

**Advance Policy Questions for the Todd A. Weiler,  
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs**

**Defense Reforms**

**The Committee has recently held a series of hearings on defense reform.**

**What modifications of Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 provisions, if any, do you believe would be appropriate?**

Although I am not currently prepared to recommend any specific modifications, I recognize the Committee's consideration of possible reforms. Goldwater-Nichols has served the Department well and I believe it is appropriate to review possible changes that modernize its usefulness. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Congress and across the Department to identify potential changes to Goldwater-Nichols, as well as related statutes and policies.

**Qualifications**

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

I believe that my background of defense, commercial and nonprofit experience, including over six years in the Pentagon serving as White House Liaison, Deputy Assistant Secretary and acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) has prepared me to contribute in addressing the ongoing challenges that face our men and women in uniform, their families and civilian personnel across the Department of Defense.

As a combat veteran and single soldier, I experienced first-hand the need for programs that address the unique challenges faced by single soldiers, particularly as we were preparing to deploy to Operation Desert Shield. Upon entering the Pentagon in 1993, I worked extensively within the Army M&RA portfolio to strengthen the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) program. While in that position, I developed a strong rapport and experience in working with senior military leaders to develop and expand programs, such as Army Distance Learning, to help stabilize and reduce time spent away from home and family for soldiers in the classroom. The M&RA experience further provided me with the opportunity to learn and hone the skills necessary to lead efforts through the programming, budget and execution processes; the importance of building consensus to ensure the long-term viability and readiness of Guard and Reserve

forces; and the importance of listening to soldiers and families to truly hear their needs and work to respond.

As an entrepreneur and businessman, I have approached commercial work with the continued understanding and appreciation for those who serve. I have been fortunate in my business career to lead large organizations of professionals and I consistently experience the value that former military personnel bring to all levels of business operations, from entry-level to the boardroom. While working in the Pentagon and later in commercial business, I have continued to promote the importance of strong transition programs for Service members and the value that they bring to our businesses.

For the past ten plus years, I have worked extensively with wounded warrior programs and efforts to reduce suicides among our greatest national treasures, our service members and veterans. I have come to understand the vital importance of programs like adaptive sports to engage these warriors and help them return to an active lifestyle – the impacts of which are seen in their faces and the faces of their families and friends.

I continue to develop a deeper appreciation for the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines and their families who sacrifice every day in altruistic service to our Nation. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, I look forward to applying this experience to support our Service members, their families and our civilian personnel so that we maintain a combat ready Total Force

## **Major Challenges**

### **In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the first Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?**

I believe that the first Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs will have some of the typical challenges that come with the creation and adjustments of duties for a new office such as this. . These challenges are likely to include creating an environment that eliminates the residual barriers for effective integration of the Reserve Affairs portfolio across the M&RA and Personnel and Readiness organizations, so as to ensure a “Total Force” mission orientation in everything that we do. I also foresee a variety of challenges, as the Department attempts to review and implement military and civilian personnel policies that enhance the Total Force, while gaining manpower efficiencies across the headquarters, as well as implementing efficiencies and improved business practices across a wide area of portfolio activities.

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

If confirmed, I will work closely with counterparts within the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, as well as the Services and

Congress to ensure that we are implementing changes in a thoughtful and efficient manner. With regard to the newly created office and its impact on military and civilian personnel within the office, I would anticipate working closely with the existing staff to ensure understanding and support across the organization for the new functions. Additionally, I will work closely with the Reserve Components and Service counterparts to demonstrate the increase in of commitment to the Total Force that comes from this expanded portfolio of responsibilities

## **Duties**

**Section 902 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 amended section 138(b) of Title 10, United States Code, to redesignate the position of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs has the principal duty of overall supervision of manpower and reserve affairs of the Department of Defense, and such other duties as the Secretary of Defense may prescribe.**

**Assuming you are confirmed, what duties do you expect to be assigned to you?**

If confirmed, I would serve as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) on all matters relating to military and civilian personnel policies and programs, military community and family policy, Reserve component affairs and integration, and Total Force planning and requirements. In addition, I would oversee the operations of the Department of Defense Education Activity, the Defense Commissary Agency, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home, and provide policy oversight of the Office of Family and Employer Programs and Policy.

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

- **The Secretary of Defense**  
As I understand it, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASD(M&RA)) reports directly to the USD(P&R). If confirmed, I would report through the USD(P&R) to the Secretary of Defense.
- **The Deputy Secretary of Defense**  
As I understand it, the ASD(M&RA) reports directly to the USD (P&R). If confirmed, I would report through the USD(P&R) to the Deputy Secretary of Defense.
- **The Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness**  
If confirmed, I would report directly to the USD(P&R).

