

**Senate Armed Services Committee**  
**Advance Policy Questions for Mr. Alex Wagner**  
**Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs**

**Duties and Qualifications**

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

I understand that the duties of the office include providing guidance, direction, and oversight for the Department of the Air Force's Total Force Human Capital portfolio, which includes: personnel and manpower programs; medical readiness and health affairs; as well as Reserve Component affairs. I also understand that this role is responsible for oversight of the operation of the Air Force Review Boards Agency and its component boards.

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

Yes.

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

I believe that my combined national security and management experience, leading the aerospace and defense industry's talent and workforce policy efforts as well as having served nearly seven years in a variety of roles in the Department of Defense, has provided me with the experience and exposure to ensure the success of the Air Force and Space Force through the development of policies, programs and processes to improve the quality of service and quality of life of DOD service members, civilians, and their families.

Over the last three years, I've built the Aerospace Industries Association's talent and workforce division from scratch. The division operates a Leadership Council comprising industry Chief Human Resource Officers, a Committee comprising Chief Diversity Officers, and working groups focused on talent attraction/development and the future of work and workspaces. In this role, I regularly convene industry leaders to share best practices, define industry-wide approaches, and explore with policymakers and experts ways to attract and develop a world class workforce. In addition, I've also led the American Rocketry Challenge, the aerospace industry's premier annual competition focused on attracting and engaging middle and high school students into STEM disciplines.

In previous roles at the Pentagon, I was involved with policy efforts during the Obama administration to open all combat positions to women, remove barriers for open service by transgender Soldiers, and ensure permanent religious

accommodations to certain uniform and grooming standards. From 2011-2017, I also developed and taught an annual civil rights course at Georgetown Law that included classes focused on public employment, including the rights of service members.

Finally, throughout my private sector career, both as a policy leader and lawyer, I have consistently been involved in the development and management of personnel initiatives designed to create a more inclusive workforce, as well as seeking to broaden recruiting and empower mentoring initiatives.

For over 20 years, from my first job after graduating college at a boutique national security consulting firm through my current role supporting industry's efforts to recruit, retain, and develop a 21st century workforce to support America's warfighters, I've gained a deeper appreciation for the needs of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and now Guardians, and the central role they fulfill in defending our Nation.

### **Major Challenges and Priorities**

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

ASAF(M&RA) is responsible for oversight of both the personnel and medical portfolios within the Department of the Air Force, as such, COVID-19 response and mitigation actions will continue to be a challenge. Additionally, completing the Military Health System transformation, implementing the recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault and the forthcoming requirements in the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, and building a resilient and inclusive workforce will be priorities. If confirmed, these issues will be some of the first I address by working with the staff and leadership to understand the key details and then identifying and implementing appropriate solutions.

### **Civilian Control of the Military**

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

I believe that civilian control of the military is pivotal to the foundation of our democracy. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Secretary of the Air Force and DOD leadership to follow, as well as advocate for, the appropriate civilian-military dynamics within the Department.

**6. If confirmed, how would you ensure your inclusion in the discussion, debate, and resolution of U.S. defense and national security issues?**

If confirmed, in my role as ASAF(M&RA), I would develop the relationships both up and down the leadership chains required for me to exercise the responsibilities of the position. I will work with the Secretary's office to ensure inclusion in all meetings appropriate to my position. Additionally, I will maintain awareness of key topics and how they are being addressed in the staff.

### **Personnel Policy Implementation**

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

If confirmed, I plan to take an extensive look at the Air Force and Space Force Human Capital strategies to ensure there is synergy between the two services, maximizing resource sharing and avoiding duplicative processes and policies. As is the case in any environment, it is my belief that efficiencies and improvements can always be made, and I intend to ensure that the Department of the Air Force is at the forefront of personnel policy best practices.

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

I believe it is vital to maintain a strong and cooperative relationship with this Committee and all appropriate committees of Congress, to best posture the Department of the Air Force for mission success. I believe open and transparent communication is key to maintaining and improving these relationships. If confirmed, that would include regular engagements and updates to communicate all key personnel policies, to include those directed by law.

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

If confirmed, I would ensure frequent interactions with all Defense Committees, including regularly scheduled staffer days, information visits to the Hill to keep information flow at the forefront. Additionally, I would build Congressional notifications into the cross check for all key personnel policy updates.

### **Non-Deployable Service members**

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

If confirmed, I will ensure policies that support non-deployment decisions take into account individual circumstances and the needs of the Department of the Air Force. I will also work with DAF leaders to ensure deployability rates meet the mission needs.

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

I do not have enough information to speculate on the frequency of this occurrence; however, I do believe there are circumstances that would warrant retention in certain circumstances. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leaders to understand the current approach, and consider mission and readiness requirements of the Department of the Air Force.

**12. In your view, how should this policy be applied to airmen and guardians with HIV? To those who identify as transgender?**

I understand the Department of Defense continues to review medical and readiness policies in light of updates to medical treatments and prevention of HIV. If confirmed, I will work with the leadership across the Department of Defense to ensure individual fairness and mission readiness are considered in any updates to policy.

