

NOMINATIONS OF HON. MADELYN R. CREEDON TO BE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION; HON. BRAD R. CARSON TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY; AND DR. WILLIAM A. LAPLANTE, JR., TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR ACQUISITION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:34 a.m. in room SDG-50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Reed, Nelson, Udall, Hagan, Gillibrand, Donnelly, Kaine, King, Inhofe, Ayotte, and Blunt.

Committee staff members present: Peter K. Levine, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Jonathan D. Clark, counsel; Richard W. Fieldhouse, professional staff member; Creighton Greene, professional staff member; Gerald J. Leeling, general counsel; Jason W. Maroney, Counsel; Mariah K. McNamara, special assistant to the staff director; Roy F. Phillips, professional staff member; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: John A. Bonsell, minority staff director; Steven M. Barney, minority counsel; William S. Castle, minority general counsel; Samantha L. Clark, minority associate counsel; Allen M. Edwards, professional staff member; Thomas W. Goffus, professional staff member; Ambrose R. Hock, professional staff member; and Anthony J. Lazarski, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Lauren M. Gillis, Daniel J. Harder, and Alexandra M. Hathaway.

Committee members' assistants present: Carolyn A. Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Cathy Haverstock, assistant to Senator Nelson; Christopher R. Howard, assistant to Senator Udall; Moran Banai and Brooke Jamison, assistants to Senator Gillibrand; Marta McLellan Ross and David J. Park, assistants to Senator Donnelly; Karen E. Courington, assistant to Senator Kaine; Stephen M. Smith, assistant to Senator King; Lenwood A. Landrum, assistant

to Senator Sessions; and Bradley L. Bowman, assistant to Senator Ayotte.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. The committee meets today to consider the nominations of: Madelyn Creedon to be Principal Deputy Administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administration; Brad Carson to be Under Secretary of the Army; William LaPlante, Jr., to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition.

We welcome our witnesses and their families. We extend our gratitude to the family members in particular, who are so critically important for the support of our nominees through the long hours that they work and the countless demands on them as a result of their careers in public service.

To our witnesses, during your opening statements please feel free to introduce your family members and others who are here to support you today.

Each of our nominees has an impressive record in public service. Ms. Creedon has served in positions of distinction throughout her time in government service, positions including the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs; Assistant Administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administration for Defense Programs; General Counsel for the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission; and a trial attorney in the Department of Energy; and of course, as counsel to this committee for over 17 years. So we all can—I think we’re all familiar with her deep knowledge of and passionate commitment to the National security of our country.

Mr. Carson was a member of the House of Representatives representing the Second District of Oklahoma from 2001 to 2005. In 2008 and 2009 he served on active duty with an explosive ordnance disposal battalion in Iraq and was awarded the Bronze Star for his service. Mr. Carson is currently serving as the seniormost legal advisor in the Department of the Army, the Army General Counsel.

Dr. LaPlante began his career in the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. He remained at the university for over 25 years. During that time he held a variety of positions, including the department head for global engagement and associate department head of the National security technology department. Dr. LaPlante has been a member of the U.S. Strategic Command Senior Advisory Group, the Naval Research Advisory Committee, and the Defense Science Board. He is currently the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition.

When they’re confirmed—usually I say “if confirmed,” but I’ll be very optimistic this morning, so I’ll say “when confirmed”—Ms. Creedon will take on a key leadership role in the Nation’s nuclear security apparatus, while Mr. Carson and Dr. LaPlante will help to guide the Army and the Air Force through the challenging fiscal environment that we now face and will face even more so in the Department of Defense.

We look forward to the testimony of our nominees and hopefully to their confirmation, and we call on Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me first repeat what I've told those who are here at the table before the hearing. Unfortunately, my effort to segregate the two committees of the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Armed Services has been unsuccessful again. So we're simultaneously having a meeting upstairs two floors, so I will be going back and forth.

And I will use your characterization of "when confirmed" also.

Ms. Creedon, it's nice to see you again. It's very rare that you get someone who has such a deep background and interest in this that we all—you're predictable, and we appreciate that very much. Congress remains committed to the Nuclear modernization promises that were made back when they were getting the votes for the New START Treaty and I will be asking some questions about that.

Secretary Hagel said earlier this month in Wyoming, and this is a quote, he said: "We've got some work to do on modernization and we're going to invest in the modernization we need to keep that deterrent stronger than it's ever been. And you have my commitment to do that."

That's a quote by Secretary Hagel and I was very glad to hear that. When confirmed, you'll play an important role in overseeing the efforts to meet these modernization commitments. NNSA's successful execution and implementation of the nuclear modernization program will be essential to avoid delays in cost growth. This will require the NNSA to implement changes in its organizational culture and improve the way it manages programs.

Now, I'm happy to see my good friend Brad Carson here from Oklahoma. I told him in my office yesterday that Joe Westphal has been one of my best friends long before he had the position that Mr. Carson's going to be confirmed in. So he was also from Oklahoma. He taught at the Oklahoma State University. So so long as we keep Okies in that position I'm happy about it, Mr. Chairman. [Laughter.]

When I served on the House Armed Services Committee, I remember—I think I told you this story—that my last year in the House Armed Services Committee would have been 1949—1994—[Laughter.]

Anyway, at that time I remember we had witnesses that said in 10 years we'll no longer need ground troops. So I think we know that, now that we've got some real serious problems. We talked about the drawdown, reducing the end strength from 490,000 to 420,000. No matter how many smart politicians, Pentagon officials, or academics you put around the table, you will never be able to predict the future and what our needs are going to be.

Discussions are also ongoing about future mix of active and Reserve component forces that will have far-reaching implications for the future of the force and its ability to meet our National security needs.

Dr. LaPlante, the past several years have been challenging for the Air Force's acquisition community. The lack of accountable leadership is one of the reasons for recent failures, including the cancellation of the Expeditionary Combat Support System, a program that lost \$1 billion in taxpayers' dollars. Additionally, ques-

tions remain if the Air Force will be able to perform an audit by September 30, 2017.

Other critical programs, such as the Long-Range Strike Bomber, are just beginning and ensuring an achievable and affordable acquisition program will be critical to maintaining our Nation's nuclear triad and conventional global strike capabilities.

Now, given your experience—and I just really appreciate the time that you gave me in the office to go over things. I really believe that you have the background where you are going to be able to try some new things.

Specifically, I have a chart that I've already explained to you, that we want to be sure that we explain to this committee. So I'm looking forward to working with you and with all of those who are before us today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, Senator Inhofe.

We'll now call upon our witnesses for their opening statements. Secretary Creedon.

STATEMENT OF HON. MADELYN R. CREEDON, NOMINATED TO BE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Ms. CREEDON. Thank you, Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Inhofe, distinguished members of the committee. I'm honored to be here today and grateful to President Obama and Secretary Moniz for nominating me to be the Principal Deputy Administrator at the National Nuclear Security Administration.

I would also like to introduce and thank my husband, Jim Bracco, for being here today, but mostly for his patience over the years, for putting up with the many long nights and weekends at work and away from home, and with my being late to more things than I ever want to count, but mostly for being enthusiastically supportive of this new challenge.

I want to thank my daughter Meredith and my son John, who have grown up to be incredible adults, for all of their support, even though today their support is virtual. I know that they will watch the SASC website tonight so that they can critique me in the morning.

I also want to thank my parents, who still live in Indiana, Marilyn and Richard Creedon. Through my dad's 35-plus years of service in the Army Reserve and my mom's unending commitment to volunteerism, they have instilled in me dedication to public service and a deep commitment to my country.

My over 30 years in government service supporting national security have been a special privilege, and if confirmed to be Principal Deputy Administrator I will have the honor to serve again with the dedicated and highly talented men and women of the National Nuclear Security Administration. These men and women work every day to ensure that the United States nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective, to prevent the threats from nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, and to ensure that our nuclear-powered naval surface ships and submarines can steam all over the world to secure our freedoms.

The NNSA has many challenges, but I have faith in the people of the NNSA and look forward to the opportunity, if confirmed, to work with all of them to address these many challenges. Just last week I had the pleasure of accompanying Secretary Hagel as he visited NNSA's Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque, New Mexico. While I was there in my role as the DOD Assistant Secretary and had been to NNSA sites many times, it was a wonderful reminder of the impressive work done by the men and women of the nuclear security enterprise.

NNSA's work remains as important and impressive as it has ever been. Even in today's budget environment and with Cold War facilities decaying around the complex, the commitment of the NNSA remains strong. It is a privilege to be asked to continue in public service, and particularly to be asked to serve at the NNSA.

Maintaining nuclear security is a whole-of-government sport. The Departments of State and Defense, as well as Members of Congress and the personal and committee staffs, are all necessary to ensure a bright future at NNSA. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that this partnership remains strong.

