

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Mr. Jules Hurst III
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Duties and Qualifications

1. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASA(M&RA))?

Answer: The ASA(M&RA) serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Army and Under Secretary of the Army on issues related to talent management, quality of life and service issues, readiness, force structure, training, and mobilization. The ASA (M&RA) oversees programs and policies related to, but not limited to (1) accessions, recruiting, and performance management for Soldiers and civilians; (2) training and education, force structure, and manpower requirements; and (3) Soldier and family readiness programs. Most importantly, the ASA (M&RA) provides strategic direction regarding the Army's most precious asset - its human capital.

2. What background and experience do you have that qualify you for this position?

Answer: My experiences as the dependent of an active-duty officer, Army officer, Department of Defense civilian, defense contractor, and congressional staffer provide me a great appreciation of the needs of the employees and family members who contribute to the strength of the Army, and the changes that the Army needs to make to adapt to the changing character of warfare.

Over the past seventeen years, I have served on active-duty, as a civilian, and contractor as a Targeting Officer at U.S. Central Command, a senior intelligence analyst at the 75th Ranger Regiment, an operations officer in the Joint Special Operations Intelligence Brigade, a strategist and executive Officer on the Army Staff, a project manager for AI initiatives at Project Maven, an Army legislative liaison, and the Legislative Director to the Speaker of the House. I continue to serve as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve.

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

Answer: I believe that civilian control of the Armed Forces is fundamental to the values our Republic. If confirmed, I commit to engaging in a robust dialogue with military leadership but will ensure that civilian leadership oversight is maintained.

Conflicts of Interest

Federal ethics laws, to include 18 U.S.C. §208, prohibit government employees from participating in matters where they, or certain family members or organizations with which they have certain relationships, have a financial interest.

4. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to disclose any potential conflicts of interest, including investments, business ties, family relationships, or other connections that could be perceived as influencing your decision making?

Answer: I agree to comply with all conflicts of interest disclosure requirements set forth in the Ethics in Government Act and implementing regulations.

5. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, that if a conflict of interest arises, you will recuse yourself from participating in any decisions regarding that specific matter?

Answer: I agree to comply with all recusal requirements under 18 U.S.C. § 208 and implementing regulations.

6. Do you commit, without qualification, if confirmed, to decide matters on the merits, and exclusively in the public interest, without regard to private gain or personal benefit?

Answer: I commit to deciding matters on the merits based on the public interest, without regard to any private gain or personal benefit.

Major Challenges and Priorities

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

Answer: The ASA (M&RA) faces four major sets of challenges. First, it must continue to modernize Army recruiting practices and talent management. Second, it must improve the quality of life and quality of service of the Soldiers, civilians, and family members within the U.S. Army to become an employer of choice. Third, ASA (M&RA) must drive the Army to create training environments and readiness models that reflect the rapidly evolving operational environment. Fourth, the Army must prepare to play a major role in national mobilization if the need arises.

Over the past three years, the Army has made investments in the professionalization of its recruiting workforce and increased its focus on talent management. If confirmed as ASA (M&RA), I would carefully evaluate the efficacy of these reforms and reinforce success with an eye towards modernizing our processes and systems for bringing individuals into the Army as Soldiers and civilians, and better matching talents with assignments through the exploration of more flexible career development models. Aligning leaders and Soldiers to the right assignments leads to better outcomes for the Army, the Soldier, and the unit.

Improving quality of life and quality of service will lead to direct gains in the Army's ability to attract and retain talent. If confirmed, I will work to remove unnecessary administrative burdens from Soldiers, civilians, and families, so they can focus on higher priority tasks. If the Army

wants to be an employer of choice for America's sons and daughters, it must continually improve quality of life and quality of service for service members, civilians, and their families.

The character of warfare is changing rapidly. If confirmed as ASA (M&RA), I will advocate for investments that enable Commanders to replicate modern threat environments at combat training centers and at home station. I will also work to create predictive models that better enable the Army to see the impacts of troop rotations and deployments on its future readiness.

The United States of America has not fully mobilized for war since World War II. If confirmed, I will work to build the capacity, processes, plans, and intradepartmental coordination in place to successfully execute a large-scale mobilization.

Personnel Policy Implementation

8. If confirmed, what Army personnel policies and processes would you implement to change or improve the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources management—both military and civilian—across the Department of the Army?