- **The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs**  
 If confirmed, I would establish a close and collaborative relationship with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, with a view to working together for the good of the Department and its personnel on cross-cutting issues and other matters of mutual interest.
- **The Department of Defense General Counsel**  
 The Department of Defense General Counsel is the chief legal officer of the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I would seek the General Counsel's advice on all legal matters arising with regard to the policies and programs under the purview of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.
- **The Department of Defense Inspector General**  
 If confirmed, I would establish a close and collaborative relationship with the Department of Defense Inspector General. I would forward to the Office of the Inspector General any information pertaining to waste, fraud, abuse, or reprisal within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and would be responsive to Inspector General Reports of investigation, inspection, and audit regarding matters arising within the Office.
- **The Service Secretaries**  
 If confirmed, I would consult and collaborate with the Service Secretaries on cross-cutting issues and other matters of mutual interest and will seek Service Secretary input and coordination on major policy and program initiatives.
- **The Service Chiefs and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau**  
 If confirmed, I would consult with the Service Chiefs and Chief of the National Guard Bureau on key personnel issues and collaborate closely with them on cross-cutting issues and other matters of mutual interest.
- **The Assistant Secretaries for Manpower and Reserve Affairs of the Army, Navy, and Air Force**  
 If confirmed, I would meet regularly with the Military Department M&RAs to discuss and consult on key personnel issues, actively seek their views and input on major policy and program initiatives, and collaborate closely with them on cross-cutting issues and other matters of mutual interest, all with a view to working together for the good of the Department and its personnel.
- **The Deputy Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force for Personnel, the Chief of Naval Personnel, and the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Manpower and Reserve Affairs**  
 If confirmed, I would meet with Deputy Chiefs, the Chief of Naval Personnel, and the Deputy Commandant on key personnel issues and collaborate closely with

them on cross-cutting issues and other matters of mutual interest, all with a view to working together for the good of the Department and its personnel.

- **The Chiefs of the Army, Navy, and Air Force Reserves and the Commander of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve**

If confirmed, I would meet frequently with the Reserve Chiefs and the Commander to consult and collaborate on key issues affecting reserve affairs and integration across the Department, with a view to promoting a “total force” approach to all matters under the purview of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

- **The combatant commanders**

Formal communications to the Commanders of the Combatant Commands normally are transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If confirmed, I would work through the USD(P&R) and the Chairman to ensure that major policy and program initiatives under the purview of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs are coordinated closely with the combatant commanders and would seek their input on cross-cutting issues and other matters of mutual interest.

- **The Joint Staff, particularly the Director for Manpower and Personnel (J-1)**

If confirmed, I will meet with the Director for Manpower and Personnel (J-1) on key personnel matters and would collaborate closely with the J-1 on cross-cutting issues and other matters of mutual interest.

- **Director, Defense Health Agency**

If confirmed, I would collaborate with the Director of the Defense Health Agency on cross-cutting issues and other matters of mutual interest.

- **Director, Office of Personnel Management**

If confirmed, I will seek guidance, as necessary, from the Director, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on civilian personnel matters and would work with the Director to address provisions of law and policy under the purview of OPM, as they affect the Department of Defense civilian workforce.

## **Transgender**

**If confirmed, what would be your role in the review and approval of Department policy on whether transgender persons should be allowed to serve openly in the military?**

If confirmed, I would offer my advice to the Department’s leadership on potential policy considerations related to the range of issues that may be associated with allowing transgender Service members to serve openly.

## **Religious Accommodation**

**On July 22, 2015 the Department of Defense Inspector General released a report on “Rights of Conscience Protections for Armed Forces Service Members and Their Chaplains.” The Inspector General found that the services are not processing special religious accommodation requests promptly and, once accommodation requests are approved, they do not last for the duration of soldiers’ military careers. In many cases, this has put individuals in the difficult position of being forced to violate their faith in order to join the military and they must resubmit accommodation requests every time they transfer military bases. In some cases, these policies are unfairly burdening individuals specifically recruited by our armed forces for their unique language, culture, and technical skills.**

**If confirmed, what would be your role in addressing the recommendations in the Inspector General report?**

If confirmed, and after carefully reviewing the Inspector General’s report and current policy, I would evaluate the necessity of updating or reinforcing existing policy.

**Do you support a policy to allow service members’ religious accommodations to follow their service throughout their entire military careers – no matter where they are stationed?**

In my view, it would be appropriate for the Department to permit a religious accommodation afforded to a Service member to continue—until and unless—at some point, there is a compelling government interest that requires withdrawal of that accommodation. If confirmed, I will work with stakeholders across the Department to review current DoD policies in this regard and evaluate whether they should be updated.