In closing, I also want to thank Senators Reed and Nelson and Senators Sessions and Vitter for their work on the Strategic Forces Subcommittee when I was on the committee staff; and now Senator Udall for his support; and for all of the continuing commitment to NNSA that all have given.

I look forward to this new challenge and to your questions, and I thank you for your support.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much.

Now, Mr. Carson.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BRAD R. CARSON, NOMINATED TO BE
UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**

Mr. CARSON. Senator Levin, Ranking Member Inhofe, distinguished Senators of the committee: I do have a prepared statement that I would propose I submit for the record and instead speak a bit more extemporaneously and briefly.

Chairman LEVIN. That would be fine.

Mr. CARSON. I would like to thank President Obama for nominating me to this position and to the Secretary of Defense for his support of the nomination. It's been a great professional pleasure of mine for the last 2 years to serve as General Counsel to the Secretary of the Army, John McHugh. I look very steeply up to the example he has set. Joe Westphal, the Under Secretary, who Senator Inhofe has already mentioned, is a friend and a mentor as well. To Generals Odierno and Campbell, soldier's soldiers, combat leaders extraordinaire, people who are respected not only within the Army but far outside of it.

I have many friends here today from the Army's Office of General Counsel and from across the Pentagon, and I am grateful to be part of their team and to have been a small part of the effort in the Army to try to do some good things.

Of course, behind me is my wife Julie, who is an attorney herself, and she has sacrificed so much as I have pursued my own career, often at the expense of the things that she would have done for her own professional development. So I am very grateful to her.

The Army, as you know, is an amazing place, filled with extraordinary people. I'm reminded of this most when I see any soldier who is under the age of 35, because I know that each of them joined knowing that they would be sent almost immediately upon the completion of training to Iraq or Afghanistan. They joined not to avoid the fight, because they wanted to be in the fight at its very hottest moments.

The Army has sacrificed much: 4,843 casualties in Iraq, 2,401 as of today in Afghanistan, tens of thousands more wounded. All the services have contributed much to these conflicts, but the Army has borne more than its sad share of those statistics. Perhaps even more notable, 15,000 Awards for Valor, 9 Medals of Honor, 30 Distinguished Service Crosses, and more than 600 Silver Stars. It is said when you go to Section 60 of Arlington National Cemetery you'll see all the services well represented, but you can't overlook the contributions that the U.S. Army has made.

I think my background in law, politics, higher education, and business have well prepared me to be the Under Secretary of the Army. One thing I can assure the committee is that if I am confirmed I won't forget the example of those people I've mentioned and I will do my best to acquit myself in their honor.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carson follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Carson, and thank you for mentioning Joe Westphal, too, and Senator Inhofe did as well, because he's a wonderful person who's done a wonderful job. I just am glad you made reference to him and I should have actually done that when I introduced you.

Dr. LaPlante.

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM A. LAPLANTE, JR., Ph.D., NOMINATED
TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR AC-
QUISITION**

Dr. LAPLANTE. Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Inhofe, and other members of this distinguished committee. Thank you for having the hearing and inviting us here to answer your questions.

I'd like to start by thanking President Obama, Secretary Hagel, Secretary James, and Frank Kendall for their confidence in having me as the Principal Deputy, as well as nominating me for the Acquisition Executive. I want to offer a special thanks to Frank Kendall and former Air Force Secretary Mike Donley for their especially persuasive powers to bring me into the Federal Government. I would not be here if it wasn't for them.

With me today is my family: Joann, my two daughters—my wife Joann, my two daughters Clair and Caroline, Nathan, my sister Lynn, and my nephew August, who is supposed to be in first grade in Illinois this morning, but instead is here. So, August, I hope this is worth the travel for you.

I have spent over 28 years, like many of you, around defense systems, technologies, acquisition programs, touching all aspects of those programs, all services. This experience, along with the tenure on activities like the Defense Science Board, offers a first-hand impression of the state and the challenges of defense acquisition. Of

course, this has evolved and changed over the years, whether it was, for me at least, starting during the height of the Cold War in the mid-1980s, living through the drawdown and all that we went through in the mid-1990s with the lower force levels, the acquisition reform initiatives, as we called them, back in the late 1990s, the first decade of the 2000s with the wars and the rapid acquisition that we had to do, and where we are, of course, today, which up until extremely recently had significant budget uncertainties.

In all that time, like all of my colleagues who've been in those forums, I've formed impressions and opinions on the challenges of acquisition. Also, I come, though, from a community that desperately wants to make a difference. I come from a community that wants to find the game-changing technology, bring it to the warfighter, get it into production. I come from a community that wants to invent the clever way to do contracting so we finish a development contract on time. I come from a community that just wants to make a difference.

So it's such an opportunity for me and a privilege to potentially be able to come into the government and, if confirmed, be the Acquisition Executive. I'm under no illusions of the challenges in the system, of course. We've all seen the successes, we've all seen the misfires. I would say coming into the Pentagon, just in the last several months, I had my own impressions of what to expect. Many of those impressions were confirmed. I also found that there are nuances, of course, and subtleties that I had no appreciation for being outside the government.

Finally and probably most importantly, I found some surprising successes, some good news stories, some positive indicators, some of which I was unaware of, that I think we can build upon. So what I would pledge to this committee is, if confirmed, I will build upon those successes, those bright spots, those best practices. I will directly take on the areas that we know need help in terms of improving acquisition outcomes. I'll be transparent in doing so and be honest as I can be on the state of the programs.

So again I thank the committee for having the hearing and for inviting me here to answer your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. LaPlante follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Dr. LaPlante.

Let me now ask all of you the standard questions that we ask of our nominees. Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

Ms. CREEDON. I have.

Mr. CARSON. Yes.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Have you adhered to applicable—have you assumed any duties or undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the outcome of the confirmation process?

Mr. CARSON. No.

Dr. LAPLANTE. No.

Ms. CREEDON. No.

Chairman LEVIN. Will you ensure that your staff complies with deadlines established for requested communications, including questions for the record in hearings?

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes.

Mr. CARSON. Yes.

Ms. CREEDON. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to congressional requests?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes.

Mr. CARSON. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Will those witnesses be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes.

Mr. CARSON. Yes.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify upon request before this committee?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes.

Mr. CARSON. Yes.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Finally, do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted committee, or to consult with the committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes.

Mr. CARSON. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Why don't we try—yes? Yes, Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Mr. Chairman, I have to go to the Banking Committee. I want to just say how enthusiastic I am about the nominees. Their service to the Nation already has been spectacular. I look forward to their rapid confirmation.

I also want to commend the chairman on his attire today. He looks great in that West Point tie.

And finally—

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator REED. And finally, if August—if we were as composed as August, we'd get more business done here in the Senate. That's all I have to say. Thank you, August.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. That puts a lot of pressure on you to stay awake. But you're allowed not to.

Okay, thank you, Senator Reed, very much.

Let's start with seven minutes. First let me ask you, Secretary Creedon. The Air Force disclosed yesterday that 34 ICBM officers were implicated in cheating on their monthly proficiency tests. In your current position as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs, are you responsible for the oversight of training and equipping those personnel?

Ms. CREEDON. No, sir, I'm not. Those people fall within the military chain of command.

Chairman LEVIN. And you are not in that chain?

Ms. CREEDON. Correct, I am not.

Chairman LEVIN. All right, so you are not involved in knowledge of this. You were informed I guess about the same time we all were?

Ms. CREEDON. Yesterday.

Chairman LEVIN. That's totally understandable, given what your job is and the fact that you're not in the chain of command.

The Budget Office—Secretary, let me ask you this about the NNSA, which has had a history of program delays and cost growth, particularly with its construction projects for new facilities. We in the 2013 Defense Authorization Act had a provision which establishes in the NNSA an Office of Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation. My question is the following: If you're confirmed and when you're confirmed, will you work without delay in standing up that office?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. The Department of Defense has a similar office to evaluate its programs. How do you envision those two offices working together on future projects?

Ms. CREEDON. Senator, the office, the CAPE Office in the Department of Defense, has been very helpful over the course of the past 18 months in providing assistance to the Nuclear Weapons Council in determining some of the costing for several life extensions, and they've also been very much involved with the NNSA, helping the NNSA come to grips with various costing methodologies both for life extensions and for construction projects.

I would hope, if confirmed, to be able to continue to draw on the expertise at CAPE, particularly for their costing experience, which is deep and extensive, as we set up a similar organization in the NNSA.

Chairman LEVIN. Secretary, the NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency in the Department of Energy. Can you explain the relationship between the NNSA and the Department of Energy in setting safety and security regulations?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, sir. The statute that created the National Nuclear Security Administration made it clear that the administration reports to the Secretary of Energy through the Deputy Secretary, and that the Secretary of Energy sets the overarching policies for the Department of Energy, including for the National Nuclear Security Administration. So the overarching policies and regulations that apply to the Department also apply to the NNSA. The NNSA does have authority to make modifications to those as necessary, should the Administrator make that decision.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Mr. Carson, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 requires the Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense to establish a plan to ensure the DOD's financial statements are validated as ready for audit by not later than September 2017. The Secretary of Defense has established the additional goal of ensuring that the statement of the Department's budgetary resources is validated as ready for audit by not later than September 30th of this year. Is the Department of the Army in your opinion on track to achieve those objectives, particularly with regard to data quality, internal controls, and business process reengineering?

