HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON MILITARY AND CIVILIAN
PERSONNEL PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IN REVIEW ON
THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022 AND
THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

U.S. Senate
Subcommittee on Personnel
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m. in
Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Kirsten
Gillibrand, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Subcommittee Members Present: Gillibrand [presiding],
Tillis, Hawley, and Tuberville.
OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW YORK

Senator Gillibrand: Good afternoon, everyone. The subcommittee meets today to receive testimony on the military and civilian personnel programs in the Department of Defense and the Military Service in review of the administration's Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2022. This is the subcommittee's annual personnel posture hearing, and serves to establish a foundational record for the committee of the Department's full range of activities concerns matters affecting servicemembers, their families, retirees, and the Department's civilian workforce, and to provide the Department the opportunity to discuss their personnel policy priorities.

To our witnesses, welcome, and thank you for appearing. We will have two panels today. The first panel consists officials from the Office of The Secretary of Defense, that cover the full range of military and civilian personnel programs. Mr. Lernes Herbert -- oh A-bear. Is that how you say it? Got it. Okay. I was like, what is this phonetic? I do not understand it. Okay.

Mr. Lernes Herbert, performing the duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Dr. Terry Adirim, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs; and Dr. Elizabeth Van Winkle, Executive
Director, Office of Force Resiliency.

The second panel will include the senior personnel chiefs of the Military Services, Lieutenant General Gary Brito, U.S. Army, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-Senator Kelly: Vice Admiral John B. Nowell, Jr., U.S. Navy, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, N-1 and Chief of Naval Personnel; Lieutenant General Brian T. Kelly, U.S. Air Force, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services; Lieutenant General David A. Ottignon, U.S. Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; and Ms. Patricia Mulcahy, Chief Human Capital Officer, United States Space Force.

While I recognize that we have not yet received the administration's budget request, which is not unusual for the first year of an administration, I appreciate your willingness to appear here today to discuss personnel programs and policies.

For the past 20 years, our country been in a state of continuous war. President Biden has announced a withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan by no later than September of this year. While this represents the closing of one chapter, it also means the beginning of a new one. As Avril Haines, the Director of National Intelligence, summarized in testimony before this committee a couple of weeks ago, quote, "The United States and its allies will face a diverse
array of threats that are playing out amidst the global
disruption resulting from COVID-19 pandemic and against the
backdrop of great power competition, the disruptive effects
of ecological degradation and changing climate, and
increasing number of empowered non-state actors, and rapidly
evolving technology."

These challenges mean that the need for a highly
trained and capable military and civilian workforce within
the Department of Defense and throughout the Federal
Government has never been greater. I believe the
Department's upcoming budget request represents an important
strategic reset and an opportunity to ensure that military
and civilian personnel systems are oriented for the force we
need in the future, not a force rooted in the past.

As I stated last month, a subcommittee hearing on the
cyber workforce to prevent the types of attacks we now see
with alarming frequency, including attacks over the weekend
against a major gas pipeline that supplies gas to much of
the East Coast, we must grow and maintain our cyber
capability, and that starts with people. Our ability to
field the world's strongest military has always come from
the collective talent and dedication of our servicemembers
and the civilian workforce that supports them. We must
commit to meeting these new threats by developing, fielding,
and maintaining the world's most capable workforce.
I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about their ideas to develop a workforce ready to meet these challenges. We must ensure military and civilian pay and benefit enable the Department to compete for America's best and brightest, especially in emerging technology fields, including fully funding civilian pay raises that keep pace with inflation, something this Congress has consistently failed to do over the past 8 years. We must fully fund military family programs and child care programs. We must ensure adequate resources for DoD-operated schools and supplemental impact aid to help local school districts educate military children. We must continue to ensure that military health care is fully funded and oriented to support all servicemembers and their families, especially the most vulnerable, those with special needs.

And finally, it will come as no surprise to anyone here, I am sure, but I will continue throughout this legislative hear to fight tirelessly to improve the military culture by eliminating the scourge of sexual assault within the ranks and reforming the way the military responds to and prosecutes these cases.

Senator Tillis, welcome. I look forward, as always, to working with you on the fiscal year 2022 Defense Authorization Bill, which I am confident we will enact for the 61st consecutive year. We worked so well over time here
to take care of our servicemembers, their families, and civilians that support them, and I expect that to continue.