**Do you support a policy that would allow prospective recruits to request accommodation prior to enlisting or accepting a commission for service in the armed forces?**

Yes, in my view, an individual should know—prior to enlistment or commissioning—whether his or her religious requirements can be accommodated. If confirmed, I will work with stakeholders across the Department to review current DoD policies in this regard and evaluate whether they should be updated.

**In your view, do requirements for individuals being accessed into the military to first comply with military grooming and appearance standards that conflict with their sincerely held religious beliefs before being considered for a waiver of those military standards constitute a constitutionally valid restraint on religious expression?**

In my view, an individual should know—prior to enlistment or commissioning—whether his or her religious requirements can be accommodated. If confirmed, I will work with stakeholders across the Department to review current DoD policies in this regard and evaluate whether they should be updated.

**In your view, how do the military services justify strict adherence to military grooming and uniform standards in the case of religious observance, while authorizing tens of thousands of shaving profiles, including allowing beards for deployed service members, and tens of thousands waivers from tattoo policies that include religious-themed tattoos and tattoos of bible verses?**

I am not in a position to interpret or speculate on individual Service policies or exceptions. I simply do not have enough information. I think most leaders make decisions and grant exceptions on the best information they have available to them at the time. If confirmed, I will review current policies and evaluate the need to update or reinforce policies within my portfolio.

**Do you believe that allowing service members of certain faiths, such as Sikh, Orthodox Judaism, or Islam, to maintain beards or wear turbans or other religious headwear, while in uniform, would strengthen or weaken the United States military's standing in areas of the world where such religions predominate? Would such allowance help or hurt our coordination and engagement with such foreign nations?**

I believe that increased diversity in the U.S. military can only strengthen its ability to perform its mission around the globe.

**American military personnel routinely deploy to locations around the world where they must engage and work effectively with allies and host-country nationals whose faiths and beliefs may be different than their own. For many other cultures, religious faith is not a purely personal and private matter; it is the foundation of their culture and society. Learning to respect the different faiths and beliefs of others, and to understand how accommodating different views can contribute to a diverse force is, some would argue, an essential skill to operational effectiveness.**

**In your view, do 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?**

Based on what I know today, yes.

**In your view, does a military climate that welcomes and respects open and candid discussions about personal religious faith and beliefs in a garrison environment**

**contribute in a positive way to preparing U.S. forces to be effective in overseas assignments? Would a policy that discourages open discussions about personal faith and beliefs be more or less effective at preparing service members to work and operate in a pluralistic environment?**

It is my understanding that current Department policy places a high value on the rights of members of the Military Services to observe the tenets of their respective religions or to observe no religion at all. As I understand current policy, it neither encourages nor discourages discussions of religion by individual Service members.

### **Force of the Future**

**The Committee has been conducting a series of hearings on reforming the Department of Defense. A number of witnesses have called for reforms to the Pentagon's personnel management system to ensure we recruit and retain the best and the brightest to work for the nation's defense. This Committee is concerned, however, that on an issue of such importance, the Pentagon has chosen not to consult the Congress in its deliberations, yet foreign military officials, think tanks, and union representatives have received detailed briefings on Force of the Future (FOTF) that have not been available to the Congress.**

**What was your role, if any, in establishing and executing the FOTF initiative?**

While I did not have any role in establishing the FOTF initiative, I expect, if confirmed, to play a critical role in implementing the initiative.

**What role, if any, did you have in briefs to foreign military officials, think tanks, and union representatives prior to public announcement of the FOTF initiative?**

I have not had any role in briefs to foreign military officials, think tanks, or union representatives on the FOTF initiative.

**What is the clearly defined problem faced by the current military personnel system that the FOTF initiative is aimed at addressing?**

I have not been involved in development of the FOTF initiative; however, as I understand it, it is an effort to maximize the Department's ability to access and recruit; develop and utilize; and support and retain the very best talent the nation has to offer. If confirmed, I anticipate playing a critical role in implementing the FOTF initiative and, in doing so, will work closely with Department leadership and the Congress to ensure the initiative adds value to both the military and civilian personnel systems.



## **Military Pay and Allowances**

**The Department has traditionally compared Regular Military Compensation against comparable civilian salaries to devise a percentile as a way to assess the relative attractiveness of military pay versus civilian pay.**

**What is the current comparable percentile of military pay versus civilian pay for officers and enlisted personnel?**

Although I do not know the precise percentile for comparing military and civilian pay, it is my understanding that military compensation generally compares favorably with civilian compensation.