Mr. CARSON. Yes, Senator, the Army is on track to meet those goals. There's a lot of work still being done, many challenges to be faced, but we are on track to achieve those goals.

Chairman LEVIN. Will you take all the steps you can and all the ones that are available and needed, if confirmed, to ensure that the Army moves to achieve these objectives without an unaffordable or unsustainable level of one-time fixes and manual work-arounds?

Mr. CARSON. Yes, I will do everything in my power to make sure that happens.

Chairman LEVIN. Let me ask you now about the service members who are wounded or injured in combat operations. I think the American people and every one of us believe that they deserve the highest priority from our government for support services, healing, recuperation, rehab, evaluation for return to duty, and successful transition from active duty if required, and then continuing support beyond retirement or discharge.

There's a lot of challenges, obviously, that remain, despite the enactment of a lot of legislation and a renewed emphasis over the last few years. Can you give us your assessment of the progress to date by the Army to improve the care, management, and transition of seriously ill and injured soldiers, as well as the support needed for their families?

Mr. CARSON. The Army's faced a great challenge over the last 14 years of conflict in meeting those requirements, but I think we are world leaders and are setting examples in every day doing—making progress that will be followed around the world for decades to come. We are world leaders in this particular area. Our warrior transition units, the community-based warrior transition units, have been very successful in delivering basic care.

I've been involved with Secretary McHugh in ensuring the behavioral health diagnoses for the tens of thousands of returning soldiers who've had difficulties there are satisfied. We are better in burn care, in rehabilitation for people with traumatic injuries.

So the Army has put forth a tremendous effort to meet this sacred obligation to our veterans and I think there are many lessons for other institutions to take from it.

Chairman LEVIN. Are you satisfied and will you take steps to ensure that sufficient facilities and services are available to the redeployment of troops that are coming home from Afghanistan, particularly in the area of reintegration, medical services, so that we can accommodate the increase in the soldier populations at their home stations when that occurs?

Mr. CARSON. I give you my word in that, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank all of you for your willingness to serve, and your families as well.

Let me start with you, Dr. LaPlante. New Hampshire is very proud that the Air Force has selected Pease Air National Guard Base, the home of the 157th Air Refueling Wing, as the top National Guard base to receive the new KC-46A. So we're very proud of that, and I wanted to get an update on where we are based on your position, your current position, and preparing for this hearing,

and your new position, on the status of the KC-46A. Is it on track? Are we going forward?

Dr. LAPLANTE. Thank you, Senator. The program is on track and this past year in September it completed a successful critical design review with the contractor, with Boeing, and completed that actually about a month ahead of schedule. The program has to date had no engineering changes on the fixed price contract, as you know, in the development. A reminder, the government's liability, if you will, in the program is capped under that fixed price arrangement.

We are on track to begin first flight of the KC-46 later this year. So all indications are the program is going well. I would also like to call out the trainer that was competed for on selected by the Air Force, the trainer for the KC-46. The actual trainer came in about \$250 million under what the independent cost estimate was for that trainer. So it's on track.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, that is music to my ears and I'm really glad to know that that program is going so well and on track.

On another note, unfortunately I want to ask you about a program from December 2012, where the U.S. Air Force cancelled an information technology program called the Expeditionary Combat Support System, the ECSS, that it had been working on since 2005. The Air Force scrapped the program after putting in a billion dollars into the project, with no identifiable benefit to the military or taxpayers. There were also reports that the project would have required an additional \$1.1 billion to fix and the system wouldn't have been completed until 2020. So that was obviously cancelled by the Air Force.

Based on your experience and your preparation for this hearing, particularly in the position you're going into, who is being held accountable in the Air Force for wasting a billion dollars of tax dollars into a failed Air Force acquisition program?

Dr. LAPLANTE. Senator, your characterization of ECSS and the history is correct. From the accountability perspective, the direct answer to your question is in 2011 and 2012 it's my understanding that the program manager for that program was removed and the program executive officer for that program was removed.

Having said that, do you believe that we have firm accountability in the acquisition system and are comfortable with where it is? I am not. I think it is something, should I be confirmed, that I will put extra emphasis on. But again, your characterization of ECSS is correct.

Senator AYOTTE. So why did it happen and how do we prevent it from happening again?

Dr. LAPLANTE. The best answer to why it happened from my perspective coming in to the Principal Deputy position and preparing for this hearing today was achieved by careful review of what's called the acquisition incident report. That report should be available, has been available for the committee. It was commissioned in the way a mishap, an airplane crash, for example, report would be done, where an independent team came in, did fishbone analysis, as they call it, failure analysis, interviews, and got to root cause.

It's very, very sobering reading. It identified about six fundamental root causes, which in my assessment were probably baked

in, unfortunately, at the very beginning. I will go through a few examples.

There was a lack of appreciation of the complexity of the data, the data that was going to go into this business system. When you're going to an enterprise business system, of course, the commodity everybody uses is the data itself. Not understanding that data, not understanding how to get the quality of the data, was a foundational error in the program.

Then two other quick things, but there are more: Not having a good transition plan. In other words, going from these legacy systems, the as-is, to the to-be vision, in some ways the to-be vision is often the thing that's the easiest to come up with. That's where we all dream of having a nice, seamless enterprise business system. The hard part and the part that was not done well was understanding the way to get from where they were with these legacy systems and this data to that to-be. Just like when there's construction on a major highway you have to assume there's still going to be traffic and how's the traffic going to use the system, the user still had to use this as it was doing the transition.

Those are foundational errors that were baked into the program.

Senator AYOTTE. Here's why your position that you're going into in particular is so important and why this billion dollar loss disturbs me, as I know it disturbs all of us. The Air Force is proposing that all active duty A-10s be divested by 2016, plus the Air National Guard unit in Boise, Idaho, and that all Guard and Reserve units be divested by 2017, in order to save money in 2019. A billion dollars, that's about \$3.7 billion over the FYDP.

I think of that and I think a billion dollars we lost on that, when we have the A-10's that are incredibly important for close air support, incredibly important for search and rescue, incredibly important to our men and women in uniform. In fact, General Odierno has said it's the best close air support platform we have today. And despite this effort to divest it, General Welch has said it is the best airplane in the world at what it does.

So these are the things that you're going to be facing, that if we waste a billion dollars then we have to—you come to us and say, divest a plane that our men and women, especially those on the ground, care about, they know, that it has saved lives. So in your position this is very important that this not happen again, and we look for areas in the Air Force where you see this problem bubbling up, so that we can not waste taxpayer dollars and we can make sure that the dollars go to things that we know our men and women in uniform need.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate your concerns on that particular platform. As we all know, there are very, very difficult force structure trades that are being made by the leadership and will be presented in the President's budget.

I would say what I'm learning in the short time on the job is it all costs money. It costs money to keep things, to maintain things. It also costs money actually to divest. I think there are some very difficult choices, as you know, that the leadership is making with force structure, as you point out. I know the Air Force, I know General Welch, is keenly aware of your concerns, and that's the fiscal

environment that they're facing, how to go to a different force structure.

Senator AYOTTE. I know my time is up, and obviously I do not believe that the A-10 should be divested, because I believe it's very important. It saves lives. But not just that. What we need to avoid, stepping back from it is, it's hard to say to the men and women on the ground, hey, we're going to eliminate the A-10, but we wasted a billion dollars on an IT system.

So this is where you all, focusing on being better, to make sure that the resources we have go to where they need to go, you'll have a very important role in this new position. So I look forward to working with you on that.

Thank you.

Dr. LaPLANTE. Yes, thank you, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

Senator UDALL.

Senator UDALL. Good morning to all of you. It's terrific to see all three of you here. Secretary Creedon,

I want to thank you for your long history of public service. You've taken on a lot of daunting assignments. This is another one for you. The NNSA is a vitally important agency. You are going to be responsible for some of our most sensitive and important programs. You really fit the bill in my estimation for the job that's in front of you. I'm going to ask you some questions about the job the assignment you have.

I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my good friend Brad Carson. We served in the House together. He's a true patriot. If you look at Brad's biography, he's walked the walk, including deciding at a relatively old age, I think I can say, that he wanted to serve our country, went to Officer Training School, was I think deployed in Iraq if my memory is correct.

It's just fantastic that you're going to have this opportunity to serve us, Congressman, in the Army, along with our friend John McHugh, with whom we also served in the House. I'm full-throated in support of your nomination and look very much forward to voting for you to take on this important assignment.