If confirmed, I will also work with leadership across the Department, including medical professionals to understand the current standards, their impact on readiness, and determine if any adjustments are needed.

**The new Department of Defense policy on service by transgender persons, as set forth in DOD Instruction 1300.28, provides that “any determination that a transgender Service member is non-deployable at any time will be consistent with established Military Department and Service standards, as applied to other Service members whose deployability is similarly affected in comparable circumstances unrelated to gender transition.”**

**13. Please provide an example of a “comparable circumstance” that would be used to determine deployability of a transgender service member.**

I have not had access to internal deliberations of the Department of the Air Force in these circumstances. If confirmed, I will work with leadership to understand the process used to make such decisions and ensure fairness and equity are balanced with mission readiness requirements.

**14. In your view, should an airman’s or guardian’s readiness to perform specific missions, functions, and tasks required in the context of a particular deployment also be considered in determining whether that service member is deployable?**

Each case should be evaluated individually in consideration of mission readiness requirements. If confirmed, I will work to ensure those policies are applied consistently.

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

I have not had access to the non-deployability rate for the reserve components. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to understand the factors contributing to the deployability rate, assess the current rate of medical non-deployability, and I will work with Air Force Reserve leaders to address any necessary adjustments.

**Diversity and Inclusion**

**16. In general, what is your assessment of the diversity of the Department of the Air Force military and civilian workforces?**

I believe the Department has made progress cultivating a diverse population of talent, but as the Racial Disparity Review and the more recent Diversity Review point out, there is much room for improvement. For instance, while the DAF is far more demographically diverse at entry levels within the military and civilian workforce, it is less so at the more senior ranks and grades. If confirmed, I intend to learn more about the programs the Air Force has been pursuing to increase diversity in operational career fields, and explore ongoing barrier analysis efforts to understand issues that are affecting this uneven distribution as people progress in rank.

**17. If confirmed, how would you propose to increase diversity and inclusion within the Department of the Air Force writ large?**

If confirmed, data-informed programs and changes will be key to finding solutions with long-term success in diversity and inclusion. The Racial Disparity Review and its update are an important start. Leveraging best practices from corporate America, I will work to understand the baseline, what is being measured, and determine up front what success looks like. The DAF must constantly strive to develop and build the skills of its uniformed and civilian populations in ways that make them feel valued and invested in, so that they want to stay and continue their critical service to our nation.

**18. A recent Air Force analysis of the eligible military recruiting pool and Air Force demographics found that Asian Americans are the most underrepresented racial group on active duty military service. Why do you believe this is the case? Specifically what would you do, if confirmed, to attract more Asian-American persons to military service?**

I do believe the Department recognizes that it has not made enough of an investment in certain communities of talent, and this includes Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, but also others like American Indians and Alaska Native communities. If confirmed, I will work closely with members of these communities to improve engagement while increasing awareness of the many career fields that enable rewarding professional service in the Air Force, not only with regard to airplanes, but also medical personnel, lawyers, engineers, information technology specialist, human relations, and meteorologists, etc. After a fulfilling career in the service to our Nation, many go on to further their career in industry, academia and the non-profit sectors. There is also an opportunity to serve in a part time capacity, by joining the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard.

Overall, I believe the Department can do a better job of educating all communities on the benefits of service, while building bridges to underrepresented communities, to encourage and mentor talented youth to choose professions in the Air Force or Space Force.

**19. If confirmed, specifically what would you do to make progress toward the goal of ensuring that the Air Force and Space Force, at all levels, especially within the senior officer ranks, reflect the broad diversity of the nation?**

It takes 25 to 30 years to groom an officer to serve as a general officer. To see benefits sooner, the DAF must look to improve its retention numbers of the diverse Airmen and Guardians it has in the forces today while also focusing on expanding the aperture at the beginning of the pipeline in those career fields that have the largest disparities. If confirmed, I will work to provide development opportunities and reinforce inclusive environments that expand the propensity to serve in underrepresented communities while strengthening those members' inclination to build careers in military service.

**20. If confirmed, how would you increase diversity and inclusion in the Department's civilian workforce, especially at the senior General Schedule and Senior Executive Service levels?**

Ensuring diversity among civilian leaders is just as critical as it is for senior military officers. It is more than just the right thing to do, but provides an advantage by leveraging a wide variety of perspectives and experiences to solves some of the challenging problems when the stakes are the highest. If confirmed, I will work with leadership to retain the talent the Department gets in the door earlier in their careers, ensure appropriate career development opportunities free from bias, and also invest in attracting talent from industry. The DAF must invest in its diverse junior civilians so they want to stay with the Department long term—and that includes ensuring they see people like them succeeding in senior roles.