Answer: If confirmed, I will prioritize modernizing our human resources management to build a more ready and resilient Total Force. My focus will be on transforming talent management in a manner that helps us better assess talent and match it with service needs, to include studying our existing process for promoting and selecting leaders. This transformation requires a data-driven understanding of talent within our force. Additionally, we must explore more flexible career development models and take advantage of the unique skills that members of the Reserve Component can provide us.

9. 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 Army personnel policies directed by law.

Answer: I fully recognize the vital role of Congressional oversight, particularly by this Committee, in ensuring the effective and responsible implementation of Army personnel policies directed by law. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing open communication and consultation with this Committee and other relevant committees of Congress. I believe that a strong, collaborative relationship with Congress is essential for the Army's success, and I pledge to foster that relationship through my words and actions.

10. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to ensure consultation with the Committee on significant changes to Army personnel policies, including when the changes are not directed by law?

Answer: I understand the importance of close collaboration with this Committee on matters of Army personnel policy, even when changes are not explicitly mandated by law. If confirmed, I will prioritize building a shared understanding of the rationale behind any significant policy changes. To achieve this, I will actively solicit and carefully consider the Committee's feedback and be prepared to adjust policy proposals based on that feedback. I will also maintain open lines

of communication and utilize both formal and informal channels to ensure the Committee is kept informed and has opportunities to ask questions and raise concerns.

11. What is your understanding of the time period within which the Department must implement personnel policies directed by law?

Answer: My understanding is that the Army is obligated to implement personnel policies directed by law in a timely and efficient manner, adhering to the specific timelines outlined in the legislation as well as those provided by the Department of Defense. If no specific timeline is provided, the Army must implement the policies as expeditiously as possible. I also recognize that various factors can impact implementation timelines, such as resource constraints, technological limitations, or unforeseen complexities. If confirmed, I will prioritize the prompt and effective implementation of all legally mandated personnel policies.

Non-Deployable Service Members

12. In your view, should soldiers 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 of Defense policy?

Answer: I agree with the current Department of Defense policy regarding the deployability of Soldiers. Soldiers want to be ready when called, and the Army wants them to be ready. If a Soldier is consistently not ready to deploy, the Army owes it to them to help them overcome that challenge.

13. Under what circumstances would the retention of a soldier who has been non-deployable for more than 12 months be in the best interest of the Army?

Answer: The Army evaluates every Soldier who is not able to deploy. For Soldiers who are not able to deploy for greater than 12 months, there is a multi-tiered evaluation process designed to keep the Soldier in the Army. If the Soldier is able to continue to serve and perform their required duties without worsening the Soldier's health and wellbeing, they may be allowed to continue their service.

14. What are your ideas for addressing the challenges of medical non-deployability in the Army's reserve components?

Answer: To improve medical readiness in the Army Reserve and Army National Guard, the Army should evaluate the efficacy of its existing medical screening program and physical health assessments, encourage participation in TRICARE Reserve Select, and provide training to Reserve officers and Non-Commissioned Officers on helping their formations optimize their health.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

15. In your view, how adequate and effective are Department of the Army policies, programs, and training in regard to the prevention of and response to sexual assault in the Army?

Answer: In my view, the Army must always seek to evaluate and improve efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault. If confirmed, I will prioritize the prevention of and response to sexual assault. I will support the Army's ongoing efforts to implement DoD directives and the recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, including the transition to a professional Sexual Harassment/Assault Prevention and Response workforce. I commit to fostering a culture of respect and accountability across the Army.

Sexual Harassment

16. What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the military sexual harassment programs of the Department of the Army?

Answer: While the Army's sexual harassment programs reduced sexual harassment in the ranks and enhanced unit cohesion and readiness, there is room to improve. If confirmed, I will review and prioritize a thorough assessment of the effectiveness of Army's military sexual harassment programs by working with Army leaders and experts.

Suicide Prevention

In 2023, the Department of Defense released the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC) report which included recommendations to the Department to improve quality of life, aid in building healthy climates and cultures, and better address stigma as a barrier to help-seeking, amongst other things.

