

Advance Policy Questions for Franklin R. Parker
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and clearly delineated the operational chain of command and the responsibilities and authorities of the combatant commanders, and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have also clarified the responsibility of the Military Departments to recruit, organize, train, equip, and maintain forces for assignment to the combatant commanders.

What modifications to Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions, if any, do you believe are necessary for the readiness of the armed forces?

If confirmed, I will assess whether there is a need for changes to the Goldwater-Nichols provisions. Given that changes would likely have implications across all Services and the potential to alter the basic command and control and operational readiness of our forces, any proposed changes would have to be carefully considered by senior leadership across the Department of Defense (DoD). In the area of personnel policy, I understand the Goldwater-Nichols provisions that govern promotion policies are nearly thirty years old and, if confirmed, I will review those in detail to see if they continue to meet the needs of our current force.

Duties

Section 5016 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs shall have “as his principal duty the overall supervision of manpower and reserve component affairs of the Department of the Navy.”

If confirmed, what duties do you expect that the Secretary of the Navy will prescribe for you?

If confirmed, I believe the Secretary of the Navy will require me to provide overall supervision and oversight of manpower and reserve component affairs for the Navy and Marine Corps. I would be responsible for developing integrated policies and programs related to military personnel (active and reserve components) and the civilian workforce. Additionally, I would provide the necessary oversight of our total force – military, civilians and contractors – to ensure the most efficient workforce balance.

What actions will you take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

If confirmed, I will apply my experience in government service to further my understanding and knowledge of the Department of the Navy, its people and organizations. I will diligently evaluate the challenges it faces and the resources necessary to sustain and transform it. I will

seek advice and counsel from the military and civilian personnel of the Department and from Members of Congress and their staffs.

In carrying out these duties, what would be your relationship with the following officials:

The Secretary of the Navy

The Secretary of the Navy is responsible for conducting all the affairs of the Department of the Navy and for formulating and implementing policies and programs consistent with the policies and objectives established by the President and the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy to help him achieve his goals, particularly those involving manpower issues. My role will be defined in part by powers he may choose to delegate to me.

The Under Secretary of the Navy

The position of Under Secretary of the Navy is currently vacant. As the Chief Operating Officer of the Department of the Navy, the Under Secretary plays a significant role in prioritizing and synchronizing the efforts of the Assistant Secretaries of the Navy. If confirmed, I would establish a close, direct, and supportive relationship with the new Under Secretary of the Navy, or the person acting in that capacity.

The other Assistant Secretaries of the Navy

If confirmed, I would coordinate with them on our combined interests and work together to support the Secretary's goals.

The General Counsel of the Navy

The General Counsel is the senior civilian legal advisor to the Secretary, the Under Secretary, and the Assistant Secretaries and their staffs. If confirmed, I expect to consult and rely upon the General Counsel on a variety of legal issues in discharging my responsibilities.

The Judge Advocate General of the Navy

The Judge Advocate General is the senior uniformed legal advisor to the Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations and serves as the Department of Defense Representative for Ocean Policy Affairs. If confirmed, I expect to consult and rely upon the Judge Advocate General on a variety of legal issues in discharging my responsibilities.

The Inspector General of the Navy

The Naval Inspector General is the senior investigating official in the Department of the Navy and the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps on all matters concerning inspection, investigations, and audit

follow-up. If confirmed, I will establish and maintain a close and professional relationship with the Naval Inspector General.

The Chief of Legislative Affairs of the Navy

The Chief of Legislative Affairs is responsible for developing legislative strategies for the Navy. If confirmed I will work closely with him as it relates to the Department's legislative requirements for manpower and personnel and to ensure an open and candid dialogue with the oversight committees and individual Members of Congress and their respective staffs.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense for Total Force Management as it relates to readiness, Active and Reserve component affairs, health affairs, training, and personnel requirements and management. These responsibilities include the issuance of guidance to the Military Departments. If confirmed, I will develop a close and professional relationship with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. I will continuously communicate and coordinate with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on matters of mutual interest, articulating the views of the Department of the Navy. I will ensure that the Department of the Navy is administered in accordance with guidance and direction from the Department of Defense.

The Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

The Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness advises the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and, from time to time, performs responsibilities that require the issuance of guidance to the Military Departments. If confirmed, I will continuously communicate and coordinate with the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on matters of mutual interest and in furtherance of the best interests of the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

This is a new position and currently not filled. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs is responsible for the overall supervision of manpower and reserve affairs of the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I will communicate and coordinate with the new Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, or the person acting in that capacity, in the development of programs and policy related to military and civilian personnel in furtherance of the best interests of the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness

This is a new position and currently not filled. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness is responsible for advising the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on key readiness and training issues. If confirmed, I will communicate and coordinate with the new Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness, or the person acting in that capacity, on matters of mutual interest and in furtherance of the best interests of the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense.

The Chief of Naval Operations

The Chief of Naval Operations is the senior military officer of the Department of the Navy and has a direct reporting relationship to the Secretary of the Navy. If confirmed, I would work with the CNO to support the Secretary in areas of manpower policy as well as program execution.

The Vice Chief of Naval Operations

The Vice Chief of Naval Operations is the second highest-ranking commissioned officer in the United States Navy, and serves as the second-in-command for the Chief of Naval Operations. If confirmed, I will work very closely with the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, as required, on manpower issues.