    Senator Tillis?
STATEMENT OF HON. THOM TILLIS, U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA

Senator Tillis: Thank you, Chair Gillibrand. There are certain aspects I missed about having the chairman's role. Having to be the first one to pronounce some of the difficult names is not one of them, so thank you so much.

I want to thank you for holding this hearing, and I really want to thank you for the work that we have done together. I have enjoyed working with you over the last 6 years, especially to improve important programs to serve military personnel and their families. Together we have done a lot of hard work, but we have much more to do.

This is an important hearing, oversight hearing for us, as we are able to get a current perspective on the personnel and readiness programs for the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Military Services. I want to thank the witnesses for appearing here. I want to thank those that we have been in contact with, Dr. Van Winkle being one of them, before the hearing. I know you have been working hard in preparation for this hearing, and working through all the challenges of COVID over the last year, so thank you for your service.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses on many important topics, including suicide prevention, sexual assault prevention and response, domestic violence
prevention, the impact of COVID-19 on military readiness, recruitment, and retention, COVID's impact on military families, the challenges the Defense Health Agency has encountered as the DoD reforms the military health system, reform of the Family Advocacy and Exceptional Family Member Programs, officer and enlisted personnel management, and civilian personnel management.

Again, Senator Gillibrand, thank you for your leadership on this subcommittee. I look forward to working closely with you, and I look forward to the witnesses' testimony.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Mr. Herbert?
STATEMENT OF LERNES HERBERT, PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE
AFFAIRS

Mr. Herbert: Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member
Tillis, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you
for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Manpower and Reserve Affairs has been a key part of the
DoD response to COVID-19 for well over a year now. M&RA's
contributions, including issuing stop-movement orders and
other essential personnel policies, both for military and
civilian personnel, to protect our people and keep our
Department running has been crucial throughout the pandemic.

Manpower and Reserve Affairs also oversaw the rapid
mobilization of more than 65,000 Reserve component members,
supporting the government's response to COVID, and modified
operations to our child development centers and DOD
schools to ensure we continue caring for and educating
military children as we battled the pandemic.

And while M&RA continues to support the nation's fight
against COVID-19, we also have not lost sight of the many
initiatives across our portfolio that take care of our
people and build the DoD workforce we need to protect
America and defeat our adversaries, now and in the future.

The M&RA team has worked hard and continues to do so on
policy priorities like combatting extremism, the service to
transgender individuals, sustaining the all-volunteer force. We are also working on issues related to ensuring our servicemembers, civilians, and families have access to affordable child care, that our DoD school continue to provide high-quality learning opportunities for our dependents, and that spouse can pursue not just jobs but careers throughout their service.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here, and I look forward to answering any of your questions you may have.

[The joint prepared statement of Mr. Herbert, Dr. Adirim, and Ms. Van Winkle follows:]
Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Dr. Adirim?
STATEMENT OF TERRY ADIRIM, M.D., ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR HEALTH AFFAIRS

Dr. Adirim:  Good afternoon. So I guess you can hear me. Great. Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am honored to represent the military and civilian medical professionals in the Military Health System who are serving around the world and here at home, delivering health care in support of our 9.6 million beneficiaries, as well as providing COVID-19 support to millions of Americans throughout the United States.

My testimony will provide the subcommittee with information on major military medical operations for the coming year. The most significant issue for the Military Health System is the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Department's role in the response. Secretary Austin has made clear that the greatest proximate challenge to our nation's security is the threat of COVID-19. The MHS is providing critical health support worldwide to our military forces supporting other Federal and state entities as part of a whole-of-government response to this crisis, and continuing to meet other strategic global mission requirements while sustaining high-quality health services to our military servicemembers and their families.

Regarding COVID-19 vaccinations, as of this morning
over 55 percent of our active-duty force is already vaccinated, and this number is climbing daily. We have directly administered almost 3.2 million doses to our eligible beneficiaries and coordinated another 600,000 doses of vaccine through our TRICARE providers and retail pharmacy networks.

To meet urgent health care needs throughout the pandemic, the Department has significantly expanded the use of virtual health to meet beneficiary demand while minimizing unnecessary risk for patients and staff. With our vaccination rollout now reaching our entire population of eligible beneficiaries, we are communicating with our beneficiaries who may have delayed or deferred needed preventive and routine medical care during the worst days of the pandemic, to ensure that they get timely quality care.