**21. If confirmed, how would you increase geographical diversity in the Air Force and Space Force—promoting the accession or enlistment of persons from areas**

**of the country and local communities that are currently underrepresented in the military force?**

If confirmed, I think the DAF must invest more in community outreach, particularly in those areas not located near military installations. The Department has put more resources into recruiting in recent years, but there is more to be done. I would also look to leverage the pop culture awareness of the Space Force and this new golden age of space to increase opportunities for public engagement, in order to enhance the visibility and recognition of the unique mission and roles that exist with the active and reserve components of the Services.

**Extremism**

**22. What is your view of the prevalence and effect of extremism within the armed forces?**

I believe that any amount of extremist activity within the Department of the Air Force is detrimental to the health of the organization, as it undermines morale and combat readiness. While I have not yet been privy to specific data related to Airmen and Guardians with extremist ties, I understand it is low but I firmly believe that extremist activities are incompatible with military service.

**23. If confirmed, what would you recommend the Secretary of the Air Force do to eliminate extremism within the Air Force and Space Force ranks?**

If confirmed, I would first want to understand what the Department has already done and assess accession and recruitment policies, overall training programs, as well as the transition programs for departing members. With this information in hand, I could then, if confirmed, develop recommendations for the Secretary.

**Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**

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

Not enough progress has been made since the last time I served in government, and I'm aware from recent incidents just how much work there still is to be done. If confirmed, I will make prevention and response to sexual assault a top priority just as the Secretary of Defense did within his first week in office. I understand the Air Force is currently re-examining its sexual harassment and assault policies, programs, and training; and exploring best practices, particularly in light of the recommendation contained within the Independent Review Commission report. If confirmed, I will work with Department leadership to implement any directed and statutory changes regarding accountability, as well as try to find additional ways to improve prevention and response.

**25. What is your assessment of the potential impact, if any, of proposals to remove from military commanders case disposition authority over most felony violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice?**

While I do not have full details of the potential impact of such proposals, if confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force to thoroughly analyze these proposals and any other promising ideas for alternative criminal processes. If legislation in this area is enacted, I will be ready to implement in coordination with leaders in the Department.

**26. If confirmed, specifically what would you do to increase focus on the *prevention* of sexual assaults in the force?**

If confirmed, I will confer with the Secretary, and work with DAF leadership to understand the approaches the Department is taking toward prevention, including positive prevention efforts such as the Cadet Healthy Personal Skills (CHiPS) primary prevention program. I would work with Department leaders to ensure the DAF is focused on prevention, educating and training service members, holding perpetrators accountable, and implementing recommendations from the Independent Review Commission.

**27. What is your assessment of the Department of the Air Force's implementation of protections against retaliation—most notably social ostracism and reputation damage—against members of the Air Force and Space Force who report sexual assault?**

This is fundamentally a leadership responsibility. If confirmed, I will partner with DAF leaders to assess the culture within commands, and ensure every Airman and Guardian understands retaliation against survivors is not only wrong but illegal, and I will hold perpetrators of such behaviors appropriately accountable.

**The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently found that the timing, amount, and mix of legal training provided to commanders may not be meeting their needs.**

**28. In your view, do military and civilian leaders within the Department of the Air Force have the training, authorities, and resources needed to hold subordinate commanders and supervisors accountable for the prevention of and response to sexual assault and retaliation? If not, what additional training, authorities, or resources do you believe are needed, and why?**

I have not had access to the Department training and resources available to military and civilian leaders; therefore, I cannot provide my opinion at this time. However, I understand that the Independent Review Commission has made a number of relevant recommendations, some of which address training, resources, and authorities, and that the Department of Defense has developed a roadmap to guide implementation of such

recommendations. If confirmed, I would work with DAF leadership on implementation to strengthen the approach to sexual assault and retaliation.

**29. If confirmed, what actions would you direct to improve legal training for commanders?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Department's Inspector General and legal teams as well as engage Commanders to understand any improvements required or directed for prevention and response training.

**Sexual Harassment**

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

Recent reports indicate the DAF is not making the improvements needed to significantly reduce and eliminate sexual harassment, and this poses a threat to Air Force and Space Force readiness. The Independent Review Commission released its findings and recommendations, and if confirmed, I will work with OSD and Air Force and Space Force leaders to best implement changes within the DAF.

**31. In your view, do methods for tracking the submission and monitoring the resolution of informal complaints of harassment or discrimination in the force provide Air Force and Space Force leaders, supervisors, and managers with an accurate picture of the systemic prevalence of these adverse behaviors?**

At this time, I do not have data available on how well the methods for tracking the submission and monitoring the resolution of informal complaints work in practice. However, I believe it is critical that these methods are as effective and efficient as possible to gain Airmen and Guardians' trust and confidence in the process and that starts with individuals being held appropriately accountable. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to identify ways to strengthen confidence in the reporting process to help Airmen and Guardians see the value in reporting.

**32. If confirmed, what actions would you take to improve the quality of investigations into allegations of sexual harassment in the force?**

At present, I am not aware of the issues with these investigations. However, if confirmed, I am committed to review the current investigative process and work with DAF leadership to take the appropriate steps to ensure all Airmen and Guardians receive a comprehensive, timely and objective investigation into any and all allegations of sexual harassment.