The Chief of Naval Personnel

The Chief of Naval Personnel is responsible to the Chief of Naval Operations for Navy's manpower readiness. If confirmed, I would maintain a close relationship with the Chief of Naval Personnel, ensure that the manpower, personnel, training, and education needs of the Navy are met, and to provide the best possible support for Sailors and their families.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps

The Commandant is the highest-ranking officer in the United States Marine Corps and has a direct reporting relationship to the Secretary of the Navy. If confirmed, I would work with the Commandant to support the Secretary in areas of manpower policy as well as program execution.

The Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps

The Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps is the second highest ranking officer in the United States Marine Corps and serves as the second-in-command for the Commandant of the Marine Corps. If confirmed, I will work very closely with the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, as required, on manpower issues.

The Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

The Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Manpower and Reserve Affairs assists the Commandant by planning, directing, coordinating, and supervising both active and reserve forces. If confirmed, I would maintain a close relationship with the Deputy Commandant of the

Marine Corps for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, ensure that the manpower, personnel, training, and education needs of the Marine Corps are met, and to provide the best possible support for Marines and their families.

The Surgeon General of the Navy

The Surgeon General of the Navy is the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. If confirmed, I would look to the Surgeon General for advice and insights on the spectrum of medical affairs affecting our Navy and Marine Corps personnel.

The Chief of Navy Reserve

The Chief of Navy reserve is the principal advisor on Navy Reserve matters to the Chief of Naval Operations and the commander of the Navy Reserve Force. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Chief of Navy Reserve on the numerous operational and policy matters affecting the reserve component of the Navy.

The Commander, Marine Forces Reserve

The Commander, Marine Forces Reserve, is the principal advisor to the Commandant on Marine Forces Reserve matters. If confirmed, I would work closely with Commander, Marine Forces Reserve on the numerous operational and policy matters affecting the Marine Forces Reserve.

Marines, sailors and their families

Those men and women who answer the call to duty and service are our Nation's most valuable national security assets. If confirmed, I will work to ensure Sailors and Marines are fully trained, integrated and ready when called upon. I will also work diligently to care for Sailors, Marines and their families across the Department of the Navy to ensure they enjoy a comfortable quality of life that meets their individual and collective needs as they serve and sacrifice on behalf of our Nation. Additionally, I would meet with Sailors and Marines wherever they are stationed, when practicable, to gain their insights and to remain informed of the issues and concerns most important to them.

Qualifications

What background and experience do you have that you believe qualifies you for this position?

If confirmed, I believe my personal background, my educational and my professional experiences qualify me for this position.

The son and nephew of Vietnam veterans – my father an Air Force Captain, my uncle an Army Lieutenant Colonel – I was raised with a deep appreciation for what it means to be called to serve our Nation. It was instilled in me at an early age that we must always respect our service members and their service, and that we must always care for them as they have for us.

Following 9/11, I left the practice of law to pursue a life of public service. After earning an advanced Public Policy degree in Political Advocacy and Leadership from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, I returned to private legal practice specializing, in part, in legislative and regulatory affairs, where I gained valuable experience working with Congressional offices on public policy issues.

In 2009, I was honored to receive an appointment as Special Assistant (attorney-advisor) to the General Counsel of the Department of the Navy. During this extraordinary opportunity, I worked on a range of matters that provided me with critical insight into issues impacting the Department, its servicemen and women, and its civilian personnel. I was afforded the unique opportunity to participate in DoD's Comprehensive Review Working Group, which examined the impacts of a repeal of the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy; exploring the potential effects of one of the most significant military personnel policy changes of our time. For my service, I was honored to receive the Department of the Navy's Meritorious Public Service Award in 2011 and the Distinguished Public Service Award in 2012.

In 2012, I was appointed as Chief Counsel for the Maritime Administration (MARAD) at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), where I serve not only as MARAD's chief legal officer, but also as its third-ranking official. In this capacity, my responsibilities include not only legal matters, but also impact broader personnel, management, and policy concerns in support of MARAD's mission. Core to this mission is the training, employment, and retention of the U.S. merchant mariners and maritime professionals who support our Nation's commercial and military sealift requirements. In addition to my core duties as Chief Counsel, I have been closely involved in other personnel-related initiatives such as serving on DOT's Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance Review Board, participating in Office of Personnel Management-led interagency efforts to improve SES onboarding practices, and playing various roles in hiring, diversity, mentoring, quality of life, professional development, outreach and other efforts.

I believe the sum of my experiences in private practice and government; my efforts on both military and civilian personnel matters; my legal familiarity with governmental authorities and limitations; my perspective having served in both defense and civilian agencies; my understanding of government processes, organizations, and dynamics; my roles as an action officer, a Senior Executive and as a member of senior Agency leadership; my work with Congressional offices and staff, and the deep respect and appreciation I hold for the women and men who serve our Nation, equip me with the skills I need to effectively perform the duties of this position.

Major Challenges

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

In my view, the fundamental challenge facing the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs is effectively manning the entire force, which equates to balancing military readiness with future requirements. Manning the force with the right manpower mix of qualified military, civilian, and contractor personnel in the current and foreseeable fiscal environment will be a critical challenge. The Department of the Navy must continue to recruit, train and retain the very best, maintain the superior pay and benefits package our Sailors and Marines deserve, and ensure the best care for our wounded warriors and their families.

If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?

If confirmed, I will work within the Department of the Navy-Department of Defense framework to address manpower requirements while supporting our servicemen and women and their families. I will work to ensure that major headquarters are properly adjusted per congressional and SECDEF guidance. I will support SECDEF and SECNAV initiatives such as Force of the Future, Task Force Innovation, and Talent Management initiatives to enhance flexibility in career and workforce management and help develop and retain the Department of the Navy's highly trained personnel. I will address requirements by garnering the expertise of the civilian and military leadership within the Department of the Navy, the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and will be open to input from Members of Congress and the Department's oversight committees.