17. If confirmed, what efforts, if any, from the SPRIRC report implementation will you continue to prioritize?

Answer: If confirmed, I will prioritize the implementation of the SPRIRC recommendations focused on building a more resilient Army culture. I will focus on expanding military community programs, strengthening lethal means safety training, and leveraging data analytics to target prevention efforts to those at highest risk. I recognize the importance of addressing stigma and fostering a climate where Soldiers feel comfortable seeking help. I am eager to learn from the experts within the Army and will champion a collaborative approach to ensure these vital initiatives are effectively implemented.

18. If confirmed, what additional efforts would you undertake to strengthen the Department of the Army's suicide prevention programs to reduce the number of suicides among service members, including in the reserve components, and their families?

Answer: If confirmed, I am committed to strengthening the Army's suicide prevention programs through a focused, data-driven approach. I will prioritize expanding access to lethal means safety

initiatives, including promoting voluntary safe storage and enhanced training for leaders. Crucially, I will advocate for improved data analytics to identify and support at-risk Soldiers, and ensure access to mental health services for all service members and their families. I will work closely with the Defense Health Agency and other stakeholders to achieve these goals.

United States Military Academy

19. What is your assessment of the efficacy of the policies and processes in place at USMA to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment?

Answer: If confirmed, I will prioritize a thorough assessment of USMA's policies and processes for preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment. I also understand USMA has implemented important initiatives, including enhanced training and reporting procedures. However, continuous evaluation is critical. I will focus on understanding the impact of these programs on cadet behavior and the climate for reporting and ensuring the Academy's values of respect and dignity are fully integrated into the cadet experience.

20. What is your assessment of the efficacy of suicide prevention programs at USMA?

Answer: If confirmed, I will prioritize understanding the efficacy of USMA's suicide prevention programs. I recognize the Academy's commitment to cadet well-being through training, accessible mental health services, and early intervention systems. I will focus on ensuring these programs are data-driven, effectively destigmatize seeking help, and are responsive to the evolving needs of the cadet population.

Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC)

21. In your view, to what extent is the Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC) program a viable source of officer accessions for the Army?

Answer: SROTC produces most of the officers who enter the United States Army. It is critical to meeting the Army's officer accession mission.

22. In your view, should the Army 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.

Answer: The Army must direct its resources to successful SROTC programs. If an SROTC continually fails to meet its accession mission, the Army should consider shifting resources to better performing programs.

23. To what extent would you seek to modify the SROTC program to enhance geographic diversity in Army officer accessions?

Answer: From what I understand, the Army regularly evaluates where its SRTOC programs are located and pays special attention to the geographic distribution of college-age populations during this process.

Military Compensation

24. 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?

Answer: Yes, I agree that a competitive military compensation package forms the cornerstone of an all-volunteer force. It serves as both a gateway and a stabilizer—attracting high-quality recruits and retaining experienced personnel who form the backbone of readiness. Compensation must also reflect the unique demands of military service.

25. The 14th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, released in January 2025, concluded that the current military compensation package is strongly competitive with the civilian labor market. What is your assessment of the current military pay package and its adequacy in recruiting and retaining servicemembers?

Answer: I assess that the current compensation package remains competitive, particularly when you account for healthcare, housing allowances, and retirement benefits. The Army must continually measure the effectiveness of pay structure not only against static benchmarks in the civilian labor market, but against evolving expectations, cost of living realities, and the operational tempo experienced by servicemembers and their families.

26. In recent years, Congress worked toward a substantial pay raise for junior enlisted troops, which culminated in a 14.5 percent increase in basic pay for grades E-1 to E-4 and a 4.5 percent across-the-board annual pay increase for the rest of the military in the FY25 NDAA. What changes, if any, would you recommend to the current military pay and benefits package, if confirmed?

Answer: If confirmed, I would work with colleagues in the Department of Defense to regularly assess the competitiveness of military pay. The recent pay raise for junior enlisted personnel corrects a long-overdue historical undervaluation of early career service. I would advocate for periodic structural reviews of pay tables to prevent future stagnation, especially for those early in their years of service.

Other considerations include modernizing special pays and incentives to align with contemporary high-demand skill sets (cyber, linguistics, AI, etc.). If confirmed, I would work with DoD to review Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to address regional disparities and reduce out-of-pocket burdens more accurately. I would also evaluate family support and childcare benefits, which are increasingly central to retention, especially for mid-career NCOs and officers.

