

Opening Statement

Good morning, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed and members of this distinguished committee. It is an honor to sit before you today (after sitting behind you on the other side of the dais for the last 8 years) as President Trump's nominee to be the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. I thank the President for nominating me and Secretary Hegseth for his support.

With me this morning is my wife, Lindsey. We met fourteen years ago as Air Force officers stationed in England. She was a captain and I was a second lieutenant at the time. Fortunately for me, Lindsey was somehow able to see past my inferior rank. I've been a better man for it ever since. We have three children, ages 6, 5, and 2. Lindsey's continued sacrifice and support have enabled me to pursue a career in public service.

When Senator McCain hired me to join the SASC staff I could not imagine the magnitude of the opportunity I had been given. Senator Inhofe and then Senator Wicker graciously allowed me to remain on their staff and entrusted me with additional responsibilities. Working for these statesmen has been my great good fortune.

The Senate Armed Services Committee is the epitome of what our founders intended when they drafted Article I of the Constitution. The American people should know that without fail, and on a bipartisan basis, the leadership and members of this committee take seriously their responsibility to (as Article I, Section 8 says) "provide for the common defense" of the United States. It has been the highlight of my professional life to have been able to support you.

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By kempr on Apr 23, 2025

If confirmed, I will take the lessons I have learned on this Committee to the Department of Defense. In addition to implementing swiftly the directives of the President and Secretary of Defense in a manner consistent with the law, my priorities are: 1) Elevate the stature of military service; 2) Improve military and defense civilian talent management; and 3) Provide the resources and staffing necessary to stabilize the Military Health System.

Finally, Chairman Wicker, let me take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation to you. Thank you for allowing me to have a small role in helping you advocate for a strong national defense and a renewed commitment to “peace through strength.” The nation will be more secure because of your efforts.

I thank the committee for considering my nomination and welcome your questions.