Systems and Support for Wounded Soldiers

Servicemembers who are wounded or injured in combat operations deserve the highest priority from the Navy and the Federal Government for support services, healing and recuperation, rehabilitation, evaluation for return to duty, successful transition from active duty if required, and continuing support beyond retirement or discharge. Despite the enactment of legislation and renewed emphasis over the past several years, many challenges remain.

What is your assessment of the progress made to date by the Navy to improve the care, management, and transition of seriously ill and injured marines and sailors, and their families?

I am aware that the Navy and Marine Corps take seriously the importance of caring for the medical needs of their personnel and their families. I understand the Navy Safe Harbor program and Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment programs were established to improve and integrate support services, and speed delivery of coordinated care. In addition to these programs, I am aware the Navy 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative has been established to address other areas to provide the full spectrum of whole life support. If confirmed, I will continue to support and optimize these and other vital programs for Wounded Warriors and their families.

If confirmed, are there additional strategies and resources that you would pursue to increase the Navy's support for wounded marines and sailors, and to monitor their progress in returning to duty or to civilian life?

If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Secretary of the Navy, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), Surgeon General of the Navy, the Department of Veterans Affairs leadership, and the veteran service and non-profit organizations in local communities to continually evaluate and improve existing programs and initiatives provided to our wounded and their families. In addition I will look to continue the Department's Annual Wounded Warrior Hiring conference. I will continue to champion the best practices of training, hiring and retaining our wounded, ill and injured servicemembers into both government and private career opportunities. I thank Congress for its continued support, as I believe our Nation and our Department owe these wounded Sailors and Marines a debt that can never fully be paid.

Officer Management Issues

As the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs you would have significant responsibilities with regard to officer management policies, the promotion system, and recommending officers for nomination to positions of authority and responsibility.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you make to the officer management system?

I understand the officer management systems, and in particular the promotion system, are constantly being evaluated and efforts made to improve them. I am not yet familiar with the specifics of the program, or the results of the latest evaluations. However, if confirmed, I will fully consider and evaluate any recommendations from Navy and Marine Corps leadership for system improvement.

Do you believe the current Navy procedures and practices for reviewing the records of officers pending nomination by the President are sufficient to ensure the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of Defense, and the President can make informed decisions?

It is my understanding that the Navy's processes and policies to identify eligibility and suitability for appointment or re-appointment as officers provide sufficient information for these decisions. If confirmed, I will fully support efforts to enhance personnel suitability screening associated with nominations for appointments to higher positions of leadership, trust and responsibility.

In your view, are these procedures and practices fair and reasonable for the officers involved?

To the best of my knowledge, current procedures for vetting personal and professional information seek to protect the rights of individual officers and the interests of the Navy in advancing only those who have clearly demonstrated exceptional character, competence, and commitment to the Nation's values. If confirmed, I will support these vetting processes and, for any changes proposed, I will ensure the due process rights of individual officers are protected.

Technical Training and Assignment of General and Flag Officers

In your view, do a sufficient number of general and flag officers have advanced training and degrees in scientific and technical disciplines?

Anecdotally, it has been my personal experience that the general and flag officers I have worked with predominantly have sufficient training and degrees to fulfill their responsibilities. In my previous position as an attorney in the Office of the General Counsel of the Navy, it was apparent to me that many of the general and flag officers with whom I interacted had scientific and technical backgrounds likely obtained through a scientific or technical undergraduate and/or graduate degree.

If confirmed, I will closely monitor the inventory of senior officer personnel to ensure our Navy and Marine Corps has officers with the technical and scientific training necessary to perform their duties.

Are the career paths for officers with technical skills appropriate to ensure that the services can execute complex acquisition programs, adapt to a rapidly changing technological threat environment, and make informed investment decisions on DOD and Army resources? If not, what will you do to address this deficiency?

It is my understanding that there are multiple factors that affect a general/flag officer's ability to ensure the effective execution of complex acquisition programs. I understand that the Department of the Navy policy for the Acquisition Workforce requires that those general/flag officers serving in positions with oversight responsibility for major acquisition programs have at least 10 years of experience, prior experience in a Critical Acquisition Position, as well as prior experience as an acquisition Program Manager or Deputy Program Manager.

Additionally, I understand that the Department of the Navy (DoN) attempts to provide a robust development program for its acquisition program leaders. For example, I understand the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition has Acquisition War Rooms that provide well-researched lessons learned on what has been successful in Shipbuilding/Combat Systems Acquisition as they relate to current programs. Newly selected leaders are required to go through the War Rooms. Further, DoN offers an "Understanding Industry" course that arms participants with an understanding of the mindset of Industry leaders, better equipping participants to more effectively negotiate business arrangements. Additionally, I understand DoN allows selected acquisition leaders to participate in the Secretary of Defense Corporate Fellowship Program, a year-long training opportunity with Industry to gain first-hand experience with corporate operations. Combined with existing acquisition experience, Defense

Acquisition University training, and graduate education, these initiatives are intended to collectively develop well-rounded Program Managers.

In your view do current general and flag officer assignment policies provide and incentivize qualified officers to serve in acquisition programs? Do tour lengths for those assignments enable and empower such officers to effectively manage acquisition programs? If not, what changes do you believe are necessary to improve the effectiveness of senior officers assigned those duties?