27. What specific recommendations do you have for balancing rising military personnel expenditures with other defense spending priorities, such as procurement and modernization?

Answer: I recommend strategic stewardship, not austerity, to balance personnel costs with broader defense priorities. The solution is not to pit the warfighter against the weapons system, but to optimize both by ensuring every dollar enhances capability and readiness.

28. How can the Department of the Army utilize targeted bonuses and incentives to reward and retain personnel in critical skill areas?

Answer: The Department of the Army should use targeted bonuses to address gaps in talent. Bonus levels must be data-driven and they must be authorized in a way that enables their flexible execution. Moreover, they should be employed in a manner that compliments non-monetary incentives.

Professional Military Education

29. If confirmed, what actions would you take to improve the quality of education at Army War College?

Answer: The Army War College (AWC) is vital to the development of strategic leaders in the Army, other Services, and other nations. It has a long history of providing exceptional educational experiences through research and instruction.

If confirmed, I will recommend that the AWC focus its curriculum on subjects that are most aligned with our present security challenges, to include, but not limited to: area studies, grand strategy, military history, military technology, wargames and simulations, and the study of modern campaigns in places like Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Gaza.

30. What actions would you take to enhance the perception of Army officers about the quality and value of the Army War College?

Answer: If the curriculum is relevant and well-executed, and the standards are high, Army officers will perceive value in attending the Army War College. If confirmed, I commit to studying officer perspectives of the current curriculum and instruction and to advocating for appropriate adjustments.

End Strength

31. Is the Army's current end strength sufficient to meet current national security objectives and execute the associated operational plans? If not, what end strength do you believe is necessary? Please explain your answer.

Answer: If confirmed, I will assess the Army's end strength against National security objectives. My focus will be on filling the Army's combat formations with the most qualified Soldiers. To achieve that end state, I will seek opportunities to recruit and train talented Soldiers and leverage incentives to retain that talent.

Recruiting and Retention

The 2024 National Defense Strategy Commission stated that "The DoD workforce and the all-volunteer force provide an unmatched advantage. However, recruiting failures have shrunk the force and raise serious questions about the all-volunteer force in peacetime, let alone in major combat." In addition, DOD studies indicate that only about 23% of today's youth population is eligible for military service, and only a fraction of those who meet military accession standards are interested in serving.

32. In your view, what are the main reasons that less than a quarter of 17 to 24-year-olds are eligible for military service, and how would you propose increasing the size of that pool without degrading the quality of recruits?

Answer: According to DoD data, most individuals are not eligible because they are overweight. While the Army offers the Future Soldier Prep Course to candidates struggling with their weight, the Army needs additional help to increase the number of individuals eligible for military service.

33. If required to choose between maintaining high recruitment and retention standards and achieving authorized end strength levels, which would be more important, in your view?

Answer: The Army will not sacrifice quality for end strength. It will meet all Congressional and DoD standards in quality.

34. Similarly, why do you believe that the propensity of youth to serve continues to drop and is at its lowest level (about 10 percent according to DOD data) in years?

Answer: Despite December's increase in propensity to 13%, propensity remains historically low. This is a multifaceted issue driven by negative and incorrect perceptions of military service and a decline in the population's trust of government institutions. I believe that our best way of overcoming these obstacles is increasing the quality of service of our current service members and empowering them to change false perceptions about military service.

35. What impact do current medical and other qualifications for enlistment in the Army have on the number of individuals eligible for military service? If confirmed,

what changes to such qualifications, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of individuals eligible for service without degrading the quality of recruits?

Answer: If confirmed, I commit to continuing to work with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and other services to evaluate our current medical standards for accession and retention.

36. 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?

Answer: The Army should not sacrifice any standards for enlistment. I believe the medical standards for service should be regularly evaluated using a data-centric approach.

37. Rather than relying solely on ever-higher compensation for a shrinking pool of volunteers, what creative steps would you take, if confirmed, to expand the pool of eligible recruits and improve Army recruiting?

Answer: If confirmed, I commit to exploring non-monetary incentives, to include improvements in quality of service and new methods of advertising to attract new populations to service in the U.S. Army.

38. What steps, if any, should be taken to ensure that current operational requirements and tempo do not adversely impact the overall recruiting, retention, readiness, and morale of soldiers?