**How do these percentiles compare to the base level at which the Department feels military compensation must be to effectively recruit and retain the highest quality personnel possible for military service?**

Although I do not know the precise percentile for comparing military and civilian pay, I believe we need to ensure military compensation remains sufficient to recruit and retain the high-quality force we need today and into the future.

**What is your assessment of the current military basic pay table in terms of providing adequate and competitive pay for military members and their families?**

If confirmed, I would review the competitiveness of military compensation to ensure it remains adequate, competitive, and sufficient to recruit and retain the high-quality force we need today and into the future.

**What changes, if any, would you recommend for the revision of the military pay table?**

At this time, I do not have any changes to recommend. However, if I am confirmed, I would review military compensation and make recommendations for changes that I believe are appropriate.

**In a recent hearing concerning military personnel reform one witness recommended flexible authorities for the military departments to establish career and retirement packages that recognize the different professional qualifications within the services. It was suggested that military career lengths be extended beyond thirty years of service for military specialties such as medical and legal, and perhaps shorter careers for infantry and similar combat arms positions.**

**What is your view on the need for such flexibilities?**

I am aware that military compensation must be broadly applied across the entire force but still be flexible enough to address recruiting and retention issues that arise in different career fields. If confirmed, I would review military personnel policies and military compensation and make recommendations for changes that I believe are appropriate.

**If needed, what changes would you advocate to the military pay tables and to the military compensation and retirement system to achieve any desired flexibility?**

At this time, I do not have any changes to recommend. However, if I am confirmed, I would review military compensation and make recommendations for changes that I believe are appropriate.

**The Senate-passed version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 included a provision that would restore the original purpose of the Basic Allowance for Housing, to provide a tax-exempt allowance for military members and their families to purchase or lease adequate private housing. This provision addressed the situation in which two or more military members form a household where each receives a Basic Allowance for Housing. It was included with an Administration proposal to reduce Basic Allowance for Housing rates to provide an up to 5% out of pocket contribution by military members to their private housing, based on market rates.**

**What are your views on whether the Basic Allowance for Housing should be provided to all military members comprising a single household?**

I understand Congress requested the Secretary of Defense to submit a report on this topic. I have not reviewed this report, but if I am confirmed I will review it and make recommendations for changes that I believe are appropriate.

**If the Basic Allowance for Housing is considered part of compensation rather than an allowance, particularly for those households that receive two or more Basic Allowances for Housing, should it be taxed as ordinary income? Should it be included in the calculation of retired pay?**

I understand Congress recently enacted a new retirement system for the military. I expect that making changes such as this would require additional analysis to understand the impact. If I am confirmed, I will review this matter and make recommendations for changes that I believe are appropriate.

**How would you amend the current system of allowances to provide adequate housing for all members of the military while also providing pay that is sufficiently competitive with that of civilian counterparts of comparable age and educational attainment?**

It is my understanding that the current housing allowance programs serve the purpose of providing adequate housing for Uniformed Service members. I further understand that,

combined with other pays and allowances, overall military compensation is sufficiently competitive with that of comparable civilian counterparts. At this time, I do not see a need to amend these programs. However, if I am confirmed, I would review military compensation and make recommendations for changes that I believe are appropriate.

**Do the military pay tables adequately compensate individuals for their specialized skills and provide an incentive to recruit science and engineering professionals into the military?**

It is my understanding that there is flexibility within the total military compensation system to incentivize the recruitment and retention of members with certain skills when and where such incentives may be needed. I have no view as to what specific flexibilities or incentives may be available for members with science or engineering backgrounds. However, if I am confirmed, I would review military compensation and make recommendations for changes that I believe are appropriate.

**If confirmed, would you advocate for a review of the adequacy of military pay tables?**

At this time, I do not have any changes to recommend. However, if I am confirmed, I would review military compensation and make recommendations for changes that I believe are appropriate.

**End Strength Reductions**

**In 2014, the Department proposed a defense strategy that included eventual end strengths of 450,000 for the Army and 182,000 for the Marine Corps over the subsequent five years.**

**What is your understanding of the Army's and Marine Corps' ability to meet these goals without forcing out many soldiers and marines who have served in combat over the past 15 years with the implicit promise that they could compete for career service and retirement?**

I understand that the Services have worked to minimize involuntary separations during the drawdown. Unfortunately, due to the size of the personnel reductions, it has been difficult for the Services to properly shape their force without some involuntary separations.