**33. Does the Department of the Air Force's method for recording the outcomes of informal complaints of harassment or discrimination provide leaders, supervisors, and managers with a means of identifying repeat perpetrators?**

I am not familiar with the process the Department utilizes to track the informal complaints. I believe, however, that this is an issue at the core of mission readiness and if confirmed, I am committed to work with leadership to identify additional ways to continue to improve information tracking and sharing. This will ensure the Department is better able to identify potential repeat perpetrators, as appropriate and in accordance with the law.

**34. Does the Department of the Air Force’s method for responding to complaints of harassment or discrimination in the civilian workforce provide appropriate care and services for victims?**

I do not have data on DAF-internal methods for responding to such complaints nor what care and services are provided to civilian reporting incidents of harassment or discrimination. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to ensure all military and civilian personnel are treated with dignity and respect, as well as made fully aware of their legal rights, avenues for reporting incidents, and availability of quality and professional care and services, to which they are entitled.

**35. If confirmed, what actions would you take were you to receive or become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from a civilian employee of the Office of the ASAF(M&RA)?**

I would immediately notify the appropriate Human Resources and Equal Employment Opportunity offices. I take complaints of this nature very seriously. As such, I will ensure appropriate accountability at all levels, leverage opportunities to train and educate leaders and their staff, and reinforce my stance that this behavior has no place in the DAF workplace.

**United States Air Force Academy**

**36. What is your assessment of the diversity of cadets at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA)? In your view, what measures could be taken to increase diversity at USAFA?**

I understand from recent news reports that the Air Force Academy has consistently increased diversity over the last ten years. That said, there are substantial opportunities for improvement. If confirmed, I plan to engage with Academy leadership and others in the Department to learn what actions have been taken and identify critical areas for improvement. The Air Force Academy must continue to devote significant focus and resources on recruiting diverse talent and reducing barriers to ensure that talent has the same opportunities to succeed.

**37. What is your assessment of the efficacy of the policies and processes in place at USAFA to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment, and to ensure that cadets who do report assault or harassment are not subject to retaliation—social ostracism and reputation damage—in particular?**

I am aware that Department and Academy leadership are committed to preventing the sexual assault and harassment, reducing barriers to reporting, and holding perpetrators accountable. While there are many programs in place and others being developed, there is still much to do. If confirmed, I will work with USAFA leadership to further ensure a culture and climate that rejects retaliation against victims and upholds the Air Force and the Academy's values.

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

I am aware of recent public reporting and understand the Air Force Academy continues to take seriously this critical issue. If confirmed, I will ensure that I am able to appropriately assess the efficacy of efforts taken to date and look at ways to improve suicide prevention processes and programs.

**39. Do you believe the current five-year minimum active-duty service commitment for Military Service Academy graduates is sufficient return on investment for the U.S. military and the American taxpayer?**

I'm not aware of any analysis done on the current commitment. The cost of higher education has escalated over the past twenty years, so too has the value of an Air Force Academy education. If confirmed, I will ensure that I understand the basis for the current commitment and review any recommended changes while ensuring that any commitment both helps the Department manage the force and facilitates retention in mission critical career fields which strengthens readiness.

**40. In your view, does USAFA contribute to the pool of military officer accessions commensurate with its attendant costs? Why or why not?**

I am unfamiliar with the balance between the costs and the contributions made by this pool of officers. I am familiar with the high quality officers that are produced and, if confirmed, look forward to learning more to ensure that the nation is getting the appropriate return for its investment.

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

If confirmed, I look forward to learning how the Academy has adjusted its curriculum to address the Space Force. The space mission in itself is not new to USAFA, so I am sure that it has programs in place and will continue to adapt and/or expand these programs to better meet the emerging needs of the Space Force.

**42. Under what conditions would you deem it appropriate, if confirmed, to permit an Air Force or Space Force officer to play professional sports prior to**

**completing at least two consecutive years of commissioned service following graduation from USAFA?**

I'm aware of this issue generally from my experience in the Department of the Army. I understand that these are unique cases that warrant individual review, and while there is value in the visibility provided to the Department from certain high performing athletes, developing professional athletes is not the role of the service academies. Rather, they exist to educate, train and develop leaders of character. If confirmed, I look forward to better understanding the benefits to the member, the Academy, and the Department before advising on such decisions.

**43. What is your understanding of the need for a so-called “tenure” track system at USAFA for civilian employees? In your view, how would such a system work under existing authorities and limitations applicable to the Federal civilian workforce?**

I am not aware of any need for a tenure track system for USAFA civilian professors. If confirmed, I will ensure any tenure system considered for USAFA would conform to OPM civilian personnel policy which will ensure USAFA personnel receive the same benefits and accountability as other federal civilians.