Answer: In my experience, the Army attempts to balance operational requirements against the health of the force, readiness, and modernization efforts. However, mission demands are still paramount. The Army can reduce stress on the force by creating predictive readiness models that help leaders understand how various actions impact the future force, increasing the size/capacity of stressed-force elements, and communicating readiness risks associated with deployments and rotations.

39. Several Services have reported record high retention rates to Congress in the last year. While retention has helped to offset recruiting challenges in recent years, how will you ensure retention efforts are not only meeting end strength goals, but also ensuring retained personnel possess the right skills, experience, and readiness to meet future operational demands?

Answer: The Army has met its retention mission for the year. If confirmed, I will focus on career flexibility, allowing soldiers to explore different roles, which increases Soldier satisfaction and engagement. The Army must retain the right skills to stay competitive in the global landscape, especially for warfighting. This means ongoing investment in professional development to equip soldiers with the skills needed for modern warfare.

Department of the Army Reserve Components

Historically, the reserve components have been positioned as a strategic reserve to be used in the event of significant armed conflict involving the United States. In the post-9/11 era, reserve forces have been used more extensively to support both contingency operations and ongoing military requirements in a garrison environment. Today, in addition to being an operational reserve, members of the reserve component are used continuously as a part-time workforce for the Department of Defense to perform its ongoing training and readiness requirements.

40. In your view, should the reserve components serve as a part-time workforce, an operational reserve, a strategic reserve, or some combination of those?

Answer: The Army Reserve and the Army National Guard provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to both the Total Army and the Joint Force. In the last three decades, the Department of Defense has routinely leveraged reserve units as an operational reserve, but their function as a strategic reserve remains. The current operational environment and stresses on the Joint Force demand that reserve units be prepared to fulfill either role.

41. In light of your answer, do the reserve components require increased levels of full-time support and oversight by the active component, including improved equipment, increased training, adequate compensation and reimbursement, effective career management, balanced Professional Military Education requirements, and higher levels of overall resourcing for readiness going forward?

Answer: Reserve units that provide critical capabilities that are unavailable in the active force should receive prioritization for resources to include equipment modernization, training, and full-time support.

The Reserves are a vital, integrated part of the total force – providing the resources, training, management, equipment, and opportunities they require to be lethal and effective is critical to the overall readiness of the Department of Defense.

42. In your view, is the Army executing existing authorities to fully improve permeability between the active and reserve components?

Answer: The Army should continue to make reforms to increase permeability between components. Information systems, authorities, funding issues, and the Army's methods for documenting force structure all inhibit permeability between active and reserve components. If confirmed, I will use my experience as a reserve officer to reduce these barriers and increase interoperability between Army components.

43. 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?

Answer: In my assessment, the requirements to become a Joint Qualified Officer are overly burdensome and do not provide sufficient opportunities for officers with significant joint experience to receive credit. Reserve officers have an even more difficult time than their active-duty counterparts receiving joint credit. For example:

- o Reserve Component officers, by the nature of their service, often have limited access to joint billets.
- o Reserve Component officers often have established civilian careers that make it difficult to take a year away for a joint tour. The financial and professional impact can be significant.
- o Reserve Component officers rely on mobilization to fulfill joint tour requirements. This is problematic as mobilizations are unpredictable.

The Department of Defense should study alternative means for assessing the joint experience of its officers, to include stratification of joint qualification based on time spent performing joint duty or in a joint environment.

44. In your view, what legislative reforms, if any, should be made in order to facilitate easier transitions for members of all components between active and reserve status?

Answer: Facilitating smoother transitions between Active and Reserve Component status is crucial for maintaining a highly capable and adaptable Total Army. Congress could consider streamlining mobilization authorities to enhance transition between Army components.

Military Quality of Life

45. If confirmed, what quality of life and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs would you consider to be priorities?

Answer: Quality of Life programs are a critical element to maintaining morale for Soldiers and their families. The MWR programs that installations prioritize often varies, based on the needs of the personnel and families stationed there. For example, an MWR library may be a high priority for a remote or isolated installation with inadequate public libraries, while a program like Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers will be more important for an installation with large numbers of young service members. I will work to ensure that commanders have the flexibility to prioritize the MWR programs that make the most sense for their commands. I will also prioritize investments in priority housing for Soldiers and military families.

46. 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?