**What programs are in place to ensure that separating and retiring service members are as prepared as they can be as they reenter the civilian economy?**

It is my understanding that Department has a very robust transition assistance program under the direction of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness, in which

separating and retiring Service members are required to participate prior to leaving active duty, with a view to preparing them to reenter civilian life. Additionally, the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) connects National Guard and Reserve Members, and their families, with resources throughout the deployment cycle. YRRP also educates the members and their families, and connects them to service providers who can assist them in overcoming challenges associated with reentering the civilian economy after mobilization.

**What steps are being taken to offer reserve billets to active duty members being involuntarily separated due to the drawdown?**

I do not know the details or have specifics, but I understand that all of the Services encourage eligible active duty members who are separating, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to consider continuing their service as members of the Reserve Components.

**If sequestration continues through 2018, what will be the impact on the active duty and reserve end strengths of all the services, and how would the mix between the active and reserve forces be affected?**

It is widely understood that the continuation of sequestration will have a severe, negative impact on the Department's ability to perform its missions. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to achieve the best possible levels and mix of military strength.

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

My understanding is that Congress has supported the Department with the force shaping authorities necessary to meet the drawdown under its current plan. However, if confirmed I will carefully review whether the Department requires additional force shaping authorities from Congress.

**Recruiting and Retention**

**The Department of Defense has indicated that approximately 25 percent of today's youth population is eligible for military service. This number is alarmingly low.**

**What are the main reasons for such a small pool of individuals in the 17-24 years of age population being eligible for service? Do you believe the current standards for enlistment are the right standards?**

It is my understanding that the latest information currently available indicates that only 29 percent of today's youth meet the standards for military service without a waiver. The

majority of disqualifications are the result of obesity and other medical conditions. I believe the current enlistment standards are the right standards. That being said, I understand the Department continuously reviews these standards and makes changes as appropriate.

**What is your view of the importance of increasing the number individuals for service that are older than the typical core recruiting demographic?**

I believe it is important for the Department and the Services to continuously look for ways to expand the pool of eligible individuals, provided those individuals are fully capable of meeting the rigors of military service.

**Some services have recently relaxed grooming and appearance standards. In your view, how will this impact recruiting and retention?**

Grooming and appearance standards rest with the Military Services. I am not aware of what changes the Services may have made to such policies, but if confirmed, I would work with the Services to ensure that any proposed modification of such standards is carefully considered, including the possible implications that the modification may have on recruiting and retention.

**As the economy continues to recover and strengthen, what is your assessment of the current recruiting climate? What legislative authorities, if any, do you believe would be helpful to improve recruiting?**

With the improving economy, I understand the Department is starting to observe a more challenging recruiting environment, but is well positioned to ensure success in recruiting. I do not believe there are any additional legislative authorities needed at this time.

**Given the shrinking eligible population combined with the current force structure drawdowns and strengthening economy, do you believe the Department is, or soon will be, facing a recruiting and retention issue?**

It is my understanding that the Department is currently achieving recruiting goals, but there are indications the recruiting environment is becoming more challenging and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. Additionally, continued budgetary pressures may challenge the Services' efforts to retain the best and most qualified Service members. If confirmed and appointed I will carefully monitor recruiting and retention.

**What policies or tools are needed by the Department to increase the propensity to serve of today's youth?**

Although the American public clearly has faith in the efficacy of our military, a disconnect—defined by lack of knowledge, misperceptions, and an inability to identify with those who serve--has emerged in today's society that threatens our ability to recruit

quality youth with the skill sets our armed forces need to remain the most capable and effective military in the world.

The best way to improve propensity is to improve the perception of what it means to serve. We need to reconnect America with what military service really means through effective marketing campaigns, among other means. In order to ensure these campaigns are successful, we must have sufficient and sustained marketing and advertising resources.

### **Military Accessions Vital to National Interest Program**

**Under the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) program, the Services may recruit non-permanent resident aliens who have certain high-demand medical or linguistic skills for service in the armed forces, and offer them an expedited path to citizenship.**

**What is the status of the MAVNI program?**

It is my understanding that the MAVNI program is still an active pilot program that recruits individuals whose enlistments are determined to be vital to the national interest. I understand that under this pilot program the Department has recruited individuals with certain language or cultural skills and also medical professionals. If I am confirmed, I will ensure periodic review and oversight of this pilot.

**How many individuals have been recruited under the program since its restart, and in what occupations?**

I do not have current data, but if confirmed, I will fully inform myself about this the pilot program.

**What is your view of expanding the scope of the program to include more traditional, less specialized occupations, and to increasing the number of individuals that may be recruited under the program?**

If I am confirmed, I will review the MAVNI pilot program and consider whether expanding it would be appropriate and contribute to meeting our recruiting and readiness goals.