**Recently, 240 cadets were found to have violated the Air Force Academy honor code by cheating on various academic tests and assignments. The vast majority of these cadets were placed in a rehabilitative probation program. Only 15 cadets, who were found to have cheated, were disenrolled. The ASAF(M&RA) reviews these cases and makes recommendations to the Secretary of the Air Force as to how they should be handled.**

**44. If confirmed, what criteria will you use to determine whether a cadet who violates the honor code deserves to be expelled from the Air Force Academy?**

If confirmed, I will make it a priority to understand the details of the honor code and the criteria used in the determination of follow on actions. Decisions about a cadet's future deserve my full understanding before I make any determination on specific criteria.

**45. If confirmed, what criteria will you use to determine whether a cadet who is expelled from the Air Force Academy should be enlisted in the Air Force or required to reimburse the government for the cost of his/her Academy education?**

If confirmed, I will ensure collateral consequence determinations continue to be consistent with existing statutory requirements, personnel policies, as well as made in equity and good conscience, and in the best interest of the Department and the Nation.

**46. What evidence does the Air Force have that the current honor probation program successfully rehabilitates and improves the morals and behavior of cadets who previously violated the honor code?**

I'm aware that the Air Force Academy is highly respected throughout academia and consistently ranks among the best of our Nation's colleges and universities. Although I have no metrics on the efficacy of its honor program, if confirmed, I look forward to learning more about how the honor code system is applied.

**Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps**

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

While I am not currently well versed in the details of accessions via SROTC, the geographically diverse nature of the Air Force ROTC program should provide an officer force with the wide variety of demographics, backgrounds, and experiences necessary to ensure the continued readiness of both the Air and Space Force. If confirmed, I will review Air Force ROTC to ensure it is an effective and viable source of officers.

**48. What is your assessment of the diversity in Air Force ROTC programs? What measures can be taken to increase diversity in Air Force SROTC?**

I am unaware of the details of ROTC diversity programs. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to place significant focus on and devote resources to recruiting diverse talent and reducing barriers to diversity.

**In 2020, the Air Force began awarding full scholarships to any SROTC cadet enrolled at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) or Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). HBCUs and HSIs account for only 28 percent of all African American and Hispanic SROTC cadets. Additionally, more than half of the 22 SROTC programs that fail to meet Air Force viability criteria are located at an HBCU or HSI. 70 percent of all African American and Hispanic SROTC cadets do not receive a full scholarship, despite usually attending schools with more successful SROTC programs.**

**49. In your view, what role should individual merit and Air Force requirements play in determining who should receive a full ROTC scholarship? Under what conditions would you deem it appropriate for the Air Force to deviate from considerations of individual merit and Air Force requirements to award scholarships to others?**

In my view, merit and requirements should always be the driving factors in selecting those that will lead America's sons and daughters in the profession of arms. If

confirmed, I will ensure that I understand the scholarship process and consider any deviations on their individual merits.

**50. Which SROTC detachments have produced the most African American and Hispanic officers over the last 5 years?**

Unfortunately, I do not have access to that information at this time. If confirmed, I will gather that information and follow-up as appropriate.

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

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

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

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

**53. How would you modify the SROTC program to enhance geographic diversity in Air Force and Space Force officer accessions?**

My understanding is that the Air Force ROTC program currently has detachments serving universities located in communities all across the United States. If confirmed, I will direct regularly recurring reviews to ensure the Air Force ROTC program's geographic diversity enhances accessions while continuing to meet the needs of the Department.

**Space Force Personnel Matters**

**54. What is your understanding of the progress made by the Departments of Defense and Air Force in standing up the Space Force, including specifically the transfer of personnel from other military services into the Space Force ranks? What further challenges would you anticipate having to address, if confirmed?**

It is my understanding that the United States Space Force has made considerable progress since Congress signed it into law in December 2019 as an independent military service under the Department of the Air Force. In particular, I know that they

currently have over 6,000 uniformed Guardians (and about an equal number of civilian employees). I am aware that these Guardians currently are comprised both former Air Force personnel as well as members from the other military services. I am not aware of any specific challenges confronting the Space Force, but if confirmed I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chief of Space Operations and other senior leaders to ensure the Department's newest Service has the tools and policies in place as it matures to meet its mission of securing and defending U.S. interests in space and executing its mission reliably and effectively as part of the Joint Force.

**55. What unique issues or challenges, if any, is the Department of the Air Force facing with respect to promotion boards considering officers who will or plan to transfer to the Space Force?**

I am not aware of any specific promotions board challenges the Space Force faces right now but if confirmed, I will look into the promotion board process and any unique challenges the Space Force might have.

**56. In your view, what is the justification, if any, for increasing the number of general and flag officers authorized in the Department of Defense to accommodate the Space Force leadership structure?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Space Operations to ensure the Space Force is appropriately manned with the right levels of leadership necessary to carry out its statutory responsibilities as well as those prescribed by the Secretary of the Air Force.