Answer: Appropriate metrics to measure effectiveness will vary from program to program. I will work with MWR experts to develop appropriate metrics for evaluating MWR programs, but the metrics would likely consider cost effectiveness of the program compared to commercial equivalents and participation rate/usage of the program. Customer satisfaction surveys also provide useful information.

Military Family Readiness and Support

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

Answer: In my view, the most important family readiness issues for Servicemembers (Soldiers) and their Families are access to quality and affordable childcare, the availability of reliable health care, and meaningful career opportunities for spouse employment. If confirmed, I would explore options to increase access to affordable childcare for military families. I understand a significant amount of work has been done by the Department to increase access, and if confirmed, I would support these efforts. Spouse employment is also a critical piece to family readiness and retention. If confirmed, I will explore options to reduce discretionary permanent changes of station (PCS) to improve geographic stability for military families. Availability to reliable health care is a critical enabler of military family readiness. If confirmed, I will commit to working with Department of Defense partners to identify and resolve roadblocks for Soldiers and their families accessing health care to meet their needs.

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

Answer: Access to high-quality and affordable childcare is work force enabler and critical component to recruitment, retention, and readiness. If confirmed, I will review the Army’s plan to improve and sustain the significant strides to promote access to care for the Total Force, including initiatives such the Army Fee Assistance Program, the newly implemented 100% staff discount for the first child, and the robust employee transfer program. I will commit to evaluating the need for additional infrastructure, retention incentives for staff, investment in programs like the Military Child Care in Your Home, and partnerships with communities with a high population of Guard and Reserve personnel for weekend drill care needs. I will partner with OSD and the other Services to implement the NDAA FY25 Child Development Program modernization and compensation model to ensure providers are well trained and well compensated for duties performed, thus increasing retention of staff and access to care.

49. If confirmed, how would you ensure that soldiers with family members with special needs are assigned to duty stations where services are available to address those needs?

Answer: If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that Soldiers with family members with special needs are assigned to duty stations where appropriate services are available to address those needs. The Army has a responsibility to support these Soldiers and their families, and I will prioritize efforts to improve the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and ensure its effectiveness. If confirmed, I will focus on data-driven assignment coordination, transparency, and most importantly, communication with Soldiers and families.

50. 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?

Answer: I recently became the father of a special needs child, and I am committed to supporting Army family members enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). If confirmed, I will prioritize proactive and effective outreach to military families with special needs dependents to ensure they are aware of and able to access the support they need. With nearly 50,000 Active-Duty Soldier and over 55,000 family members enrolled, EFMP impacts a significant portion of the force and requires dedicated attention. If confirmed, my approach will focus on improving the provision of family support services, with an emphasis on families receiving a warm handoff during relocation.

51. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to improve military spouse employment?

Answer: If confirmed, I will prioritize improving military spouse employment opportunities as a key factor in strengthening military readiness, retention, and the overall well-being of Army families. I will focus on improving the Army's Civilian Employment Assignment Tool, which helps military spouses by supporting transfers into new positions without a break in service. I will also work to strengthen military spouse entrepreneurship and promote employment readiness programs that provide installation-level career counseling, resume assistance, and job search support to military spouses.

Department of the Army Civilian Workforce Matters

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

Answer: The Army's civilian workforce is a critical part of the Army team. If confirmed, I commit to streamlining the civilian hiring process, improving quality of service for Army civilians, and exploring the Army's options to offering non-monetary and monetary incentives to attract and retain top performers.

53. What is your view of the effect on morale, and effectiveness of the Army's civilian workforce in light of the Administration's proposed reductions in the workforce?

Answer: As I understand it, the Army's optimization of its workforce as part of the Army Transformation Initiative has created some anxiety in portions of the civilian workforce. If confirmed, I commit to open communication with our great civilians to reduce their anxiety, and to emphasizing the use of voluntary moves and separations to place our talent where it needs to be.

54. What will be the impact on the effectiveness and readiness of the Army civilian workforces if the Administration's proposed reductions are achieved through the use of voluntary incentives? What do you understand the costs of such incentives to be?

Answer: The Department of Defense is making an effort to optimize its civilian workforce and align talent against its greatest challenges. The use of voluntary incentives like voluntary early retirement and the deferred resignation program have permitted the Department to achieve these workforce reductions while minimizing the human impact. While there are short-term costs associated with these initiatives in FY25, these actions will result in savings through the FYDP that can be reapplied towards Departmental priorities.