I am aware the DoN has policy to ensure that acquisition officers promote at the same rate as those in non-acquisition positions. In addition, I understand the department has made efforts to incentivize those leading and executing acquisition programs. There are more than ten different awards recognized in the annual DoN Acquisition Excellence Awards Ceremony, with multiple others submitted for recognition at the Undersecretary of Defense Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD (AT&L)) level. The department also recognizes leaders of acquisition programs in the USD (AT&L) magazine. DoN policy requires tour lengths that are consistent with OSD policy, i.e., four years (or closest major milestone) for those leading major programs and three years for those serving as Program Executive Officers. Beyond that, DoN's Program Review process attempts to ensure program leaders are empowered to make decisions to effectively manage their programs.

If confirmed, I will evaluate whether there is a relevant and sufficient match between acquisition education requirements and senior officer training and education.

General and Flag Officer Nominations

Under DOD Instruction 1320.4, adverse and alleged adverse information pertaining to general and flag officers must be evaluated by senior leaders in the Services and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense prior to nomination.

[Noting that the guidance has been updated as DOD Instruction 1320.04 in January 2014]

If confirmed, what role would you play in the officer promotion system, particularly in reviewing general and flag officer nominations?

The officer promotion system is governed by the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act and the Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act. If confirmed, I will review all flag and general officer nominations prior to approval by the Secretary of the Navy. If there are any concerns, I would consult with the Chief of Naval Personnel or the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Manpower and Reserve Affairs to discuss the issues prior to routing the nomination to the Secretary.

I understand that current regulations and procedures provide senior civilian oversight to ensure information relevant to prospective nominees is appropriately considered by promotion boards and officials within the recommending hierarchical chain. If confirmed, I will engage with and

monitor these processes to preserve the integrity of the promotion system to ensure that the officers promoted are physically, mentally and morally qualified to serve at the highest levels.

What is your assessment of the ability of the Services to timely document credible information of an adverse nature for evaluation by promotion selection boards and military and civilian leaders?

I believe that consideration of all information is critical to ensuring the reliability of selection board results. I consider this to be a vitally important responsibility. If confirmed, I would carefully review the selection process for military and civilian leaders to ensure information of an adverse nature is properly evaluated. It is my understanding that the Navy's process to identify credible information of an adverse nature for evaluation by promotion selection boards and military and civilian leaders provides sufficient information for these decisions. If confirmed, I will review and monitor these processes to determine if there are areas for improvement.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that only the best qualified officers are nominated for promotion to general and flag officer rank?

I understand that a thorough screening process and review is conducted on convening orders for flag and general officer selection boards to ensure clear guidance is provided to all flag and general officer selection board members. While I am not fully aware of the existing process within the Department of the Navy for developing and promulgating selection criteria for general and flag officers, if confirmed I would examine this process closely. If confirmed, I will provide the Secretary my frank assessment of the existing processes and will make recommendations regarding any changes necessary to ensure the best qualified officers are nominated.

End Strength Reductions

In this year's budget request and Future Years Defense Program, the Department proposes making additional cuts to the Marine Corps active and reserve component end strengths. The Department proposes reducing the Marine active component to 182,000 by 2020, and plans to keep the Marine Corps forces at 182,000 if sequestration continues.

In your view, can the Marine Corps meet national defense objectives at the strength levels proposed without sequestration? What about at the strength levels proposed with sequestration?

I understand the Commandant of the Marine Corps has testified that the Marine Corps can meet the requirements of the Defense Strategic Guidance today at the President's Budget levels, but there is no margin. Lowering end strength due to sequestration or enforcement of the Budget Control Act funding caps would not allow the Marine Corps to execute the current Defense Strategic Guidance. I understand a new strategy would need to be developed that would take into account fewer warfighting units available to deploy in defense of the Nation.

If the Marine Corps must reduce its active component end strength to 182,000, where does the Marine Corps take risk with respect to the national defense strategy?

I understand the Commandant of the Marine Corps has testified that the Marine Corps has been forced to prioritize near-term readiness for forward deployed Marines and assume risk in home station readiness, modernization, infrastructure sustainment, and quality of life programs.

If confirmed, I will work with Marine Corps leadership to minimize the risk to overall Service readiness.

What is your understanding of the need for additional force shaping tools requiring legislation beyond what Congress has provided the past three years?

I understand Congress has given the Marine Corps the authorities necessary to accomplish its present drawdown. If confirmed, I will assess Departmental processes and results to ensure the Marine Corps reduces end strength in a smart, measured way and identifies any additional legislative changes needed in a timely manner.

In your view, should the number of general and flag officers in the Marine Corps and Navy be reduced commensurate with the drawdown of total Marine and Navy end strength?

I am aware that the Services recently conducted a Congressionally-directed review of active component general and flag officer billets. A similar review is underway now for the reserve component. If confirmed, I will ensure that any recommendations regarding changes in the number of authorized flag and general officers are based on the needs of the Navy and Marine Corps, considering the nature of responsibilities associated with any specific position.

Lessons Learned

What do you believe are the major personnel lessons learned from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) which you would seek to address if confirmed as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

I am confident that there are valuable personnel lessons learned from OEF and OIF. The sacrifices of our Sailors and Marines, and their families in support of these operations, were made at great cost. It is impressive that all the Services have been able to maintain a high-quality all-volunteer force through more than a decade of combat operations. The continuous integration of Active Duty and Reserve forces throughout and since these Operations has been remarkable as well. I am aware that there have been many lessons from OEF and OIF about the impacts of stress on the force, and there is still more to learn and to do in support of the physical and mental resiliency of our Sailors and Marines, and for veterans seeking to reintegrate with their families and communities, to include transitioning from the uniform. If confirmed, I will

seek out and review the hard-earned lessons learned with senior leaders within the Department of the Navy.

Suicide Prevention

The numbers of suicides in each of the services continue to be of great concern to the Committee.

