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Chairman Tuberville, Ranking Member Warren, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of your United States Marines. I would like to express my full confidence in our warriors. Our Marines are prepared, capable, and poised to face the next adversary – whenever that call may come.

As we have since our founding more than 250 years ago, the Marine Corps remains focused on readiness and lethality. We continue to recruit and retain high-quality Marines across the force, it is imperative their quality of housing matches their high quality of service. While Barracks 2030 has made progress, it is a long-term commitment, and the Marine Corps is committed to seeing it through. The Commandant of the Marine Corps has entrusted me with making quality of life a top priority. To that end, I have identified key areas that will drive meaningful improvement including housing and Marine Corps Total Fitness. Each of these areas directly impacts recruiting and retention by reinforcing trust in leadership, demonstrating institutional accountability, and ensuring Marines are equipped, housed, and supported to meet the demands of service.

The value of the individual Marine cannot be overstated as future conflicts will depend on small unit dispersion forces. The Marine Corps Total Fitness program will enhance the strength and resilience of our Marines to withstand the pressures of conflict, while the most advanced technology in equipment will protect them when the enemy attacks.

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These are my priorities for the near future:

Recruiting

The Marine Corps' greatest asset is the individual Marine, and we continue to screen, select and send our best Marines to recruiting duty.

In Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), the Marine Corps met its recruiting mission with more than 35,831 individuals, passionate about becoming one of the few and earning their place in our ranks. This achievement reflects the unwavering dedication of our Marine recruiters and the enduring appeal of service in our Corps to those seeking challenge, purpose, and honor.

Our data show direct correlation between a Marine's success at recruit training and the time they spent preparing with their recruiter, in our Delayed Entry Program (DEP). We grew our start pool by more than 10% in FY25, recovering significant ground lost during the height of the pandemic era. As we look ahead to the rest of FY26, we are on track to meet our goal of accessing more than 36,000 recruits. We will continue our momentum in rebuilding the delayed entry pool, stabilizing the entry level training pipeline, and fill both our Active and Reserve formations with high-quality Marines.

Retention

However, recruiting success is just the first step. We are committed to keeping our most talented Marines in the fight. Our ability to retain experienced, combat-ready professionals is what ensures the Marine Corps remains the world's premier warfighting force. Thanks to continuous refinement of the selection process, we surpassed our retention goals in FY25. Four months into FY26, we have achieved 98% for first term and 106% for subsequent term retention.

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The message is clear: Marines love being Marines. We will continue to demand the best *of* them and *for* them. Anything less would be a disservice to our mission, our nation, and our legacy of excellence.

Quality of Life

1. Housing

The Marine Corps is known for doing more with fewer resources, demonstrating ingenuity, resourcefulness, and a relentless pursuit of mission success. While obtaining additional funding is critical, we are also taking deliberate steps to maximize efficiency and ensure every dollar spent enhances our readiness. We are actively renovating, repairing, and repurposing our facilities and materials to eliminate waste.

In 2025, we repaired or renovated 12 barracks that provide housing for approximately 4,160 Marines. In FY26, we have identified 13 additional barracks for repair.

We are implementing ways to enable Marines to electronically report and track urgent facility needs more quickly and more efficiently at the lowest levels. This initiative aligns with recommendations from the GAO report on how poor living conditions can undermine quality of life and readiness, as well as the requirements set forth in the FY24 National Defense Authorization Act, Section 2836. We are transitioning barracks management to civilian professionals to ensure consistent oversight, maintenance, and accountability. Looking ahead through FY26, we will continue this professionalization effort by filling nearly 350 civilian positions.

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Family Housing remains a key focus for the Marine Corps. Through tenant satisfaction surveys, incentive awards, and safety inspections, we uphold the terms of our agreements with our public-private venture (PPV) partners and ensure housing meets the needs of our Marines and their families. The Marine Corps requested and has been funded over \$142M in family housing construction and operations in FY26, which includes not only materials and equipment, but also the housing management professionals who provide the necessary oversight of over 23,000 PPV homes.