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

I know there are several options being considered for how to support the Space Force. If confirmed, I will work to gain a better understanding of the Air National Guard structure and its support to Space Force operations ensuring implementation of any proposals are efficient, effective, and appropriate for Space Force missions.

**Military Compensation**

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

Overall, yes and to the extent that it meets the specific Air Force mission objectives.

**59. What is your assessment of the adequacy of the current military pay package in achieving this goal?**

In an all-volunteer force, the overall compensation package must be competitive enough to attract and retain talent. If confirmed, I will assess and advocate for any necessary changes to allow the DAF to remain competitive for talent.

**60. What changes, if any, would you recommend to the current military pay and benefits package, if confirmed?**

I will need to assess the situation and be informed on recent studies as well as existing challenges within the Department of the Air Force. If confirmed, I would explore how to use existing authority to address and meet those challenges before making additional recommendations for change.

**61. What specific recommendations do you have for controlling rising military personnel costs, including entitlement spending?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Air Force and leaders across the Department of Defense to evaluate a holistic approach since I understand that these costs comprise nearly one-third of the Department's budget. DoD has a responsibility to adequately pay and provide for service members and their families. The DAF would benefit from a DOD-wide approach to address rising personnel costs that not only addresses military compensation and benefits, but also the force management and overall personnel mix decisions that affect overall costs.

**Professional Military Education**

**The National Defense Strategy notes that professional military education (PME) has stagnated and does not foster the skills and abilities needed for independent action during combat. A recent RAND report on Air Force Professional Military Education (PME) found an imbalance in the assignment of Air Force officers to PME programs. Specifically, RAND found that a greater proportion of officers who are ranked lower by the central developmental education board are assigned to PME at Air University than those higher in the rankings, who tend to be assigned to non-Air Force schoolhouses or fellowship programs. Survey results also show that Air Force officers view PME at Air Force schools less favorably than other options, and few perceive Air University options as top quality.**

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

I have not yet had the opportunity to see Air University in person, nor deep dive into their educational programs, but I do believe the development of Airmen and Guardians is vital to our national security. If confirmed I will look into how to improve experiences and programs at Air University for all service members.

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

If confirmed, I look forward to talking with experts inside and external to the Department about the findings of the recent RAND report and better understanding its recommended improvements for Air University.

**Recruiting and Retention**

**64. What do you believe to be the primary reasons that fewer than 30 percent of American youth in the 17–24-year range are eligible for military service, and how would you propose increasing the size of that pool?**

I understand that medical factors, significantly being overweight, disqualify many youth in this age group. If confirmed, I will work within DAF and across DOD to increase the number of young Americans qualified for military service in order to sustain the all-volunteer force.

**65. Similarly, why do you believe the propensity of American youth to serve in the military continues to drop and is at its lowest level in years? What would you do, if confirmed, to address this issue?**

To improve propensity, the DAF must change misperceptions of what it means to serve in the military. Today, fewer Americans have a personal connection to the military than at any time in the past several decades, and the gap between the American people and their military continues to grow wider. If confirmed, I will support initiatives that bridge knowledge gaps, correct misperceptions and reinforce a consistent, positive message in the market that raises the esteem of joining the military. This will ensure youth and influencers know that serving is a great way of life and one that will provide many great opportunities.

**66. Do you believe that non-native English speakers are disadvantaged in qualifying for military service by current testing processes?**

It is my understanding that the Department is in the process of conducting an overarching review of best practices used by academia to assess academic achievement for non-native English speakers. If confirmed, I will review these results and those of similar efforts, and direct actions that achieve a wider reach to all populations while maintaining appropriate enlistment standards.

**67. How would you address any such disadvantages to increase the pool of eligible and interested youth?**

If confirmed, I will review the current efforts across the Department to ensure valid, reliable, and fair criteria and measures are used to access applicants with the highest

potential, to include non-native English speakers. If necessary, I will direct actions that achieve a wider reach to all populations while maintaining appropriate standards.

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

Although certain standards are at the core of military health and wellness, if confirmed, I believe it makes sense to review all standards to ensure continued relevance to service in the Air Force and Space Force. I am committed to working with Congress and OSD to increase interest and eligibility for military service among young Americans.

**Department of the Air Force Reserve Components**

**69. In your view, do the reserve components serve as an operational reserve, a strategic reserve, or both? In light of your answer, should the reserve components be supported by increased training, improved equipment, and higher levels of overall resourcing for readiness?**

I have not had access to the specifics of operational tempo in the reserve components. If confirmed, I will work with component leadership to understand their utilization and the impact it has on recruiting, retention, readiness and resources

**70. In your view, what actions can be taken to improve permeability between the active and reserve components in the Air Force?**

Although I am not yet aware of the specific challenges to those transitioning between active and reserve components, if confirmed, I would review the processes and procedures, and work to address any issues identified.

**71. In your view, what actions can be taken to improve permeability between the active and reserve components in the Space Force?**

The Department of the Air Force is working with OSD to develop the policy and legislative proposal needed to integrate the reserve components into the USSF. If confirmed, I will work with Space Force leadership to understand and take advantage of the opportunities presented by a new military service with a flatter organization and identify areas for innovation.