If confirmed, what role would you play in shaping suicide prevention programs and policies for the Department of the Navy to prevent suicides and increase the resiliency of marines, sailors and their families?

I share the Department of the Navy view that every suicide is a tragedy, and that suicide is also a leadership issue. I understand that the Services have taken significant steps to improve suicide prevention efforts. If confirmed, I will support efforts to encourage strength and resilience among Sailors, Marines and their families, and to foster command climates supportive of psychological health and help-seeking behavior. It is critical that the Department continues to emphasize the importance of personal responsibility, peer-support and bystander intervention, and that it continues to emphasize that seeking help is a sign of strength.

Family Readiness and Support

Marines, Sailors and their families in both the active and reserve components have made, and continue to make, tremendous sacrifices in support of operational deployments. Senior military leaders have warned of concerns among military families as a result of the stress of deployments and the separations that go with them.

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for Marines, Sailors and their families, and, if confirmed, how would you ensure that family readiness needs are addressed and adequately resourced, especially in light of current fiscal constraints?

Sailors, Marines and their families are the Department of the Navy's greatest assets. Addressing their needs can be more challenging in times of war or contingency operations, particularly in a fiscally constrained environment. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, the Department remains agile and responsive to the needs of servicemembers and their families, within fiscal realities. Whether assisting them in transitioning to civilian life, or providing financial education throughout their service, addressing their needs and desires will be essential to success.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs are critical to enhancement of military life for Marines, Sailors and their families, especially in light of deployments.

These programs must be relevant and attractive to all eligible users, including active-duty and reserve personnel, retirees, and families.

What challenges do you foresee in sustaining Navy MWR programs, particularly in view of the current fiscal environment and, if confirmed, are there any improvements you would seek to achieve?

It is vitally important not to marginalize MWR program contribution to readiness and retention. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to ensure program relevance and sustainability. I am aware that in a fiscally constrained environment, it is critical to optimize MWR's revenue generating capability and to protect the profitability of the military exchanges that help fund MWR programs.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

What is your assessment of the Navy's sexual assault prevention and response program?

In recent years, I understand over 150 program and policy initiatives have been implemented in an effort to provide a comprehensive approach to sexual assault prevention and response (SAPR).

I am aware that in Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14), reports of sexual assault in the Department continued to increase over previous years, though I understand that an increase in sexual assault reports may not necessarily represent increased incidents of sexual assault. For a crime that is universally underreported, the Department believes this trend may represent in part an improved command climate since when a Sailor or Marine trusts the command to respond appropriately, he or she is more likely to make a report. I understand that the DoN is also committed to further efforts to address sexual assault through new training initiatives, such as bystander intervention training. Despite these efforts, however, I concur with the Department's view that there is more work to be done and that this issue requires continued focus at the highest levels.

What is your view of the provision for restricted and unrestricted reporting of sexual assaults?

I understand that the system allowing both restricted and unrestricted reporting is valuable to ensure that all persons have access to support services.

If confirmed, I would be committed to ensuring that victims have the option whether to report and, if they decide to do so, they can report in a manner that respects their privacy, their rights, and their desire to participate in the military justice system.

What is your view about the role of the chain of command in providing necessary support to the victims of sexual assault?

Through their words and deeds, commanding officers set the tone for, and are ultimately responsible for, command climate. As a result, they are the lynchpin for establishing and maintaining a positive command climate.

Every commander must be held accountable for ensuring the well-being of each individual within the command. The chain of command is integral to providing compassionate care and support to victims. It is also fundamental to implementing command-wide training on how to support survivors and ensuring implementation of military policies regarding sexual assault prevention and response.

What is your understanding of the adequacy of Navy resources and programs to provide victims of sexual assault the medical, psychological, and legal help they need?

I am aware that the Department has placed a significant focus on providing support to victims. I have been informed that victims are offered a range of resources to provide them with the proper physical, emotional and legal support. I understand that newly established programs and positions such as Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC), deployed resiliency counselors, and Victims' Legal Counsel (VLC) have afforded important guidance, support, and advocacy for victims. Meanwhile, I understand the medical community strives to provide individuals with compassionate, competent, and victim-centered care.

What is your view of the steps the Navy has taken to prevent additional sexual assaults both at home station and deployed locations?

I understand that the Department is aggressively attempting to address the problem of sexual assault no matter where an offense is committed. Specifically, I understand that SARCs, deployed resiliency counselors, and VLCs are available worldwide. The Department has also established peer-to-peer training for every Sailor and Marine. Given the connection between alcohol use and sexual assault, the Department has established alcohol sales policies on every Navy installation. In addition, I understand the Department has established new base security measures in resident housing. If confirmed, I will support continued efforts to eliminate all forms of sexual assault, in all locations, and will advocate for the continuous development of effective new approaches to combat the crime and to support victims.

What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources Navy has in place to investigate and prosecute allegations of sexual assault?

I understand there has been significant focus on ensuring sufficient resources and training for NCIS and Navy and Marine Corps judge advocates. I am aware that NCIS is required to investigate every allegation of sexual assault and I understand that changes have put into place specialists who handle investigations, courtroom litigation and provide victim support.

Adequacy of training and resources for investigation, prosecution, and defense of allegations of sexual assault is critical to ensuring a thorough investigation and fair trial of sexual assault cases

while protecting both the victim's privacy interests and the constitutional rights of the alleged offenders. If confirmed, I will monitor the Department's training and resources closely to ensure that they sufficiently prepare and equip those who investigate and prosecute sexual assault allegations.

What is your view about the role of the chain of command in changing the military culture in which these sexual assaults occur?