With that—Dr. LaPlante, I don't mean to ignore you, but I have close connections with both of the other nominees. Thank you for your willingness to serve as well.

I want to turn right to the NNSA, Secretary Creedon. Someone suggested that if we separated the nuclear enterprise from DOE we'd be better served. Would you share your thoughts on that debate and that discussion we've been having?

Ms. CREEDON. Thank you, Senator Udall, and thank you very much for those kind words. They're most appreciated.

Senator UDALL. They're well deserved.

Ms. CREEDON. Thank you.

Obviously, my views with respect to NNSA at this point in time would be my personal views. But I happen to believe that the legislation that established the NNSA remains sound and that it's in the long-term best interests of the NNSA to be part of the Department of Defense. I think having a cabinet-level agency responsible for looking out for assisting with the NNSA is really incredible and essentially important, particularly as we look to the long-term

budget debates that we know are going to continue in the future as the budget goes down.

That said, there are significant internal management challenges with the NNSA that the NNSA has to deal with. But I think these challenges can be dealt with within the flexibility provided in the statute and that, at least at the moment—and obviously, if confirmed I'll know a little better when I get back into the NNSA again. But at least at the moment, I haven't identified any legislative changes that I think are necessary.

Senator UDALL. Madam Secretary, if we could clarify for the record, you said Department of Defense. I think you meant Department of Energy.

Ms. CREEDON. Energy, I'm sorry. The Department of Energy.

Senator UDALL. You did mean Department of Energy.

Ms. CREEDON. I'm sorry, I did mean Energy.

Senator UDALL. Thank you for that, those insights. They're valuable because again of your broad experience.

I'd be remiss in my second question if I didn't ask you about the recent news reports about what happened in Malmstrom. Do you have greater concerns about larger systemic issues associated with our ICBM force?

Ms. CREEDON. Senator, from my observation sitting where I have over the course of the last two and a half years—and obviously, it's the military chain of command; I'm not in that chain of command—but it is very troubling. I think to me it's even more troubling for all of those men and women who really do have a commitment, who show up every day, who are dedicated.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, I had the opportunity to travel with Senator Hagel and we also went out to F.E. Warren Air Force Base and went out to one of the launch control centers, talked to the crew. He then had a very long discussion with some of the folks out there. We had lunch with them, had some pretty good one on ones, talked to the 20th Air Force commander. They are so committed and they try really hard. They live in a very difficult environment, and we need to support them fully, and it's just a shame when there are just bad apples.

Senator UDALL. Yes. Well, we're going to need to work on this, and I know you're committed to it and focused on it, as am I.

Let me turn to the CBO number, \$350 billion. That's the estimate that we'll spend over the next 10 years on nuclear forces, I should say. That includes the NNSA programs. Do you think that's accurate? Could you mention what that investment's going to purchase for us?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, sir. I think CBO did a pretty good job. Obviously, determining the long-term costs of the entire enterprise depend a little bit on sort of what you put in and what you put out. But I think CBO did a good job in getting what's really at the heart of the long-term challenges.

The NNSA challenges are with respect to both the modernization of the complex—there are two big facilities left to address. We need plutonium, we need highly enriched uranium processing facilities. And pretty much—NNSA needs assured, understanding, and reliable budgets. DOD's budget bow wave is coming in a few years and it really has to do with the modernization of the platforms and the

delivery systems—the submarine, the bomber, and whatever is the future of the ground-based strategic deterrent, in other words the next Minuteman III. Those are the bulk of the costs.

Senator UDALL. We're going to be working, I know, to do what's right to maintain our nuclear posture, but also keep control of costs. We just have to do that, and I know you agree.

Let me turn to Congressman Carson. I'd be interested in your thoughts about what's in front of you. I'd ask you the traditional question: What keeps you up at night as you anticipate taking on this important assignment?

Mr. CARSON. These are extraordinary times in the U.S. Army, where we are trying to manage coming out of two wars and the many problems that dealing with that, that retrograde of equipment and with soldiers who are transitioning back into either garrison life or returning to the civilian world, along with their families. That's an extraordinary challenge.

We have a difficult budget climate and we have a drawdown in forces, while at the same time still trying to meet the needs of the National military strategy, which are quite robust. So it's that overall challenge of managing the Army that is a very difficult one.

Senator UDALL. You're up to it, I know, along with John McHugh.

Dr. LaPlante, if I might I'd like to use what time I have remaining—and I'll truncate my question. But basically, my question goes to the proposal that the Air Force has put forth that would involve developing an entirely new helicopter, given that we already have a series of machines, a group of machines, that I think get the job done. My concern is if we spend hundreds of millions of dollars so the Air Force has its own unique helicopter and at the same time we're cutting funding for the space surveillance systems and other vital programs, to me that doesn't fit.

I'd be curious to hear your comments on this.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Well, in general, as you know, on items like new starts, whether for helicopters or airplanes, we're in an environment now where we're having to be very careful about starting anything new, and we're looking very carefully, as we should, at what the tradeoffs are between something new versus extending life, extending what we have.

I understand your concerns and I think in general the force structure decisions that the Air Force is currently making are going to be trading some of those very difficult things. I'll be happy to work with you further on.

Senator UDALL. I'd like to follow up with you in more detail.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Absolutely. Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thanks again to the panel and thank you for your willingness to serve our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Creedon, in my opening statement I talked about our concern, and it's not just mine. Others have the same concern. In fact, when the New START treaty was put in there were some commitments that were made and those commitments have not become a

reality. I guess when you are confirmed what would be your effort in terms of trying to—or will you try to reach the level that was kind of agreed upon prior to the voting on the New START treaty?

Ms. CREEDON. Senator Inhofe, not only does the NNSA have substantial budget challenges in front of it, but so obviously does the Department of Defense in looking forward to the long-term modernization programs and investment programs to support the nuclear complex. The numbers that you're referring to are what have been referred to as in the 1251 report. At least with respect to the NNSA at the moment, the NNSA budget request for fiscal year 2014 was a little bit under the fiscal year 2012 1251 report and a little bit over the fiscal year 2011 1251 report.

One of the challenges I think that has occurred over time is some of the elements that were supposed to be covered by those, by those funds, have ended up costing more. So it's caused a delay of both the uranium—rather, a delay of the plutonium facility and also has caused a relook of the approach on the uranium facility.

Senator INHOFE. I really believe that if anyone can do it, you can do it. So I think the main thing we want to hear before this committee is that you do have a commitment to do your best to try to get us on track for security purposes.

Ms. CREEDON. I absolutely do, Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Mr. Carson, you know, we talked in the office about you're inheriting a little bit of a mess in terms of end strength, and it's because it's the understanding that the OSD believes the Army end strength should be reduced to 420 from 520 active, and 315 from 358 on Guard, and then a comparable Reserve figure.

I know you've had some time to look at this, and you've also heard from the Chief of Staff of the Army, who's been quite outspoken on what his needs are. How are you going to handle that?

Mr. CARSON. It is a difficult challenge, of course. The Chief of Staff of the Army and the Secretary of the Army himself have talked about how the drawdown will make it more and more difficult to meet the many requirements that are placed upon the Army. So there's really two questions there: What are the requirements that the Nation is going to ask of the Army, and what is the right size for the Army to meet those, and can the country afford an Army of that particular size?

Drawdowns are always very difficult. Maintaining the right grade play, the right mix of officers and enlisted members in the Army as you reduce by 30,000 or 50,000 members, maintaining soldier and family resiliency, keeping morale up, the transition of those soldiers who are leaving to go back into civilian life.

So it's going to be a great challenge, both on these strategic questions as well as on kind of the personnel and readiness side, to make sure we manage this drawdown in a way that is equitable and does justice to the sacrifice of our soldiers over the last decade.

Senator INHOFE. It's tough, because you're going to hear from some of the uniforms that it could increase risk. Of course, risk is lives. So it's a tough issue to deal with. I know you will do everything you can to try to make that a reality.

Dr. LaPlante, again thank you for the time that you gave me in talking about it. I have a slide that DARPA, the Tactical Tech-

nology Office, put together in 2012 that shows from approximately 1975 to the present—Where is the chart? Okay. You see the chart here. The blue line is where it would be with commercial aircraft. The automobile industry—I'm not sure why we should have that on there, but nonetheless it is. But here is what we're talking about here [indicating]. When you get into—everything's fine up through the, I guess, the F-117. Then with the F-18, the C-17, B-2, and the rest of them, you see what is going up. We had a chance to look at this.

The question I would want to ask you is—the last platform we didn't have a problem with was F-117. Have you had time to look? Do you have an analysis or an idea of, if we were able to do that, why that same can't be used as a model for some of the other platforms?