The Department is also resuming a number of major reforms within the Military Health System. The fiscal year 2017 NDAA enacted sweeping reforms to the organization and management of military medicine. The overarching direction from Congress was to centralize and standardize many military health care functions in a way that better integrates readiness and health delivery. Included among these reforms was the expanded authority and responsibility of the Defense Health Agency to manage military medical treatment facilities, or MTFs, worldwide, and the authority
to adjust medical infrastructure in the MHS to maintain readiness and core competencies of health care providers.

Follow a strategic pause in these reforms due to the initial COVID-19 pandemic response, the MHS has resumed executing the transition of MTFs to DHA administration and management, in accordance with the law. Similarly, the Department submitted its required report to Congress in February 2020, on our plan to restructure military treatment facilities. The report articulated DoD's decisions to achieve a proper balance between meeting readiness requirements and managing the total cost of health care in the direct and purchased care systems.

The Department is currently revalidating the assumptions made regarding its readiness requirements prior to the pandemic, as well as the assessment of network capacity to absorb additional patients where we intend to proceed with right-sizing plans. Local transitions will only occur when we are certain that TRICARE networks can provide timely and quality access to health care for our beneficiaries. If they cannot, we will revise our plans.

Finally, the Department is also grateful for this committee's long-term advocacy and support for our military medical research program. Military medical research advances the state of medical science in those areas of most pressing need and relevance to today's emerging threats,
which includes the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for inviting me here today to speak with you about military medicine, our response to the global pandemic, and our plans to further improve our health system on behalf of the uniformed servicemembers and families who we serve. I look forward to the discussion.
Senator Gillibrand: Dr. Van Winkle?
STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH P. VAN WINKLE, Ph.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF FORCE RESILIENCY

Ms. Van Winkle: Member of the committee, good afternoon and thank you for having me today. I have appeared before you in past year expressing a commitment to addressing the issues that fall under me, to include sexual assault, harassment, diversity and inclusion, and suicide prevention, and countless military and civilian leaders have shared this same commitment. And while I can assure you of our sincerity and have provided, in my written statement, some of the initiatives that we have been doing, I want to take this time to discuss some critical issues that we must keep in mind as we move forward.

Points of failure in the system, as reflected in painstaking detail within the pages of the Fort Hood report, will consistently undermine all of our actions if not addressed. At Fort Hood, and likely other installations, there is a culture of disrespect and purposeful degradation of others that was unimpeded and left unchecked by the very individuals who hold the responsibility to prevent this type of culture. It left lingering questions as to whether some of our military leaders were blind to these infractions, whether they were complicit, and if there is even a meaningful distinction between the two.

Since 2019, we have introduced strategies and policies
developed in conjunction with experts in the field, to
address sexual assault as part of an integrated violence
prevention framework, focusing on the prevention of all
forms of harm and ensuring an inclusive environment for all
who serve. While I truly believe that an integrated
violence prevention approach with a focus on command climate
is how we can best prevent these behaviors, it must be
emphasized that anything we have put into place, or will put
into place, will be ineffective if members of our military
fail to proactively embody the values that we expect.

Changing climate and culture requires the commitment of
every single member of the community. No one gets a pass.
No one gets to decide they do not have a role to play. When
you join the military you are taking on a responsibility to
uphold our values and to be a part of the team that rejects
these behaviors. And when you become a leader, at any
level, within this team, you take on a critical
responsibility, both when it is easy and when it is not.
And this means calling out behaviors that are not in line
with our expectations, even if they are perpetrated by a
friend. If you overlook these behaviors, you open a door
that you cannot easily shut later. Your looking the other
way allows harm when it otherwise did not exist, and every
time you fail to address misconduct, even the smallest
offensive jokes and comments, someone is watching you, and
trust is either gained or it is lost, and once it is lost, you will not easily recover it. And if you assume witnesses will remain quiet as you move up in your career, you are not paying attention. We use words like "protect," "defend," "dignity," "respect," and "discipline." These have never been negotiable, nor should they be confusing for anyone who wears a uniform. It is not up for discussion and it carries no exceptions.