I believe that preventing and responding to sexual assault is not just a legal issue - it is a leadership issue. The chain of command is responsible for the health and well-being of the servicemembers they have been entrusted to lead and plays a fundamental role in the Department of the Navy's (DoN's) prevention and response efforts. As a result, the chain of command must practice, promote and reinforce these efforts at every level in order to create an environment and culture in which sexual assault is not tolerated.

In your view, what would be the impact of requiring a judge advocate outside the chain of command to determine whether allegations of sexual assault should be prosecuted?

I believe that, in the military environment, the chain of command has a central role in ensuring the well-being of servicemembers, but I also understand concerns that have been expressed regarding the role of the chain of command in sexual assault prosecutions. If confirmed, I will closely examine this important question, and will keep an open mind regarding options for improving the system for prosecutions of sexual assault.

What additional steps would you take, if confirmed, to address the problem of sexual assaults in the Navy?

If confirmed, I would continue ongoing work to implement statutory mandates, Secretary of Defense initiatives, and Service initiatives, and would monitor these new initiatives for effectiveness as they are implemented. I would consider any independent recommendations and would also continue collaboration with Congressional oversight committees; keeping an open mind regarding their concerns and suggestions for addressing this important issue. In addition, I would stress the importance of training as well as the significance of a commitment from leadership at all levels to create and sustain a climate that refuses to tolerate sexual assault or retaliation against survivors.

Religious Guidelines

In your view, do Department of Defense policies concerning religious accommodation in the military appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion and other beliefs, including individual expressions of belief, without impinging on those who have different beliefs, including no religious belief?

I understand the Department of the Navy (DoN) and the Department of Defense (DoD) take very seriously the Constitutional freedom expressed in the First Amendment for the free exercise of religion on the part of all citizens, including members in military service, and respects those who observe no religion. I am aware that commanders, leaders, and chaplains are responsible for ensuring those rights are afforded to all of our Sailors, Marines, their families, and DoN civilians, and for striving to protect their civil liberties to the greatest extent possible, consistent with military requirements.

In your view, do existing policies and practices regarding public prayers offered by military chaplains in a variety of formal and informal settings strike the proper balance between a chaplain's ability to pray in accordance with his or her religious beliefs and the rights of other servicemembers with different beliefs, including no religious beliefs?

The Navy's Chaplain Corps provides religious support to the Navy, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard on the basis of the servicemembers' respective free exercise rights. Chaplains provide prayers on many occasions in both private and public settings, and I understand chaplains are never required to pray outside of their individual convictions, beliefs, religious traditions, or the tenets of the religious organization that provides their endorsement to DoD and DoN. I understand that there are no Department policies that restrict prayers, either in manner or content, though chaplains are encouraged to be respectful of other faiths when praying during official ceremonies where attendance is mandatory.

Section 533 of the FY13 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 112-239), as amended by section 532 of the FY14 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 113-66) protects rights of conscience of members of the armed forces and chaplains of such members, and prohibits, so far as possible, use of such beliefs as the basis of any adverse personnel action, discrimination, or denial of promotion, schooling, training, or assignment. Members of some religious denominations have sincerely held beliefs in opposition to same-sex marriage.

In your view, may a member of the armed forces who has a sincerely held belief in opposition to same-sex marriage be subject to adverse personnel action or similar other adverse action, if he or she shares those personal views on the subject in a personal capacity?

I understand that Sailors and Marines may express sincerely-held moral or religious views about same-sex marriage when speaking in a personal capacity, but must avoid any appearance that they are expressing an official position. DoD's Equal Opportunity policy (DoDD 1020.02E) guarantees all Service members an environment free from harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. Having an environment free from discrimination helps ensure that Sailors and Marines reach their potential and contribute as much as possible to the mission. So while I understand the Department recognizes that some servicemembers may hold very sincere religious convictions in good-faith opposition

to same-sex marriage, it nevertheless requires all Sailors and Marines to abide by DoD's Equal Opportunity policy in their official capacities.

Officer Accessions

What, in your view, is the appropriate relative distribution from the sources of commission to meet the Navy's officer accessions requirements and sustain the viability of the Naval Academy, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and the Officer Candidate School?

My understanding is that each commissioning source brings different strengths in terms of prior military experience, academic background, diversity, and indoctrination into military culture. The existence of different commissioning sources likely makes naval service appealing to a wider range of young men and women than would be attracted by any single program. If confirmed, I would need to look at the reasons each Service relies on a particular source for a specific number of officer commissions each year, to determine whether the relative distribution is appropriately aligned with the skills and experiences necessary to meet the requirements of the force.

United States Naval Academy

What is your assessment of the policies and procedures at the United States Naval Academy to prevent and respond appropriately to sexual assaults and sexual harassment and to ensure essential oversight?

My understanding is that the United States Naval Academy (USNA) possesses policies and procedures designed to prevent and respond appropriately to sexual harassment and sexual assaults and to ensure essential oversight. I believe it is critical at every level to promote a positive command climate that does not tolerate any form of sexual assault, or sexual harassment. I understand that the USNA recognizes this and that the highest levels of school leadership are engaged on this issue. Recently, the USNA has played an integral part in the launch of the "It's On Us" campaign that addresses prevention of sexual assault on college campuses and has participated in a number of civilian institutional forums designed to share best practices. If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to support the ongoing efforts to strengthen the USNA programs and policies that attempt to eliminate sexual assault and sexual harassment.

What is your assessment of the policies and procedures at the United States Naval Academy to ensure religious tolerance and respect?