[The information referred to follows:]

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes, thank you, Senator. As it turns out, being a member of the Defense Science Board, we in fact looked at some of this in studying adaptable systems, in fact with DARPA's help, a few years ago. Part of that, we actually looked specifically at the F-117. A couple things I would offer that were in my view unique in listening and interviewing the principals who were there.

The first was that it was a very small group of empowered, what I would call today a cross-functional team. That is, the requirements, the user, if you will, the program manager, the systems engineer, the lead contractor, and I told it was on the order of six to eight people who were all empowered to make decisions, that were in a protected environment. It was a highly classified program, as you know, but it also had top-level support.

If you know some of the individuals that were there—and the one I happen to know, and some of you may know, is Dr. Paul Kaminsky, currently the Chairman of the Defense Science Board. He was in part of that time the program manager as an active duty colonel.

It was quite a talented team. And when you listen to how they did it, it's remarkable. What it was was it started with quick identification of what the hardest parts of the problem were, which in their case was the signature itself and getting it to fly, then going right to the prototyping and, if you will, experimentation to see if they could actually make this thing work.

They had accidents, as Paul will tell you. They had fatalities. But within about three years they were able to wring out some of the fundamental problems there and were able to go right into production.

I would add another—there's two pieces to that which I think are lessons for us. One is the requirements side. Dr. Kaminsky will give the story of when he was the program manager he was pressured, if you will, by some of the leadership in the services at the time of why the airplane could not fly in all weather: Why don't we add a radar so it can fly in all weather? Well, Dr. Kaminsky knew that was going to be a very difficult challenge and he resisted. He said: No, if we do that we're not going to have the airplane. And he resisted it. And he says to this day we wouldn't have that airplane if he had to put that radar on it.

Senator INHOFE. He had to do that first?

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes. So it was understanding the requirements, resisting changes to the requirements as needed, and an empowered team. It proves it can be done, and I think it should be an inspiration for all of us.

Thank you.

Senator INHOFE. I think that's a great answer. You certainly would be one of the rare persons who could make that I think be a reality.

My time has expired. I'll wait a few minutes for the second round.

Chairman LEVIN. Sure, thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Creedon, the *Ohio*-class submarine is aging and we're getting to the point where we're talking about a replacement. Are there particular challenges as we deliver the new reactor for the upcoming Ohio-class replacements?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, Senator. I would say the biggest challenge, frankly, is ensuring that there is stable and predictable funding with respect to that reactor. My understanding is the naval reactors program has the technology fairly well in hand at the moment, but it is a critical part of the success of that replacement submarine.

Senator KING. Is multi-year funding part of the answer?

Ms. CREEDON. Senator, I'm going to have to pass on that question. I will certainly look into it and get back to you. The NNSA part of it is the research and development part of it and so multi-year doesn't really fit with the research and development part of it. The procurement side of that is on the Navy side and so that's not an area of my expertise. So I would have to get with the Navy and get back to you on that side.

Senator KING. But when you say—you're talking about continuity of funding for the research side year to year?

Ms. CREEDON. I'm talking about the research side and the NNSA side, yes, sir.

Senator KING. And some predictable funding level from year to year is an important part of your being able to meet this challenge?

Ms. CREEDON. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. In your prior position you were working on countering weapons of mass destruction, nonproliferation. Do you see that as relevant experience to what you're going to be doing now?

Ms. CREEDON. Absolutely, sir. In my current job I have the policy responsibility for countering weapons of mass destruction at the Department of Defense, and the Department of Defense has primarily been focused on biological threats, chemical threats, and the NNSA has also been primarily focused on the nuclear threats. But there is also overlap where the two Departments work very closely together.

So between the Department of Defense and the Department of European, the National Nuclear Security Administration, it's essential that the two Departments work together so that we handle all aspects of the threats from weapons of mass destruction that face this country.

Senator KING. Well, it's somewhat out of the scope of this hearing, Mr. Chairman, but I woke up this morning suddenly thinking about what happened in West Virginia, which was an accident. But it certainly raises the specter of what it wasn't an accident and how vulnerable we are and what that did to a third of the State of West Virginia by contaminating the water supply. It's a daunting—it's a daunting concept.

Ms. CREEDON. It absolutely is, Senator. One of the things that right now in my current job I'm working on is a new strategy for the Department of Defense for countering weapons of mass destruction.

Senator KING. Godspeed.

Mr. Carson, we've all—I suspect we've all—I know I have heard from my governor and my adjutant general. I think one of the toughest issues we're going to face this year is the relationship between the Guard and the Reserve and the Regular Army. Do you have thoughts on how this force structure issue should be approached, how do we make sense of it, bearing in mind the interests of the States as well as the national interest?

Mr. CARSON. I think it is going to be a very vexing problem for us, and I think the only solution is to commit not to engage in Army fratricide about the AC-RC mix, but instead to work together in consultation with the governors, with the adjutant generals in the States, with the National Guard Bureau, and the Department of Defense.

Everyone recognizes, myself especially as a reservist, that the Reserve components have played a heroic incredible role over the last 14 years of conflict, no longer simply a strategic Reserve, but an operational asset to the Army and to the other Services, too. I don't believe we're going to go away from that, but we do have to look at the right mix as we come out of these wars, the right assets, what functionalities the governors, for example, would like to see in the Guard, what functionality we need to keep in the Active component, the kind of boots-on-ground dwell ratio.

These are all very difficult questions and there's no one solution to it other than to say you must be committed to working with the various stakeholders in the States, in the Guard, in the active component, and through leadership bring everyone together, because in the end, whatever differences we may have seem quite superficial given the commonality of interests that the National Guard, the Reserve component altogether, and the Active component have.

Senator KING. So you see essentially a new analysis of needs and roles, as opposed to applying a rule of thumb of a ratio of two to one or three to two or whatever?

Mr. CARSON. The chief of staff has talked about the historic ratio of the Reserve component to the active component of about 54 percent to 46 percent respectively. So there's been some discussion by him in particular about maintaining that role going forward. I don't think it's a new analysis. People value the contributions that have been made by the Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve over the last decade, the last 15 years. So it's kind of taking what we've learned, taking that institutionalized knowledge, and then applying it for the rather austere budget climate we find ourselves in.

Senator KING. By “new analysis” what I meant is we can’t just say because the ratio was 54–46 2 or 3 years ago that’s what it’s going to be ongoing. We’ve got to stop and look and see, okay, what do we need and what are the roles.

Mr. CARSON. That’s absolutely right. We have to look at what requirements we have—

Senator KING. Right.

Mr. CARSON.—in each of the components, and then resource them accordingly.

Senator KING. A second issue that we’re going to have to struggle with is personnel costs. You know the figures that we’re steadily—personnel costs are steadily eating up readiness and procurement and other parts of the military. The Congress learned about a month ago how difficult it is to even touch these issues.

Do you have thoughts about how we can deal with the personnel cost issues without causing a firestorm of concern among active duty and retired military? Should we do it all in a prospective way, which means we don’t get the savings for a long time? How do we approach this?

Mr. CARSON. Well, it too is not an easy matter. It’s a particularly acute problem—

Senator KING. “Not easy” is an understatement.

Mr. CARSON. It’s particularly acute in the Army, though, because we are a people-centric service, where about 46 percent of our budget goes to paying our soldiers. So those problems you talk about that are chronic in the Department of Defense are notable in the Army especially.

I do prefer approaches that don’t prejudice the interests of people who have already made long-term commitments, whether it’s retirees, whether it’s people who are close to retirement. It is certainly better to start out on the front end, and those savings can be manifested over years. There are other ways to find savings.

But it’s difficult—and this is my own personal view—to be making changes that are contrary to either the explicit or implicit promises we’ve made to service members and for which they have made, set expectations for the future as well. Those are very difficult things to do, and to be avoided in the absence of profound countervailing benefits.

Senator KING. I completely agree. I believe you have an explicit or implicit contract. People have expectations and that’s what’s going to make this problem exceedingly difficult to deal with.

I’m almost out of time or I am out of time, but, Dr. LaPlante, I just want to call attention again to that chart that Senator Inhofe showed. If it takes 22 years to develop something from idea to completion in the private sector, you’d be out of business. I mean, that’s just ridiculous. By the time you get finished, the technology’s changed and you’re almost by definition building something that’s not state of the art.

So I think the example of the F–117 is a good example. We’ve got to figure out how to deal with that. It’s just unacceptable to take 20 years to develop a new weapon system. So I just, I commend to you to keep looking at that prior example. It may take—in my experience it takes a small group who have the power and

the authority to make decisions. The larger the committee, the lesser the results.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes, Senator, thank you, and I agree, and I look forward to working with you. Thank you.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator King.

Senator Blunt.

Senator BLUNT. Thank you, chairman.