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

Although I am not currently familiar with these requirements, if confirmed, I will work with the reserve component leadership to examine the qualifications and ensure

both part-time and full-time reserve components have sufficient joint assignment opportunities for leadership development.

**73. In your view, is the current Air Force PME system appropriate for the Department's reserve components? If not, what changes would you recommend?**

If confirmed, I will review the DAF PME system to ensure it properly addresses and includes the reserve components and continue to work with the reserve component leadership to ensure all in-residence and correspondence offerings meet the Total Force needs for force development, growing leadership, and future mission execution.

**Military Quality of Life**

**74. If confirmed, what quality of life and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs would you consider to be a priority?**

Quality of life and MWR programs are important to Airmen, Guardians, and their families. If confirmed, these will be a priority for me, as they are key to fostering a ready and resilient force. Quality of life programs not only build a strong DAF community, they also play an important role in recruitment and retention of the force. Those programs and capabilities that have the greatest impact on family readiness and resiliency will be my initial priority.

**75. What metric would you apply in determining which MWR and quality of life programs should be sustained or enriched and which should be eliminated or reduced in scope as ineffective or outmoded?**

If confirmed, I would use data and advice from DAF leaders closest to the programs, but more importantly I will listen to feedback from Airmen, Guardians, and families. The data and feedback will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of MWR and quality of life services. I'll ensure the Department's efforts and resources focus where they have the most impact to the health and resiliency of the Airmen, Guardians, and families.

**Military Family Readiness and Support**

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

I believe family readiness is key to sustaining a resilient and ready force. Airmen and Guardian retention is often linked to family readiness and the member's ability to balance it with mission demands. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership and DAF families to understand the complex challenges military families face on a day-to-day basis and pursue efforts that have the greatest potential to enhance DAF family readiness.

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

DAF families are reliant on quality and affordable childcare, and the Department must ensure this capability is ready and available to support the DAF's mission. If confirmed, I will meet with families to better understand their concerns and identify potential solutions that I can work with DAF leaders to implement.

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

If confirmed, I would work with DAF leadership to assess the Exceptional Family Member Program. Ensuring the program is effectively relocating Airmen, Guardians and families to installations with the necessary medical, educational, and support services they need is a key part of family readiness.

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

Connecting to DAF Families who have special needs dependents will be key to ensuring the success of the DAF's Exceptional Family Member Program. If confirmed, I will work with DAF leadership to better understand what touchpoints are currently established and ensure all military families with special needs dependents have a voice in obtaining the support they need.

### **Use of Military Leave and Carryover Authority**

**The Department of the Air Force recently announced enhanced leave carryover authority for airmen and guardians unable to use military leave due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, effective through the end of fiscal year 2024, despite data showing that the only ranks with leave balances in excess of the existing statutory carryover authority are general officers.**

**80. What is your understanding of the importance of service members using their available leave, even if travel is limited due to COVID or other factors?**

I believe that use of military leave is important for the mental well-being of the force. However, I also understand the unusual circumstances many personnel have experienced due to COVID-19. If confirmed, I will review how the Department has permitted leave use and determine if other alternatives should be considered.

**81. Do you believe the use of military leave is important for the mental health of the force, and family readiness, and that it should be used rather than accumulated?**

During my time at the Department of the Army, I saw military personnel undertake intense workloads, many times in high stress environments. I believe taking leave is vital to the mental health of all service members and is essential to family readiness. Leave is an earned benefit that contributes to a member's ability to appropriately balance personal and professional responsibilities. How an individual chooses to use their leave is dependent on many factors and no one answer is correct for all.

**82. If confirmed, what actions would you take to encourage airmen and guardians to use, rather than accumulate, their military leave?**

If confirmed, I would need to review DAF data to understand where Airmen and Guardians sit with leave balances and determine if there are issues. If a problem is identified, I will work to understand the factors involved and work with leadership to identify solutions.

**83. Do you believe that existing leave sell back authorities may inappropriately disincentivize service members from using their leave?**

I am not currently familiar with existing sell back authorities and how they incentivize service members. If confirmed, I will work with DAF staff to ensure service members appropriately utilize their leave.

**Department of the Air Force Civilian Workforce Matters**

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

Civilian employees are necessary and equal partners; they cannot be managed in isolation from the other Total Force elements. The ability to recruit and retain top talent is directly tied to the quality of their work environment. Quick and deliberate responses to employee feedback increases employee engagement, improves the work environment, and elevates the workforce morale, increasing the probability of top talent selecting the DAF as their "employer of choice." If confirmed, I will continue to focus on improving DAF leadership communication and the work environment, as well as opportunities for the professional growth of civilians, and other areas supporting DAF civilian employee success.