55. In your judgment, what are the biggest challenges facing the Army in effectively and efficiently managing its civilian workforce?

Answer: If confirmed, I would work with Army leadership to understand the challenges Army faces in managing the civilian workforce. I would maximize the use of any hiring and compensation flexibilities and authorities the Congress has provided and seek out ways to bring long-lasting improvements and promote innovation and excellence. I will review our personnel processes and systems and look for efficiencies that will enable effective management of the civilian workforce.

56. In your view, what are the benefits and detriments to the use of borrowed military manpower?

Answer: There is a balance to strike when considering employment of borrowed military manpower, or BMM. Using BMM gives commanders flexibility to surge forces to cover crucial requirements; however, commanders must weigh the impact of using BMM on the readiness of the formations from which BMM are drawn.

Cyber and Science-Technical Workforce

57. In your view, how effective is the Cyber Excepted Service Workforce authority under section 1599f of title 10, United States Code, in helping the Army meet its requirements for a highly qualified and competent cyber workforce? Do you have any recommendations for improvement for that authority?

Answer: If confirmed, I will examine the Army's use of the Cyber Excepted Service (CES) authority provided by Congress and determine if the authority can be improved through modification or a change in application.

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

Answer: The Army should pursue a technical workforce of both service members and civilians. Service members with technical skills bring their military experience to bear in applying new technologies and can undertake expeditionary missions. Civilian technologists may have the ability to bring in additional private sector experience or that is less common amongst military technologists.

59. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the directors of defense labs under the purview of Army have the civilian workforce management tools they need to shape their science, technology, and engineering workforces?

Answer: Special hiring authorities, like Cyber Excepted Service, AcqDemo, and LabDemo, are essential tools for the Department of Defense to compete for the best and brightest minds in science, technology, engineering, and acquisition. By adapting aspects of traditional personnel management, these authorities allow us to recruit and retain individuals with specialized skills critical to national security. If confirmed, I would partner with the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology) and the Chief Information Officer to identify opportunities to enhance the special hiring authorities to support a more effective, agile, and mission-aligned workforce in the defense labs.

60. Do you have recommendations for how to better track the workforce with highly specialized technical skills, including cyber, acquisition, scientific and engineering degrees, to ensure that the Army has sufficient people to assess whether it is able to compete with the private sector for talent?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with civilian personnel experts to identify ways to better track the workforce with highly specialized technical skills, including cyber, acquisition and engineering degrees. Additionally, I will work with the ASA (ALT) and CIO to survey these workforces to better understand how we can attract and retain them.

Senior Executive Service

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

Answer: Selecting members of the Senior Executive Service is just as important as selecting the Department's senior military leaders. If confirmed, I will evaluate the Department of the Army's current means of SES selection / promotion and determine how we need to adjust our methods to

select and promote our best civilians to positions of responsibility and pull in talent from outside of the public sector.

62.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?

Answer: If confirmed, I will ensure the Army's SES performance planning process and the resulting performance plans are required to include performance metrics that are directly aligned to organizational goals, mission statements, and strategic plans. Moreover, I will evaluate our existing mechanisms for assessing SES performance, compensating our top performers, aligning members of the SES against the appropriate mission sets.

63. Are you satisfied with the subject matter and rigor of SES professional development programs currently available? If not, what changes would you make to these programs, if confirmed?

Answer: If confirmed, I will evaluate the current state of SES development programs and determine if they meet the needs of the Army.

64. What is the impact to the SES program, and the morale of the members of the SES service, of the shuttering of the Federal Executive Institute?

Answer: While Federal Executive Institute (FEI) was a valued resource, my understanding is that the Army's Executive Education Framework and SES development program is robust, and the Army continues to adapt and expand partnerships with leading universities to allow for greater customization and alignment with the Army's specific needs and strategic priorities.

If confirmed, I will support the Army's commitment to maintaining a positive development experience and emphasizing clear communication about the enhanced opportunities, highlighting the Army's continued investment in leadership growth.

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.

65. 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.

Answer: Yes

66. 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.

Answer: Yes

67. 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.

Answer: Yes

68. 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.

Answer: Yes

69. 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.

Answer: Yes

70. 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.

Answer: Yes

71. 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.

Answer: Yes