### **Mobilization and Demobilization of National Guard and Reserves**

**Over the past 14 years, the National Guard and Reserves have experienced their largest and most sustained employment since World War II. Reserve force management policies and systems have been characterized in the past as “inefficient and rigid” and**

readiness levels have been adversely affected by equipment stay-behind, cross-leveling, and reset policies.

**What is your assessment of advances made in improving reserve component mobilization and demobilization procedures, and in what areas do problems still exist?**

It is my understanding that the Department has focused on increasing the alert and notification timelines prior to mobilization. DoD needs to provide predictability to Reserve Component service members, their families and employers, whenever operational requirements allow. If confirmed, I would continue the efforts of the Department to improve in this area and will monitor this issue closely.

**Do you see a need to modify current statutory authorities for the mobilization of members of the National Guard and Reserves?**

I do not have enough information to make an assessment at this time. However, if confirmed, I will examine all existing authorities for accessing the Reserve Components, with a view to ensuring that the Department has the appropriate authorities to meet the challenges associated with the frequent and recurring operational role of the Guard and Reserves in our force deployment plans.

**What is your assessment of the Department of Defense programs to assist members of the National Guard and Reserves as they transition from a mobilized status?**

It is my understanding that the Department of Defense's Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) provides for the well-being of National Guard and Reserve Members, their families and communities, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle. Specifically, YRRP educates Service members and their families, and connects them to service providers who can assist them in overcoming the challenges of reintegration after mobilization.

### **Enhanced Reserve Mobilization Authorities**

**In the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, Congress authorized the Service Secretaries to mobilize units and individuals in support of pre-planned combatant command missions for up to 365 consecutive days. In the current defense strategy, the President and Secretary of Defense have stated that while conventional ground forces will be reduced, Special Forces will be increased over the next five years, and a key component of the new strategy seems to be the establishment of a rotational presence in Europe, the Middle East, and anywhere US interests are threatened. Some have called this a “lily pad” approach, and it potentially dovetails with an operational view of the Reserve components.**

**What is your assessment of the authority to order members of the Selected Reserve to active duty for preplanned missions in support of the combatant commanders (10 USC 12304b)?**

If confirmed, I will thoroughly review the effectiveness and utility of the 10 USC 12304b activation authority in light of the demands facing the Department. I will make a determination as to whether 10 USC 12304b satisfies the long-term needs of the Department, and if necessary, will recommend legislative changes that may be required to maximize the utility of this authority to the Department, while also providing as much predictability and protections to our Reserve Component members as reasonably possible.

**Are the other mobilization authorities adequate to mobilize members and units of the Selected Reserve for emerging requirements where it is not feasible to include information about the deployment in budget materials for the fiscal year of the deployment?**

If confirmed, I will examine all existing authorities to ensure that the Department can meet all of the challenges must face, including emergent unplanned requirements, particularly given the frequent and recurring operational role of the Guard and Reserves in our force deployment plans.

### **Military Quality of Life**

**The Committee is concerned about the sustainment of key quality of life programs for military families, such as family support, child care, education, employment support, health care, and morale, welfare and recreation services, especially as DOD's budget declines.**

**If confirmed, what military quality of life programs would you consider a priority, and how would you work with the Services, combatant commanders, family advocacy groups, and Congress to sustain them?**

If confirmed, I would make quality of life programs that promote the well-being and resilience of Service members and their families—including family life counseling; fitness opportunities; morale, welfare, and recreation; and child care support—a priority. I would work with stakeholders across the Department to sustain these programs, while ensuring good stewardship of public funds and appropriate return on investment.



## **Family Readiness and Support**

**Service members and their families in both the active and reserve components have made 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 service members and their families?**

In my view, military spouse career and educational assistance, together with timely access to quality child care, both on and off military installations, and the development and reinforcement of relationship and parenting skills, are among the most important family readiness issues with which the Department can assist Service members and their families.

**If confirmed, how would you ensure that family readiness needs are addressed and adequately resourced?**

I believe that, even in an era of declining budgets, the Department's continued robust emphasis on meeting family readiness needs is essential to maintaining a strong force. Family support programs need to meet the needs of military families across the Total Force—Active and Reserve Component—and wherever they live: on military installations, near military installations, or far from military installations. If confirmed, I would focus on understanding the needs of our military personnel and their families. I would work with stakeholders across the Department to sustain programs that best meet these needs, while ensuring good stewardship of public funds.

**If confirmed, how would you ensure support is provided to reserve component families related to mobilization, deployment and family readiness, as well as to active duty families who do not reside near a military installation?**

My goal, if confirmed, would be to promote a full range of services for Active, Reserve and National Guard members and their families. Based on my experience in both the public and private sectors, I believe that a coordinated, community-based network of care, encompassing support and services provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as through other federal, state, local, non-profit and private providers, can be incredibly effective in reaching and serving geographically dispersed Service members and their families.