Dr. LaPlante, on the A-10 issue that Senator Ayotte raised, I'm totally in agreement with the points she made. I would have made them if she hadn't and that might have been the principal thing that you and I would have talked about. But that's getting some attention, and it's particularly getting some attention based on the comments of General Odierno and others who understand the ground support that that particular plane provides. I hope that's one of the things you'll look at very carefully, and I think you said you're going to do that. I just want to say I would have brought that issue up in more detail, but I think Senator Ayotte did a good job of covering our concerns about that.

Secretary Creedon, thanks for coming by one day this week to talk about this assignment. I think the principal thing I would just want to raise again here would be the importance of the transfer Kansas City facility to that new campus. Everything from moving a six-ounce tool to an 87,000-pound piece of milling equipment has had to happen as part of that big transfer of what you're doing there.

Then once that transfer's completed, the other thing that I'd like you to comment on briefly is just the importance of what we do with the piece of property that the Federal Government has been on for half a century and now would be leaving, after all the work that's done there and all the kinds of left-behind problems that that work would mean would have to be dealt with.

Ms. CREEDON. Thank you, Senator. Yes, the new Kansas City plant, which goes by the acronym of KCRIMS, is a very important part of the modernization plan for the National Nuclear Security Administration's nuclear complex. It's the—as you know very well, it's the electronics. But the real achievement with this new facility is that it'll be a much better place for the workforce to work and they'll be able to do the same work in half the space, and they get out of a building that they've been in since the late forties, early fifties. It's a long time coming and it's definitely needed.

That said, after our conversation yesterday I've done a little more looking into it and the old Bannister Federal Facility that has both GSA, NNSA, and other Federal entities in it, it will be a challenge in the future. It's absolutely something that, if confirmed, I will take on to make sure that in the end it is the best result for the community as well as for the NNSA to understand really how to deal and get rid of this old Federal facility in a way that's really beneficial.

Senator BLUNT. And for my colleagues on the committee, this is a facility that, as the Secretary indicated, we've been at for 60, 70 years now. Lots of nuclear work done there. By this point, it's pretty well located right in the center of lots of things and has great development potential, but only if the government now deals with

it in a way that allows somebody to in the future use it for that purpose. I'm pleased that Secretary Creedon understands that in the depth that she does, as did the nominee that had the agency that the committee reported out again just the other day after those names had to be dealt with another time.

Mr. Carson, nice to see you again. We served in the House together for four years in districts that were pretty close together and we were able to do some things there. An important assignment for a lot of the reasons you've already been asked about today in terms of restructuring the military.

While I'm in the mode of talking about Missouri facilities, I would just call your attention to Fort Leonard Wood, where General Odierno was just in the last week. Secretary McHugh has visited there recently. I know General Odierno when he went to the chemical school, the biological school, the radiological school, the nuclear school, all of which are there, said that this has unique possibilities, both because of the location and community support, to look at all of those homeland security applications.

As everyone does when they visit there, he mentioned the level of community support and how important this base is seen to the people that surround it. One of the neighbors, by the way, is the Mark Twain National Forest, which gives us even more capacity to do some things on the base that might in other places be seen as intrusive or troublesome. I wanted to call his visit to your attention, but Secretary McHugh, who you and I also served with in the House, has been there as well.

On the question that Senator King mentioned about the integrated armed services, I've seen some reports lately that there is a discussion of eliminating the Guard from the support services, the helicopter services, the Kiowa, the Apache helicopters that largely—a lot of that has been done by Guard personnel, and a discussion that maybe that assignment would come back to the full-time force.

I don't know of any reason to believe that the Guard personnel that have done that haven't done an extraordinarily capable job there. I will just continue to look, as I think you may have already responded to, the importance of having that integrated armed forces and looking at any comments that General Grass and others in the Guard have to make about this.

But on the support generally of air support and other things that come to the Army from the Guard, do you want to comment on that?

Mr. CARSON. Certainly. It was a real pleasure serving with you in Congress. I had my home in Oklahoma, of course, just down the road—

Senator BLUNT. Right across the border.

Mr. CARSON.—from I know your home, and we worked together a lot on issues. I hope at Fort Leonard Wood we'll have a chance to visit that together and give me a good excuse to go back to our neighborhood.

As has been reported, part of the Army restructuring is going to look at the aviation, both in the active component and the Reserve component, with the idea of streamlining it. We have a number of assets, like our TH-67 training helicopters, that have to be re-

placed or supplanted by another airframe. The aviation community wants to come to what they call glass cockpit dual-engine aircraft, which are better for training and have more uses. And they want to save some money in operations and sustainment costs that they can put into kind of the long-term projects for the future of vertical lift, for example, kind of the next generation helicopters that may some day replace the Apache and the Blackhawk.

So there is a restructuring that's being examined. There's been no final decision that I'm aware of on those kind of issues. As I was telling Senator King, I am confident that I will be a part of this process if confirmed to consult with the governors, the TAG's, and others to say, what functionality do you need in your National Guard aviation units, the 12 aviation brigades that are in the National Guard, what do you need here, so we can make sure that those requirements are satisfied.

Senator BLUNT. Well, I would just suggest again that whatever you do there I think needs to, as you've already committed, to have the active communication with the Guard here, with the adjutant generals and the States, looking at the impact this has on the ongoing mission and recruiting capability and maintaining the numbers that these units have had, and look at the performance, as well as looking about whether that particular skill also continues to be a valuable skill for the States to have available in the State for the other work that the Guard does in addition to being able to be called up and used to support the full-time force.

I think this will be an issue that a lot of members, including me, will take very seriously as it comes up, and I know you will, too, and I wanted to raise it with you today.

Thank you, chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Blunt.

Senator Gillibrand.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Carson, I am very concerned about cyber security and in particular in recruiting and retention of cyber experts. In the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2014, I included language that would give career credit to newly commissioned officers with cyber security experience. If confirmed, what additional steps will you take to ensure that we're recruiting the best and the brightest into the field?

Mr. CARSON. It's a real challenge, as you know, to recruit this highly in-demand skill set into the military, where our pay structure often can't compete with that of the private sector. We are fortunate that we've established relationships with some major universities, including the one I used to teach at, the University of Tulsa, one of three universities that is working closely with the military, with Cyber Command, the National Security Agency, and others to try to recruit and train people to come into the military.

These special programs like you mentioned can help do that. The Army has been fortunate that we have met most of our—the filling of the two new cyber brigades we've established. But it's going to be a continuing challenge for us, simply because these skills are so highly in demand.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Do you need any additional authorities to reach your goals?

Mr. CARSON. I'm not sure at this time we do need any authorities, but I will commit to you that General Cardon, who runs Army Cyber Command, could come in and talk to you specifically about what our recruiting status is and if we do need some kind of special provisions to allow that.

Senator GILLIBRAND. That would be helpful.

I authored a bill last year called the Cyber Warrior Act, which leverages the talent pool that already exists within our National Guard, and because of the National Guard's dual mission it's an ideal place to attract those individuals. So they might be working at Google by day and could be a cyber warrior for their service on weekends and when their commitments are due.

However, I've heard that this idea isn't as well received as it might be because they think that it needs to reside within DOD and focus should be on active, not Reserve, forces. So my question is, please explain why, if you did create these units with a dual status, it would be detrimental to the Army and the overall goal of protecting our Nation against cyber attack?

Mr. CARSON. I don't think it would be detrimental. That skill set needs to be in both the active component and the Reserve component without doubt. So I think some of the interesting ideas for recruiting—for example, the Navy has allowed direct commissioning of officers who had unique skill sets who didn't have time to spend four or five months in training and they spread it out over time. These are the kind of things we're going to have to look at for our cyber warriors, if you will.

But the skill set's going to be needed in both the active component and the Reserve component, and I don't think that anyone's denigrating the service of the Reserve community cyber community in any way.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Okay.

Dr. LaPlante, I'm concerned that we aren't able to move as quickly as we need to to get the best, most cutting edge technologies, particularly in the cyber theater. What changes would you propose in terms of implementing or improving Air Force's cyber acquisition strategy?

Dr. LAPLANTE. Of course, being cyber, there's many aspects of the problem. Let me first talk about the cyber resiliency part and then I'll talk about kind of the tools side.

What we need to do, and we've just begun it in the Air Force, but much more work needs to be done, is bring the life cycle part of the acquisition system together with the PEO's and to begin to, if you will, first understand what the cyber vulnerabilities are in your weapons system. While that sounds simple, it's actually quite difficult, depending on what level of threat you're talking about. And then, when you understand what it is, begin to put in what the mitigations are.

The mitigations can be technical, but it's also important to remind ourselves that mitigations can be just a different way to operate the system. Very simple what I just said, but it's a very complex endeavor and, if anything, also because of the way programs buy things. We buy things by weapons systems, yet cyber works by being connected. So you're only as good as your weakest link, if you will, for a weapons system.

So we've already begun that. But I would say there's much more work to be done there. Related to that, we're beginning to come up with what I would call the beginnings of cyber resiliency metrics. That is, things that we can give almost in a requirements way to the program to say, you will build this system to this resiliency against that threat.