It is my understanding that the USNA follows Department of Defense and Department of the Navy policies on religious accommodation and has procedures in place aimed at ensuring religious tolerance, respect, and support for midshipmen, faculty, and staff in their personal faith choices. I fully support this Constitutional right and recognize its importance to our Nation and the Department of the Navy. If confirmed, I will take all the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of the Navy's policies reflect religious tolerance for all faiths.

Assignment Policies for Women in the Military

The Department of Defense, in January, 2013, rescinded the policy restricting the assignment of women to certain units which have the primary mission of engaging in direct ground combat operations, and gave the military services until January 1, 2016, to open all positions currently closed to women, or to request an exception to policy to keep a position closed beyond that date, an exception that must be approved by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. The services were tasked to develop gender-free physical and mental standards for all military occupations, presumably with the goal of allowing individuals, regardless of gender, to serve in those positions if they can meet those standards and have submitted their reports and recommendations to the Military Departments who in turn provided their recommendations to the Secretary of Defense no later than 30 September 2015 for review and final decision.

If confirmed, what role will you play in the development of these standards?

If confirmed, I believe my role would be oversight and advice to the Secretary of the Navy regarding these standards.

If confirmed, will you ensure that the standards are realistic and preserve, or enhance, military readiness and mission capability?

Yes, if confirmed, I will work closely with both the Navy and Marine Corps and seriously consider their respective input in development or implementation of the standards.

Do you believe that decisions to open positions should be based on bona fide military requirements? If so, what steps would you take to ensure that such decisions are made on this basis?

I understand the Department of the Navy is committed to evaluating the requirements of each position in order to select and train Sailors and Marines, who can meet the requirements of their military occupational specialties, regardless of the gender of the individual. My understanding is that decisions will not be based on which positions to open, but rather on what positions require an exception to remain closed. I understand that exceptions to policy (if any) would be subject to a very high bar and that military requirements would be the primary consideration for any such exceptions.

If an exception to policy is requested, what criteria should be used to determine whether to grant or deny that exception?

It is premature for me at this time to offer my opinion on the appropriate criteria for granting exceptions to policy. However, I understand that criteria related to military requirements would play a central role if any exceptions are requested. I share the Navy and Marine Corps view that it is imperative to always maintain the high military standards that are necessary in defense of our Nation.

Legislative Fellowship Program

Each year, the Services assign mid-career officers to the offices of Members of Congress under the Legislative Fellows Program. Upon completion of their legislative fellowships, officers are required to be assigned to follow-on positions in their services in which they effectively use the experience and knowledge they gained during their fellowships.

What is your assessment of the process for the recruitment, selection, preparation, and assignment to Members of Navy officers in the Legislative Fellows program?

I understand that the Navy and Marine Corps Legislative Fellows programs are open to a wide variety of Line and Staff Corps officers permanent grades of O2 to O5 and some E-6 to E-9. Competition is keen, and the selection process focuses primarily on individual performance, promotion potential, career, timing, breadth of experience, academic and subspecialty qualifications, needs of the Navy and Marine Corps, and availability for follow-on assignment, as well as communication skills, aptitude, personality, and the general ability to adapt to a Capitol Hill work environment. I understand that Fellow selectees are provided with training within the Office of Legislative Affairs and in a Capitol Hill workshop, and that they are offered the opportunity to earn a Legislative Additional Qualification Designator (AQD).

What is your assessment of the value of the Legislative Fellows program to the Navy and the utilization of officers who have served as legislative fellows?

I understand the Fellows program educates Navy personnel on the workings of the legislative branch of government, while enhancing Navy/Marine Corps' ability to fulfill its role in the national policy development process. I understand that the Navy/Marine Corps benefit from assignment of personnel to Congress by bringing a unique perspective to the process of drafting and passing legislation, and by affording the incumbent an opportunity to learn about the legislative process. Specifically, Fellows receive instruction and hands-on experience in a Congressional office through dedicated training and developmental activities; a full-time, one-year assignment to the staff of a Member of Congress who serves on a Defense-related subcommittee; and liaison with the Navy/Marine Corps Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA).

Management and Development of the Senior Executive Service

The transformation of the Armed Forces has brought with it an increasing realization of the importance of efficient and forward thinking management of senior executives.

What is your vision for the management and development of the Navy senior executive workforce, especially in the critically important areas of acquisition, financial management, and the scientific and technical fields?

I am very interested in supporting the development and management of the senior executive workforce for the Department of the Navy. The quality and capabilities of the civilian executive leadership is vital to the functioning of the Department. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that senior executives have a diverse portfolio of experiences and strong leadership skills that support the Department's mission and organizational goals. I understand that the Department has an enterprise approach to senior executive management through an Executive Management Advisory Panel and an annual Talent and Succession Management process. My understanding is that these processes were designed to ensure the Department has the leadership and technical talent for the mission including acquisition, financial, scientific and technical capabilities. If confirmed, I will review the executive management process and ensure that the policies are in place to attract, retain, and develop the best senior executives for all positions.

Balance Between Civilian Employees and Contractor Employees

The Navy employs many civilian employees and contractors. In many cases, contractor employees work in the same offices, serve on the same projects and task forces, and perform many of the same functions as federal employees. Both contractors and civilians make up an integral part of the Department's total workforce.

Do you believe that the current balance between civilian employees and contractor employees is in the best interests of the Navy?

I believe the Department of the Navy's best interests are served by achieving and maintaining the right balance of military, federal civil servants and contractor employees in each organization and set of functions. I am aware that for each function, the Department of the Navy must consider the most appropriate, effective, and cost-efficient source of labor to meet mission requirements. If confirmed, I would be committed to identifying and maintaining the optimal mix of military, federal civil servants, and contractor personnel and to practices that ensure the best stewardship of taxpayer resources.