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

While the DAF has a professional and dedicated workforce, I understand that the Department needs a personnel system for all civilian Airmen and Guardians that incorporates flexibilities that will enhance the Department's ability to effectively compete. If confirmed, I would look to maximize the numerous hiring and

compensation flexibilities and authorities the Congress has provided over the years, and look forward to continuing to evolve the force for the future.

**86. In your view, would there be any value in eliminating the moratorium on the use of A-76 public/private competitions that has been in effect since 2009?**

I understand that decisions on the use of A-76 public/private competitions must weigh the health of DAF's civilian workforce against potential gains from outsourcing certain mission sets. If confirmed, I would work with experts in the Department to examine whether a change in policy would benefit DAF.

**87. In your view, how could the Department of the Air Force better utilize telework, while maintaining supervisory and employee accountability for high quality performance and the appropriate use of official time?**

As I understand it, over the course of the pandemic, the DAF has successfully proved that telework is an effective tool which allows for continuity of mission regardless of employee location. While telework is a valuable tool, I also understand that it has limitations. For example, there are critical jobs in the Department that require personnel to be physically onsite at a specific location while doing their work. If confirmed, I will continue to evaluate how the DAF can effectively integrate telework and other workplace flexibilities to achieve maximum efficiency and job performance for and from civilian Airmen and Guardians.

**Technical Workforce**

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

The unique missions of both the Air Force and Space Force requires a mix of military and civilian personnel trained and working in these technical positions. Both the active duty military and civilians bring their own unique sets of knowledge, expertise and perspective to the enterprise; which is important to maximize the talent in these vital areas, and particularly so in these high tech services. If confirmed, I will work across the Department to recruit, develop, and retain the appropriate workforce mix needed in these technical disciplines.

**Senior Executive Service**

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

It is essential for the Department to recruit and select civilian leaders with a process that ensures diversity and agility in the SES corps. If confirmed, I will ensure that the selection process considers those candidates that have the technical expertise, executive leadership qualities with a proven track record of success, and commitment to serving in ever-changing environments.

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

If confirmed, I will ensure DAF expectations and goals for SES performance are clearly articulated. These management policies will guarantee DAF senior executives will be held accountable for organization, subordinate, and personal performance using clear performance objectives.

### **Acquisition Workforce**

**91. In your view, in what ways could the Air Force better train military personnel to be acquisition professionals?**

I am aware this is a priority for Secretary Kendall and if confirmed, I will work with Department's acquisition leadership to continue to improve the training and development provided to the acquisition workforce at all levels. The acquisition workforce has a wealth of development programs, training resources, and educational institutions like Defense Acquisition University. I will, if confirmed, support acquisition career management to ensure the Department is fully leveraging all available resources.

**92. How, in your opinion, could acquisition workforce management policies be modified to make and hold leaders accountable for cost overruns on procurement contracts?**

Accountability must be directly tied to authority and resources. If confirmed, I will continue to improve accountability and discipline in acquisitions by first ensuring program managers have the adequate authorities to execute their missions, and second to ensure transparency in how they execute those authorities.

**93. In your judgement, how should acquisition program offices decide which tasks are best accomplished by government employees, military personnel, and support contractors?**

Government employees, military personnel and contractors bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the acquisition workforce. If confirmed, after first ensuring tasks are delegated in accordance with applicable rules and regulations, I

would defer to the judgement of decision-makers and work to support them by appropriately assigning tasks on the strengths and expertise of their varied workforce.

### **Laboratory, Science and Technology, and Test Range STEM Personnel**

**94. If confirmed, specifically what would you do to support the maximum use of the personnel flexibilities provided by Congress to improve the quality of the Department of the Air Force's STEM workforce?**

Leading talent and workforce initiatives for the aerospace and defense industry, I'm keenly aware of the criticality of the STEM workforce in support of our Nation's national security requirements. If confirmed, I would initiate a review of all available personnel flexibilities to ensure the Department is capable of recruiting quality candidates.

**95. If confirmed, what approach would you take to delegating authority for these use of these flexibilities to the lowest appropriate level in the organization, so they can be exercised with the speed necessary to compete with private sector hiring practices by unnecessary delay and additional costs?**

I have not been briefed on the delegation of authorities covering these flexibilities, however if confirmed, would support delegation to an appropriate level in order to remain competitive with industry hiring practices.

### **STEM Educational Opportunities for Military Dependents**

**96. What role do you think the military services, including the Air Force and Space Force, should play in supporting STEM educational opportunities for military children?**

I think the Department of the Air Force is uniquely positioned to provide STEM opportunities for military children. The characteristics of STEM are integrated into all of the Departments missions' capabilities in air, space and cyber. If confirmed, finding opportunities to educate and influence military children, will help positively shape the next generation of future Airmen and Guardians.

**97. If confirmed, how would you work with the Department of Defense research and development organizations to increase STEM educational opportunities for children of military personnel?**

If confirmed, I will work with the various research and development agencies to look for potential partnership opportunities between those agencies and Department child development programs to engage DAF children in STEM educational programs.

### **Congressional Oversight**

**In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this**

committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

**104. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.