But what I do think the Air Force and in fact the other services continue to need is flexibilities in dealing with implementing new information assurance requirements. One of the concerns that a lot of us have is that as we continue to learn more about what the cyber threats are and we build up, let's say, the requirements for building information assurance into the system, by the time it actually gets to a program office it may be 2 years later.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Right. That's part of the problem.

Dr. LAPLANTE. That's part of the problem. We know what was a problem 2 years ago—

Senator GILLIBRAND. Is not a problem today.

Dr. LAPLANTE.—is not a problem today, and what's a problem today we didn't even imagine 2 years ago.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Right.

Dr. LAPLANTE. So anything that will help us build the resiliency and get the compliance part of the system to be much quicker in reacting and not just do the normal push out information assurance would be very helpful.

Senator GILLIBRAND. I think you need to, and I think you need to make recommendations about how to do that and change protocols accordingly.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Yes, and I'd be happy, if confirmed, to work on that, work on that with you.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Turning to mental health, Mr. Carson, the issue of mental health, including the stigma surrounding PTSD, as well as the rates of suicide in our services, is critical. I receive monthly suicide data and I am very, very disheartened to see the number of service members who fall through the cracks in our system. If confirmed, what are your plans to improve suicide prevention in the Army? What will you do to ensure the Army is providing appropriate mental health care to the service members and their families?

Mr. CARSON. Well, it is a major priority of the United States Army, it has been for the last couple of years, to improve our suicide prevention programs and forestall suicides within the ranks among veterans who have served in the U.S. Army. As you know, we have about 125 to 180 suicides per 1,000—or for I guess 100,000 serving—125 to 185 suicides per year of active duty members. That rate of 25 or so, 22 to 25 per 100,000, is in excess of what you find out in the civilian population at large.

It comes from a number of fronts. We've put in together comprehensive soldier-family fitness programs, readiness and resilience programs. We have suicide prevention hotlines. We have suicide education standdowns. There is an almost heroic effort to try to deal with this problem, a problem that's difficult to understand and to grapple with and has many different causes and is almost unique in each circumstance.

A major part of that, though, is about our behavioral health treatment, whether it's reducing the stigma associated with getting care and admitting to having behavioral health conditions. Secretary McHugh has been a real leader on this in how he's treated PTSD and making sure diagnoses are uniform and fair and making sure that we're out in the community educating people.

So it's a multi-front war against suicide, but the Army is seized of this issue and realizes it is a matter of paramount importance.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.

Senator KAINE.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. To all the witnesses, appreciate your service.

Mr. Carson, in June the Army announced its plans to integrate women into combat roles, opening up positions within 27 brigade combat units. Then there are other initiatives under way, including the Soldier 2020 initiative to examine the specifications for different billets within the Army.

If you could just talk about the status of the Army's plans to integrate women into combat roles, I'd appreciate it.

Mr. CARSON. Absolutely. We have 147 mission occupation specialties that are not including those that are in the Special Forces and under their control. 133 of those are open to women today. There are 14 in the combat arms, combat engineers, that are not open to women.

You have really two efforts going on. One is to look at those 14 MOS's and establish occupational requirements for it, to revalidate those. The Army Research Institute, the U.S. Army Medical Research Environmental Medicine Institute, working with the Training and Doctrine Command, are all doing that kind of work. So over the next few months, in anticipation of the deadlines set for us by the Secretary of Defense, we'll be talking about what the requirements are to serve in those particular MOSs.

At the same time, of course, we have the direct ground combat exclusion of women. So even if it was in one of the 133 eligible MOSs, you couldn't necessarily serve in a combat unit or one that was closely associated with it. We are in the process right now of opening up all of those, of notifying Congress about those. So over the next few months we'll be opening up 33,000 positions across the Army to women in those so-called closed positions.

So we're working on both the closed occupations and the closed positions.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you.

One program I've been impressed with in the Army is the Soldier for Life program. My first bill, which was enacted as part of the NDAA, was the Troop Talent Act of 2013, which largely focused on the credentialing of active duty service personnel for the skills they obtain with credentials that are meaningful in a civilian workforce, designed to help folks get traction quicker as they move back into the private workforce.

Could you talk a little bit about efforts under way and your focus on that issue to assist either in Soldier for Life or more broadly in the sort of credentialing work that's being done within the Army?

Mr. CARSON. I think working on these issues of soldiers who are transitioning out into civilian life are extraordinarily important ones and ones I will be very committed to work on as the Under Secretary. The veterans unemployment rate is much higher than the National average. You just look at it in the unemployment payments that the Army is making. Ten years ago we spent about \$90 million a year on unemployment compensation. Today we spend \$500 million on unemployment compensation.

We're trying to deal with these problems through a number of innovative programs, working with Department of Labor, others, the Veterans Opportunity to Work program, the Army Career and Alumni programs, Soldier for Life, working with private sector employers, to where we have close relationships so they know the quality and the skills that soldiers have.

So there's a number of programs. Again, it's a multi-front war on this problem, and I promise as the Under Secretary I'll both continue and work with you and others who are interested in these issues, because that transition is a difficult one for many soldiers and in an era of downsizing of the Army those programs are going to be among the very most important ones that we have.

Senator Kaine. Thank you for that.

Secretary Creedon, I think a question was asked on this topic before I came in, dealing with the recent controversy over the exam and how that's being done. I know some of the military personnel in charge of nuclear weapons are not directly in the oversight of NNSA, but there have been a number of incidents sort of touching upon this issue that raise questions about just the general morale level. These have come up in recent media reports about the Air Force.

Are you concerned that there's a lack of focus among officers within STRATCOM and how that has affected attitudes and focus within the NNSA, and in particular what do you see yourself doing to kind of contribute to a morale uplift? I know there's been an awful lot of reports of low morale within some of these personnel MOS's.

Ms. CREEDON. First, Senator, I have to certainly share the disappointment with the announcement that came out yesterday with respect to the Air Force. That said, the vast majority of the Air Force as well as the Navy nuclear folks—and I know it's probably not well known, but there is also a really incredible cadre of Army nuclear folks, known as Army 59s, that, even though the Army doesn't have nuclear weapons, they play a key role in just making sure that the complex runs smoothly.

But nevertheless, morale is a huge problem. I think it's something that hurts most those who do the job best and who are mostly committed to it, and that's something that I really want to make sure, at least within the context of the NNSA if confirmed, that the NNSA sees that they are highly valued, they're essential to maintaining a strong, effective, secure deterrent, and that they really do play a key role. I think sometimes they don't think that the nuclear deterrent is always valued.

Senator Kaine. Thank you for that.

Dr. LaPlante, a parochial question. The Ballston area in northern Virginia is a real concentration of government offices connected

to research, so DARPA, the Office of Naval Research, the Air Force's Office of Scientific Research, National Science Foundation, some work done down at Defense Geospatial Intelligence Agency. What are your views about how the Air Force can work together with DOD and these kind of allied Federal research institutions to do more R&D as we face the budgetary challenges that we're all familiar with?

Dr. LAPLANTE. Well, first I would say I know Ballston well. If anybody has been with ONR, DARPA, or the Defense Science Board, you're actually spending time in Ballston all the time. So we all know Ballston well.

In general, obviously, the science and technology, particularly in the times that we are in, where we're drawing down, is if anything even more important. Regardless of the geography of it, science and technology is a priority for the Air Force and for being the superior force in 2020, 2023.

I would pledge that any community outreach, any geography issues that the Air Force has, whether it's in science, technology, or others, we will engage the local community and we will be open-minded and transparent in what we do. But again, without committing to anything, I am a fan of the concentration in Ballston because I've experienced it myself. But again, I would commit to being transparent with anything that the Air Force does.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Just quickly, you indicate as we draw down these scientific and research investments will become even more important. Could you just explain what you mean by that? I think I know what you mean, but I'd like to make sure.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Sure. I think it goes somewhat as follows: that when we're bringing force structure down, when we're beginning to look at what is essential versus what's not essential, what we've always relied upon in the United States is having a superior, a technological military. We're not going to change that.

So what does it mean in today, 2014, to think about what it will mean to be technologically superior 10 years from now? It's going to come very, very fast. I was on a study just a few months ago on 2030 technologies. 2030 is 16 years from now. 1998 doesn't seem very long ago.

So we have to be doing that work now. We have to be doing it in addition to perhaps something we haven't done before, which is technology scan. The breakthroughs may be international. They may not be domestic. So this is the time, in my judgment and many other people's judgment, that we have to be emphasizing science and technology, for that reason.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Donnelly.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank all of you for your service to our country. Secretary Creedon, I want you to know everyone in Indiana is very proud of you and what you've accomplished.

Mr. Carson, it is nice to see another Blue Dog alum here and we wish you the very best.

Dr. LaPlante, you're not from Indiana, but we're still proud of you.