## **Department of Defense Schools in CONUS**

**Some have questioned the continuing need for DOD-operated schools for military dependent children within the Continental United States (CONUS).**

**In light of the Administration’s request for additional Base Realignment and Closure authorities and current fiscal constraints, should DOD establish or update its criteria for the continued operation of DOD schools within CONUS?**

It is my understanding that dependents’ education plays an important role in the success, stability, readiness, and retention of our Service members and their families. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that quality educational opportunities exist for all military children, while balancing cost and exploring all options and alternatives.

**Do you believe there continues to be a necessity for DOD to provide the option of secondary education for dependents of service members in CONUS? If so, why do you believe local education agencies to be inadequate?**

Military families bear an extraordinary burden for our freedom and I believe that the availability of quality education options is a critical quality of life factor. If confirmed, I will look for high quality education options available to all military children, while balancing cost and exploring all options and alternatives.

**If confirmed, how would you approach the task of eliminating DOD-operated schools in CONUS?**

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that quality educational opportunities exist for all military children, while balancing cost and exploring all options and alternatives. In so doing, I would elicit direct feedback from the military community, advocacy and professional groups, as well as state and local educational agencies, and would collaborate and consult with the Military Departments and with Congress to determine the best options for providing education support for military families.

**Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs**

**In your view, how should the Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs collaborate with the Services to ensure that military families with special needs children receive the services they need when they relocate with the military member to a new duty location?**

As I understand it, the Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs collaborates with the Military Services to ensure that the medical and educational needs of military family members are identified and considered in the course of the assignment process. I further understand that the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)—located on military installations—offers information and referral services and support designed to help families identify local services before, during, and after a move.

**If confirmed, how would you ensure that servicemembers with special needs family members relocate to new duty stations where special needs services are available?**

I believe that the Department's current policies required the screening of military family members with special medical and educational needs *before* a move. If confirmed, I would do my best to ensure that these policies are implemented in a straightforward, uniform, and consistent fashion, with a view to ensuring that our families receive the best possible support and services.

**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?**

If confirmed, I would explore all available avenues to enhance the Department's efforts to communicate with military families with special needs dependents. I envision that a broad spectrum of outreach would be most effective, including face-to-face, DoD websites, webinars, social media outlets, digital strategies, and printed media.

### **Morale, Welfare, and Recreation**

**If confirmed, what challenges do you foresee in sustaining MWR programs in the future fiscal environment of the Department?**

I believe participation in recreation, fitness, sports, cultural arts and other leisure activities is key to improved health and well-being and helps to build strong military families and healthy communities. If confirmed, I would work with stakeholders across the Department to sustain such programs, while ensuring good stewardship of public funds.

### **Commissary and Military Exchange Systems**

**What is your view of the need for modernization of business policies and practices in the commissary and exchange systems? What are the most promising avenues for change to achieve modernization goals? What should the Department do to make the commissary system budget-neutral?**

Although I do not have details, I am aware that the Department has been examining the commissary and exchange systems with a view to reducing their reliance on appropriated funds. I recognize the importance of the commissary and exchange systems to their beneficiaries and, if confirmed, will work steadfastly to preserve the value of these benefits for our Service members and families. I agree with public comments by the Department's Deputy Chief Management Officer (DCMO) that we need to let the optimization of the commissary and exchange businesses drive the budget, rather than engaging in budget-focused cuts that would drive a reduction of the benefit. If

confirmed, I will work with the DCMO to explore and test several business strategies recommended by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) and a study by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

**What is your view of proposals to consolidate, eliminate or privatize commissaries and exchanges in certain areas where they are duplicative of services readily available at reasonable cost in the community?**

I understand that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is currently evaluating the feasibility of privatizing commissaries. Although I am not familiar with the specifics regarding privatization, if confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the GAO report to assess whether the value provided by the commissary system could be more effectively provided by a private party. I am also aware that the MCRMC put forth recommendations regarding full consolidation of the military resale system, but I tend to agree with public statements made by the DCMO to the effect that because both the commissaries and the exchanges operate under the auspices of a “common owner”—the Department of Defense—full consolidation is not necessary to achieve the benefits that the MCRMC and the BCG reports recommended. I generally agree with the BCG study’s findings that there are opportunities for the commissary and exchange systems to achieve operating efficiencies through enhanced collaboration and the development of common business systems and common business practices. Regarding your question about elimination, I believe the quality of life value of these benefits is of great importance to our Service members and their families. Therefore, unless the Department can identify a more cost effective means of providing these valued benefits, I would not support their elimination.