In your view, has the Department utilized contractors to perform basic functions in an appropriate manner?

For every function, the Department should consider the most appropriate and effective sources of labor, and apply scrutiny to processes at all levels to ensure that no inherently governmental functions are outsourced. It is also critical for the Department to examine mission requirements and best stewardship practices of existing resources when determining the most effective use of contractors. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Secretary of the Navy, the Under Secretary, and other leaders to assess the extent of the Department's reliance on contractors and to ensure compliance with law and policy.

Do you believe that the Navy should undertake a comprehensive reappraisal of "inherently governmental functions" and other critical government functions, and how they are performed?

I understand that the Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), and the Total Force Management statutes of Title 10 govern the proper sourcing of labor. It is always in our best interest to carefully review the direct, indirect, and potentially unintended consequences of a decision to contract out functions, and to take precautions to ensure that inherently governmental functions are not outsourced. If confirmed, I am committed to enforcing the processes necessary to perform this analysis, and to ensuring Departmental compliance with the FAIR Act and the FAR.

Are there non-monetary reasons why the Navy would need or desire one type of manpower over the other? If so, provide relevant examples where of those reasons? Under what circumstances should cost be used as the primary factor?

I understand there are multiple factors that contribute to workforce mix decisions, many of which are non-monetary. If the duties are deemed inherently governmental, (for example work that involves key fiduciary responsibilities) then the work must be sourced by military or federal civilian employees, without consideration for cost. Similarly, cost might not be the driving factor when sourcing a short-term project that requires highly specialized expertise not readily found in the federal workforce. However, cost would likely be used as a primary factor when filling requirements that are neither inherently governmental nor core business processes of the Department of the Navy. Additionally, in some cases, it may be desirable for certain positions to be used as shore rotation billets even if, narrowly considered, the positions might be filled by civilians at lower cost (since it is not reasonable to expect Sailors and Marines to spend their entire careers assigned to ships and other operational units). For every function, the Department should consider the most appropriate, effective, and cost-efficient source of labor to meet the mission requirement.

If confirmed, will you work with other appropriate officials in the Navy to review the contractor and civilian force mix for cost and mission effectiveness?

Yes. If confirmed, I will work with other appropriate officials in the Department to review the contractor and civilian force mix. As required by statute, if confirmed, I will also work closely with the Under Secretaries of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Comptroller, and Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, to ensure that the Department of the Navy continues to operate in a manner consistent with the Department of Defense guidance.

Would you agree that the balance between civilian employees and contractor employees in performing Navy functions should be determined by the best interests of the Navy and its mission requirements?

Absolutely, and the Department of the Navy's continuous success in mission accomplishment hinges upon continuing to employ the most effective and appropriate workforce mix of available labor sources.

If confirmed, will you work to remove any artificial constraints placed on the size of the Navy's civilian and contractor workforce, so that the Navy can hire the number and type of employees most appropriate to accomplish its mission?

If confirmed, I will support efforts to ensure that the Department of the Navy has the most appropriate, effective, and cost-efficient workforce to accomplish its many missions, within available resources. I will also support efforts to remove any inappropriate constraints on the size of the civilian or contractor workforce.

Acquisition and Technology Workforce

The Department of Defense is in a global competition for the highest quality STEM professionals at the entry-level, mid-career, and senior levels. These individuals are charged with managing billions of dollars' worth of taxpayer resources in complex acquisition programs, directly providing technical support to military operations, supporting the development of technically informed policies and regulations in areas ranging from cybersecurity to use of drones; and performing world class research and engineering functions in in house labs and centers.

Do you feel that the Navy can currently compete with the private sector for the highest quality technical performers at the early career, mid-career, and senior levels?

I understand that the Department of the Navy is experiencing some success in regard to hiring the highest quality technical performers across the full career spectrum and, for the most part, is competitive with the private sector for the Nation's best and brightest talent. Our country's technical workforce is driven by the opportunity to practice hands-on science and engineering within one's chosen discipline. The Department continues to provide such opportunities for prospective candidates at generally competitive salary rates. However, I understand Departmental hiring managers face significant hurdles in the hiring process that are not shared by private sector employers. Streamlining the hiring process to overcome these hurdles would allow the Department of the Navy to increase its hiring success rate across early career, mid-career, and senior levels. I understand several current Departmental proposals are aimed at broadening workforce talent recruitment (including STEM occupations) and retaining personnel by expanding career opportunities and developing talent management processes.

How will you work to enhance policies and flexibilities necessary to allow the Navy to compete with the private sector for this talent?

I understand the Department of the Navy's ability to compete for and retain talented technical performers at all career levels is dependent upon streamlining the hiring process and ensuring that the technical workforce is engaged in hands-on research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) initiatives. Specifically, I understand that direct hiring authority at the Navy Warfare Center and Laboratory levels would facilitate the Department's ability to compete for talent, as would providing technical hiring managers with the flexibility to identify and hire appropriate

talent within a timeframe that is consistent with that of the private sector. In addition, I understand that the Department of the Navy's Task Force Innovation provides its workforce the opportunity to improve the DON through new and innovative ideas, to assist not only with mission execution, but also with workforce attraction and retention.

If confirmed, I will work very closely with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development & Acquisition), the Chief of Naval Operations, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and other Departmental leaders to ensure that policies, practices, and new initiatives fully leverage the flexibility authorized by Congress to enable the Department of the Navy to remain competitive with the private sector in attracting talent.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

Yes.

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, and other communications of information are provided in a timely manner to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

Yes.

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?

Yes.