs.

Operational Tempo (OPTEMPO)

Since the end of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military services continue to operate at a historically high OPTEMPO, which senior civilian and military leaders in the Department of Defense have deemed “unsustainable.”

53. What is your plan to adjust OPTEMPO in the Air Force to ensure that servicemembers and their families are healthy, fit, adequately rested, and have a sustainable lifestyle so that they are prepared to give 100% to our next major conflict?

If confirmed, I will work with the DAF leadership to ensure that we are using the right forces to accomplish our nation’s objectives and to refine our deployments, rotations, and training to ensure that our OPTEMPO is sustainable to maintain readiness, while supporting our Airmen, Guardians, and their families.

Military Family Readiness and Support

54. What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for service members and their families?

I believe we recruit Airmen or Guardians but retain families. Based on what I hear in the press, I am concerned that spousal employment and access to high-quality, affordable childcare and nutritional food may be some of the family readiness challenges today’s force faces. If confirmed, I will engage with DAF leaders to identify the key family readiness challenges, assess the DAF's existing capabilities to address them, and develop strategies to enhance these programs, while advocating for required resources.

55. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that military families are provided with accessible, high-quality childcare, at an appropriate cost?

Military readiness depends on providing military families access to affordable, high-quality, and readily available childcare. If confirmed, I will collaborate with DAF leaders to evaluate ongoing initiatives addressing this need. Additionally, I will

explore opportunities to further expand the childcare network, including traditional, non-traditional, and community-based solutions to meet the needs of our Airmen and Guardians.

56. If confirmed, how would you ensure that airmen and guardians with special needs family members relocate to new duty stations where services are available to address those needs?

If confirmed, I would work with DAF and OSD leadership to assess the Exceptional Family Member Program. If confirmed, I would assess whether the program is effectively relocating Airmen, Guardians, and families to installations with the necessary medical, educational, and support services.

57. If confirmed, how would you ensure outreach to those military families with special needs dependents so they are able to obtain the support they need?

Connecting to DAF families who have special needs dependents will be key to ensuring the success of the DAF's Exceptional Family Member Program. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to better understand the current approach to connecting with these families and adjust the approach, if needed, to meet the needs of these families while delivering the DAF missions.

58. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to improve military spouse employment?

Spouse employment is a critical factor in military family financial security and the DAF's recruitment, retention, and warfighter readiness efforts. If confirmed, I will engage with DAF leaders to identify the key military spouse employment challenges, assess the DAF's existing capabilities to address them, and develop strategies to enhance these programs while advocating for required resources.

Department of the Air Force Civilian Workforce Matters

59. How would you describe the current state of the Department's civilian workforce, including workforce morale, as well as the Department's ability to successfully recruit and retain top civilian talent?

I believe civilian employees are vital to sustaining the readiness of our military forces. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department is focused on hiring top talent into positions that directly contribute to our warfighting readiness and I note the Executive Order for Restoring America's Fighting Force, which places a premium on merit-based hiring practices. I will also assess the efficiency of the work environment and level of employee engagement. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to maintain or enhance work environments and employee engagement.

60. What is your view of the effect on morale, and effectiveness of the DAF's civilian workforce in light of the Administration's proposed reductions in the workforce?

Again, I believe civilian employees are vital to sustaining the readiness of our military forces. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department is focused on hiring, rewarding, and retaining top talent into positions that directly contribute to our warfighting readiness and I note the Executive Order for Restoring America's Fighting Force, which places a premium on merit-based hiring practices. I also will review the work environment and level of employee engagement. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to maintain or enhance work environments and employee engagement.

61. In your judgment, what are the biggest challenges facing the Department of the Air Force in effectively and efficiently managing its civilian workforce?

If confirmed, I would work with DAF leadership to understand the challenges DAF faces in managing the workforce. In addition, if confirmed, I would maximize any hiring and compensation flexibilities and authorities the Congress has provided and seek out ways to bring long-lasting improvements through a meritocratic culture that promotes innovation and excellence. I will review our personnel processes and systems and look for efficiencies that will enable effective management of the civilian workforce.

62. In your view, what are the benefits and detriments to the use of borrowed military manpower?

It is my understanding that the term "borrowed military manpower" refers to military used for duties outside their assigned positions, such as security protection. I understand that there may be instances in which military personnel can be used to appropriately satisfy a near-term demand, but that Department of the Air Force and the Department of Defense must be vigilant in ensuring that military personnel are not inappropriately utilized, particularly in a manner that may degrade readiness. If confirmed, I would further explore this practice within the Department of the Air Force and any impacts on force readiness or development of our Airmen and Guardians.