### **DOD Civilian Personnel Workforce**

**As the Department of Defense draws down its management headquarters functions, managers will have to make tough choice on the consolidation of functions and employees.**

**What is your view of a civilian employee retention system that incentivizes performance above all other factors when considering which employees to retain in a limited headquarters environment?**

I believe that a system basing reductions in force primarily on performance gives the Department the ability to retain those employees whose performance most contributes to mission accomplishment.

**If confirmed, what would be your role in the consolidation and elimination of duplicative and unnecessary positions within the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness?**

It is my understanding that the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs has already made efforts to consolidate or eliminate duplicative functions and unnecessary positions. If confirmed, I will continue this effort to identify and eliminate inefficiencies and redundancies within the Office.

**What additional ideas do you have to more efficiently manage the Department's civilian employees?**

If confirmed, I would work with all stakeholders to further identify workforce efficiencies, seek and apply best practices, and identify and pursue additional authorities as necessary to efficiently manage the civilian workforce, from hiring and onboarding, to performance management, to retirement and divestiture.

**Do you feel the new performance management system will properly address the issue of employee performance reviews and ratings?**

It is my understanding that the new system has been designed to focus on improving overall performance management by promoting continuous supervisor and employee discussions of expectations and performance, enhancing accountability, and affording supervisors the ability to make meaningful distinctions in their evaluations of employee performance.

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department effectively evaluates the new system to determine whether it achieves these objectives.

**Do managers have adequate tools to incentivize employee performance?**

To the best of my knowledge, supervisors in the Department of Defense have adequate tools to incentivize employee performance.

If confirmed, I will make every effort to ensure that the Department employs all of the tools available to it to incentivize and recognize employee performance in support of mission accomplishment. Should I identify new authorities and tools that might benefit the Department, I will work within the Administration and with Congress to bring them to fruition.

**Management Headquarters Reductions**

**The Department of Defense is currently under a statutory mandate to reduce headquarters staff by 25%.**

**If confirmed, will you commit to working with the DCMO to track the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the individual services' progress towards the 25-percent headquarters reductions?**

Yes, as a priority, if I am confirmed.

**What progress has the Office of the Secretary of Defense made thus far on the 25-percent reductions?**

My review of the publicly available 2017 Department of Defense Budget request revealed that comprehensive efforts were underway to meet reduction targets. If confirmed, I look forward to joining that effort to assist the Department in meeting those targets.

**Do you agree that the Department of Defense should strive to eliminate duplicative functions?**

Yes. If confirmed I will work toward that end.

**Do you believe that the process for deciding which functions are to be eliminated should be streamlined through each service?**

Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Services to see how I might assist in that regard.

### **Acquisition Workforce**

**The Department of Defense acquisition workforce has been the subject of a large quantity of reports and legislation.**

**What is your view on giving more acquisition authority to the Service Chiefs?**

I am aware of recent statutory changes in this regard. If confirmed, I will work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD(AT&L)) and the Services to ensure any associated manpower and training requirements are appropriately addressed.

### **GI Bill Benefits**

**Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act in 2008 ("Post-9/11 GI Bill") that provides generous educational benefits for service members who have served at least 90 days on active duty since 9/11.**

**What is your assessment of the impact of the Post-9/11 GI Bill on recruiting and retention, including the provision of transferability for continued service?**

It is my understanding that the measurable impact that the Post-9/11 GI Bill has on recruitment and retention is only starting to emerge. I am advised that the Department has sponsored a study with RAND National Defense Research Institute to review education benefits for Service members, including the benefits of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and their impacts on recruiting and retention.

**Would you recommend that the Department use transferability more sparingly as a retention incentive?**

I don't have a recommendation at this time, but if confirmed, I would review this issue carefully.

**Personnel Policy Implementation**

**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 policies directed by law?**

I understand that it will be my responsibility, if confirmed, to regularly consult with and inform this Committee, and other appropriate Congressional Committees, on the Department's implementation and oversight of policies directed by law.

**What is your understanding of the Department's obligation and authority to implement personnel policies to improve efficiency within the Department?**

If I am confirmed, implementing personnel policies that improve efficiency within the Department will be of utmost importance to me in the exercise of my duties.

**What is your understanding on the timeframe in which personnel policies directed by law must be implemented by the Department?**

It is my understanding that there are specific timeframes directed by law within which the Department must implement certain personnel policies. Implementing these policies within the timeframes prescribed by law and keeping Congress updated on the progress of such implementation will be my top priority, if confirmed.

**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 Defense (Manpower & Reserve Affairs)**

Yes

**Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, and other communications of information are provided 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