Mr. Carson, Congressman Carson, the first question I want to ask you is about suicide prevention. It is something that we all have worked very hard on. I certainly have had a big focus on this. It is part of the defense bill that we moved forward that we have a study that's coming out in February as to how to best aid our men and women who serve in the armed forces.

One of the areas that we had worked on in our office was to try to, as part of the mental health assessment, or as part of the physical health assessments that's made of each soldier each year, that a mental health assessment be made, and that we talk to the commander of each individual, who is there and who sees them every day, who can tell if there's changes, and also to do some screening.

We're supposed to get that report back in February from the Office of the Secretary of Defense as to how this will work moving forward. So we would like to work with you, with the Army, obviously with all of the branches, but as someone with the Army, to try to help us in this process, because, as you know, we've lost more young men and women to suicide than in combat last year.

I want to know—you know, the Army's—I shouldn't say willingness; I'm sure you're willing. But we'd love to have you as a great partner in this effort to try to end this scourge.

Mr. CARSON. I can assure you you will have our very much utmost partnership in this effort.

Senator DONNELLY. Additionally, Mr. Carson, you mentioned before 46 percent of the Army budget now is personnel. In your mind is there a red line that we get to that, we can't cross that line in terms of that percentage that's dedicated to personnel, as opposed to equipment or other areas?

Mr. CARSON. That number is historically rather stable in fact, that while the Army budget has fluctuated over time, that 45, 50 percent is being spent on military personnel, not including our civilian personnel, is more or less stable in the Army budget. So I think that's a good number. We are a people-centric service. We spend much more than the other services do on our soldiers, and that number is probably going to be one we try to maintain.

Senator DONNELLY. Do you see it remaining in that neighborhood, that percentage, as we move forward? Because I know there's concern, for instance with the Navy. Where it was one third, it's about half now. And unless some changes come through in the future, you're heading up towards two-thirds. So do you see it in the Army as being a stable number?

Mr. CARSON. Well, I think we will budget to try to make it a stable number. That means we have to make cuts in number of people, let's say, or in other areas, try to make this all balance, because the Army has a view of kind of what a balanced Army budget looks like, the amount we spend on procurement or research and development. But we are greatly concerned, and the chief of staff has spoken quite eloquently about this, about the inexorable rise of compensation costs, whether it's health care benefits, whether it is pay raises, benefits, these kinds of things.

So I know Congress is very interested in this question. We are as well, because as the most people-centric service to keep that number stable we do have to get a handle on that increasing slope of compensation.

Senator DONNELLY. One thing—and Secretary Creedon, don't take offense at this, but I want to invite Mr. Carson and Dr. LaPlante to Crane Naval Warfare Center. You're invited as well, but these two for very specific reasons.

Dr. LaPlante, we do a lot of work on counterfeit and counterfeit detection there in terms of parts and supplies and equipment. So naturally, in the position that we are hoping you are ascending to, what do you see as your role in preventing the introduction of counterfeit parts into the Air Force process?

Dr. LAPLANTE. I would tie counterfeit parts, unfortunately, as part of the broader cyber resiliency issue. So what we typically talk about is we talk about the supply chain, and that is understanding for our weapons systems where we're getting the parts and that in fact these parts are truly what we think they are.

So I would view the counterfeit part issue in terms of the job I'm nominated for to be part of building the resiliency into that system. I think there are for selected military programs—we have gone to Trusted Foundries, as you may know. In my view there's a limit to how much you can do with Trusted Foundries, only because there's a certain throughput. But I think we're going to have to start to build resiliency into starting with our most critical systems end to end, and that's going to include looking at the supply chain and the parts.

Senator DONNELLY. I was wondering if you are a proponent, as I am, of more aggressive forensic measures, because, as you said, we certainly hope they are from trusted suppliers or whatever, but constant I guess spot check or determination on a lot of what we come through, because of the critical nature of making sure these parts are reliable and perform as advertised.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Absolutely. I believe it's also something—we've talked earlier about science and technology. I think this is an area that we should be investing in in science and technology, noninvasive ways of doing surveillance testing on large populations of ships, for example, to detect anomalies and things that are in there, Trojan horses, whatever. I think that is an active, important area of research that we should be doing.

Senator DONNELLY. Secretary Creedon, you have done so much work in the nuclear area and in keeping our Nation safe. Just recently we went through some challenges with North Korea. As we look forward, looking at the government that they have there, the actions that have been taken there—and I'm not asking you to be an expert on all things North Korean, but what do you think are the key steps in making sure that we're able to continue to move forward, continue to counter that threat, and what do you think are the things that they respond to more than anything?

Ms. CREEDON. Senator, from my current position one of the things that we've been very instrumental in is ensuring that the United States is well protected from whatever the North Koreans end up doing with respect to the development of their long-range missiles, as well as their short-range missiles, which are a threat to the theater and to our forces over there.

So we've been very instrumental in March with respect to the Secretary's announcement to expand the capacity and the capability of the ground-based strategic deterrent, to add 14 additional

ballistic missile defense interceptors at Fort Greely in Alaska. The challenge now is to continue to improve those interceptors so that they become safe and efficient.

From a nonproliferation, counterproliferation, proliferation perspective with respect to North Korea, it's absolutely essential that we do everything possible to prevent them from achieving their goals in their program, from getting the materials, the technologies. Whatever it is that they need to advance their program, we have to work to be able to prevent them from getting those things; also with respect to making sure that our allies in the region also feel that our extended assurance and deterrence is secure and viable. I think we did that too not too long ago when we had the B-52 flyover of the Korean Peninsula.

So I think all of these things need to continue to press forward so that we maintain a good posture with respect to North Korea.

Senator DONNELLY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Donnelly.

We have a second round. We can have perhaps three minutes for the second round. If we need a third round, we will.

Senator Donnelly raised an issue of counterfeit parts and I want to make sure, Dr. LaPlante, that you are aware of the investigation, which was a very extensive investigation that this committee held, into counterfeit parts. Millions, literally millions of counterfeit parts, have found their way into our weapons systems. I would hope that you would make yourself—that you would find out what we had to say, that you would study what we did in the 2012 defense authorization bill, mainly in the area of holding the contractors accountable for those parts and accountable for the correction of those parts.

We've had a lot of now effort on the part of some contractors to change our law and to not hold them accountable. But hopefully that's not going to happen. So we would urge you to read this report. It's a pretty disturbing report. Mainly the source is Chinese. We looked at the electronic parts, where they rip apart old computers, take the parts and wash them, put new numbers on them. They do it openly. It's quite an amazing operation that they're running there, and we're going to do everything we can to stop it, at least as far as weapons systems are concerned.

Dr. LAPLANTE. Senator Levin, I will—I know about the report. I will definitely review it carefully, and I consider it extremely important. As we say, it's part of that broader cyber issue. And I look forward to working, if confirmed, with you on that. Thanks.

Chairman LEVIN. Mr. Carson, when you take this position you will become the second Chief Management Officer of the Department of the Army. It's only a few years ago that we said that the position that you'll be confirmed to is the Chief Management Officer. We did this in 2007 out of the frustration and the—out of frustration with the inability of the military departments to modernize their business systems and processes. We chose to have the Under Secretary serve concurrently as Chief Management Officer because no other official in the Department of the Army other than the Secretary sits at a high enough level to cut across all the stovepipes and to be able to implement comprehensive change.

So we hope that you will make modernization of the Army's business systems and processes a top priority.

Mr. CARSON. I assure you I will consider it a very top priority.

Chairman LEVIN. And do you think you have the resources and the authority needed to carry out the business transformation of the Department of the Army?

Mr. CARSON. I do.

Chairman LEVIN. If you find out that that's not true, for whatever reason, you would let us know?

Mr. CARSON. Yes, of course.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Senator Blunt.

Senator BLUNT. No, thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Then Senator King or Senator Kaine?

Senator KING. One brief follow-up. Mr. Carson, I don't expect you to have this data at hand, but perhaps you could supply it. I'd be interested in knowing, in that personnel cost figure that you were talking about, the percentage of—the breakdown within that figure of active duty versus retired in terms of costs, of health care, retirement. Do you see what I mean?

Mr. CARSON. Absolutely. I will get that to you, Senator.

Senator KING. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. No additional questions, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Again, we thank you, thank you all, for your service and for what you're embarked upon in the new positions that you'll be confirmed to. We thank your families, your supporters, particularly August. You've done a wonderful job, and I know how important it is to an uncle to have a nephew or a niece there by his side or her side. I've got a few—I only have one nephew, a lot of nieces.

But it's a good thing that you skipped school today. Don't do that too often, though. This has got to be a special occasion. But we again know how important it was to your uncle that you be here today.

We again will stand adjourned, and we will move these nominations as quickly as—even quicker than the usual in the Senate these days.

[Whereupon, at 11:12 a.m., the committee adjourned.]