Marines do not seek luxury; they seek the opportunity to win. That opportunity begins with a fighting force that is well-housed, well-trained, and well-equipped. With your continued advocacy and support, we fulfill this commitment and honor the commitment Marines have shown us.

2. Audit

Over the past three years, the Marine Corps became the first military service to attain and sustain an unmodified or “clean” audit opinion. These accomplishments were not easy to attain but are testament to the importance that the Commandant, along with all Marines, places on accountability every day.

The Marine Corps does not ask for more until it has fully utilized all available resources. Units are re-purposing, re-tasking, and maximizing existing programs and facilities, stretching every resource to its full potential. With your continued support, we can broaden this model across the force and enhance it for optimal effectiveness.

We have a lot more work to do before clean audits become routine and unremarkable. Readiness for the warfighter requires accountability of our assets, ensuring that decision-makers have access to accurate, timely, and relevant information. This access empowers informed, data-driven decisions that

ultimately lead to successful mission outcomes. Audits help us be ready, and we welcome the opportunity to continue improving our support for the warfighter.

3. Marine Corps Total Fitness

The foundation of our combat effectiveness has always been the individual Marine. That is why we have made Marine Corps Total Fitness, or MCTF, our core leadership framework for optimizing warfighter performance, readiness, and resilience. The most critical aspect of MCTF is that it empowers our leaders to act now. It does not require new facilities to begin; it requires leadership and personal accountability. While we are making progress with existing resources, your investment is what will allow us to fully scale this program across the force.

This proactive approach is built on a simple premise: A warrior does not wait for a weapon to break before maintaining it, and the same applies to the mind and body of a Marine. To do this, MCTF combines modern human performance science with our timeless warrior ethos. We are embedding experts in cognitive performance, strength and conditioning, and nutrition within our units to provide personalized, targeted support. This is not a one-size-fits-all system; we meet our Marines where they are and give them the tools they need to succeed.

By integrating total fitness into our culture, we also eliminate the stigma around seeking support. It becomes a sign of strength—a smart step to stay in the fight. This framework has become the central pillar for every major prevention initiative we have. With your continued support, we can deploy this proven model to every Marine, ensuring the continued lethality and resilience of your force.

4. Individual Combat Equipment

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Marines operate where others cannot. Individual Combat Equipment—the personal protective equipment Marines wear into combat—must be as effective and adaptable as the Marine wearing it. Our commitment to readiness includes a responsibility to continually improve. The gear that Marines use must evolve to address future threats. On tomorrow's battlefield, an electronic signal can be just as lethal as a bullet. Features that were once considered science fiction are now becoming necessities.

Recent advancements in manufacturing have led to the development of materials that are lighter, stronger, more durable, and capable of providing multidimensional protection from lethal, electronic, and environmental threats.

Moreover, progress in exercise science and human performance, along with decades of combat experience, highlights the importance of offering expanded and customizable sizing options for a precise fit.

The Marine Corps is currently conducting an anthropometry study to create an up-to-date and comprehensive database for designing and procuring of individual combat equipment across the Force.

Marines train like they fight. We cannot wait for operations to begin for Marines to have access to the most advanced equipment.

Conclusion

Every dollar invested, every decision made, every resource allocated must be done with one goal in mind: ensuring our Marines are ready to fight and win. They are the weapon. They are the difference.

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The Marine Corps is not just a warfighting force—it is the enabler of the Joint Force. For the Marine Corps to continue providing the unique capabilities that give Combatant Commanders real-world options, Marine quality of life must be properly supported.

The Marine Corps has always been, and will continue to be, resourceful, innovative, and efficient. At the core of every capability, success, and victory is one fundamental element: our people. It is not about programs, policies, or equipment alone. It is about Marines—they are the ones who make the impossible into the possible.

They are the reason the Marine Corps remains the “Nation’s force in readiness.”