Cyber and Science-Technical Workforce

63. In your view, how effective is the Cyber Excepted Service Workforce authority under section 1599f of title 10, United States Code, in helping the DAF meet its requirements for a highly qualified and competent cyber workforce? Do you have any recommendations for improvement for that authority?

Special hiring authorities, like AcqDemo, LabDemo, and Cyber Excepted Service, are essential tools for the Department of Defense to compete for the best and brightest minds in science, technology, engineering, and acquisition. By adapting aspects of traditional personnel management, these authorities allow us to recruit and retain

individuals with specialized skills critical to national security. If confirmed, I would explore enhancing these opportunities.

64. In your view, what are the pros and cons of having active-duty military personnel—as opposed to civilian employees—trained and working as scientists, engineers, software coders, and in other technical positions across the DAF research, development, and acquisition enterprise?

The Department of the Air Force must have an appropriate and cost-effective mix of military and civilian personnel, as well as contracted services to achieve its mission. If confirmed, I will explore the existing mix with the technical areas aforementioned to ensure we have the appropriate workforce that is charged with being at the forefront of science, engineering, and technology breakthroughs.

65. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the directors of defense labs under the purview of DAF have the civilian workforce management tools they need to shape their science, technology, and engineering workforces?

Special hiring authorities, like AcqDemo, LabDemo, and Cyber Excepted Service, are essential tools for the Department of Defense to compete for the best and brightest minds in science, technology, engineering, and acquisition. By adapting aspects of traditional personnel management, these authorities allow us to recruit and retain individuals with specialized skills critical to national security. If confirmed, I would explore enhancing these opportunities and other programs such as Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory personnel demonstration projects to ensure that the Department of the Air Force utilizes all the tools available to attract and retain exceptional talent.

66. Do you have recommendations for how to better track the workforce with highly specialized technical skills, including cyber, acquisition, scientific and engineering degrees, to ensure that the DAF has sufficient people to assess whether it is able to compete with the private sector for talent?

I do not have any specific recommendations at this time on how to better track the workforce with highly specialized technical skills, including cyber, acquisition, scientific, and engineering degrees. I understand the Department currently recruits, develops, and retains a highly skilled workforce with initiatives such as the DoD Cyber Workforce Framework and the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act. If confirmed, I will work with Department leadership, the OSD, and Congress to understand the challenges that are presented to ensure that the Department is able to compete with the private sector for talent and required enhancements to reduce barriers to deliver talent in a swift and efficient manner.

Senior Executive Service

- 67. Given that competent and caring leadership is one of the most significant factors in shaping a high-performing Department of the Air Force civilian workforce, what factors and characteristics would be most important to you in selecting candidates for appointment to the Senior Executive Service?**

The Senior Executive Service (SES) is vital, and if confirmed, I will prioritize candidates with proven competence, strong character, and a commitment to a more efficient and effective Department.

- 68. If confirmed, how would you ensure that SES under your authority are held accountable for both organizational performance and the rigorous performance management of their subordinate employees?**

If confirmed, I will focus on ensuring the SES is held accountable for achieving results. This involves supporting SES leaders in fostering a culture of excellence within their organizations. My leadership will emphasize clear expectations, measurable outcomes, and consistent performance evaluations. High-achievers will be recognized, and underperformance will be addressed.

- 69. Are you satisfied with the subject matter and rigor of SES professional development programs currently available? If not, what changes would you make to these programs, if confirmed?**

Professional development for our SES cadre is critical to ensuring we have the strategic leadership required for the complex challenges facing the Air and Space Forces. If confirmed, I will review the DAF SES professional development programs to ensure alignment with the DoD and DAF priorities.

- 70. What is the impact to the SES program, and the morale of the members of the SES service, of the shuttering of the Federal Executive Institute?**

When I retired from the Air Force in 2009, the Air Force had strong internal leader development programs for military and civilian members. If confirmed, I will evaluate the SES program and morale of members in order to develop initiatives to resolve issues, if needed.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.

- 71. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 72. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to provide this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 73. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 74. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 75. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 76. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this committee? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

- 77. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member,**

federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.