As a Department, we are looking at all aspects of these issues, to shed light in those places we previously did not have visibility, to applaud those that are doing the right thing, to appropriately hold accountable those who are not, and to ensure all members can serve safely and honorably.

I want to thank you for your dedication to these issues, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Ms. Van Winkle, you just said there were areas where you need to shed light where there is no visibility. What areas are those?

Ms. Van Winkle: So one of the areas that we have not had visibility is really within the units and at the installation level. As you know, much of our data comes from the Gender Relations Survey, which is a very high level. The problem is if we do not know what is happening on the ground, if we do not know what is happening within those units, then we simply do not have a good sense of
whether our initiatives are getting to where they need to be. And that was one of the things illustrated by the Fort Hood report, and many of the immediate actions that the Secretary has recently directed is to get just at that -- what is happening on the ground so that we really can intervene early and prevent these behaviors from happening.

Senator Gillibrand: I am exasperated by that statement. Isn't that the unit commander's job?

Ms. Van Winkle: Yes.

Senator Gillibrand: Haven't you been asking for the past 8 years we have been focused on this, that commanders can keep their authority? They have had this authority the entire 8 years at the unit commander level. And so for you to state that there is no visibility there is an absurd statement. You have visibility because you have unit commanders, and you had testimony from survivors for the last 8 years I have been working on this, that when they are sexually harassed, 66 percent of the time it comes from their unit commander. So you have had plenty of visibility onto this issue.

Ms. Van Winkle: I think you are right, that in the sense of we have been hearing those concerns, and the problem was is how do we get valid information at the ground so that we can start doing something about it.

Senator Gillibrand: I am sorry. I am sorry. What is
invalid about the information you have been getting from
servicemembers, at least for the last 8 years that I have
been working on this? Direct testimony saying that they are
being harassed, direct testimony saying that when they do
come forward with a sexual assault report that they are
retaliated against, peer-to-peer, administratively, and
professionally.

Ms. Van Winkle: It is not that that is invalid. It is
that we did not know where it was happening. And so what we
are aiming for right now is to ensure --

Senator Gillibrand: I am sorry. How do you not know
where it is happening? The survivors have come forward and
told you. I personally have heard hundreds of stories. For
every example, when a survivor comes forward and reports a case,
and goes to trial, her entire unit sits behind the accused
and not her. We have heard testimony of survivors that have
come forward and said, "Yeah, I was told by the other
members of my unit, 'We cannot wait to get you to Iraq so we
can shoot you in the head.'" I don't understand how you
don't have eyes on what retaliation looks like and what
climate looks like.

Ms. Van Winkle: So I think the distinction is in terms
of the programs and the policies. You are absolutely right.
Every time that we hear those things, that is problematic,
and the services and the unit leaders need to be doing the
right thing. From where I sit, in terms of the broader policies and programs, what I want to make sure we can do, and what the Secretary is supporting right now, is ensuring that we have that visibility where we don't have victims who feel comfortable coming forward, so that all servicemembers who are experiencing these, we know where it is happening and can intervene.

But you are right, we have heard these stories in the past.

Senator Gillibrand: You have about 5,000 victims coming forward every year, reporting openly who attacked them, what happened in those circumstances. Then on top of that you have over 2,000 that report confidentially. So you have a lot of information and a great deal of data, and frankly, the military has more data than any DA's office is ever going to have, because you have a survey, every year, and you have reporting requirements. And this is supposed to be something that the command has taken seriously, with zero tolerance for the last decade, since Dick Cheney was the Secretary of Defense.

So I am baffled by your testimony, ma'am. I don't understand it, but I don't understand how you can state what you just stated. This is not a problem that we don't know the details about.

Ms. Van Winkle: Again, what I would say is what we did
not have visibility on is what is happening at those unit
levels and installation levels, specifically, where we can
go down, go onsite and see what is going on. With Fort
Hood, the way the independent panel went down, those are the
types of things that need to happen. And it is long
overdue. I agree.

Senator Gillibrand: Okay. I don't think that is the
problem. It is not a lack of visibility. It is not a lack
of information. It is a lack of will. And if you have unit
commanders who are the sources of harassment and assault, if
you have unit commanders who turn a blind eye for people
retaliating against other unit members who have come
forward, this is not an unknown problem.

So I do not think it is a lack of information, and I do
not think it is a lack of prevention. And so I would like
you to rework your testimony, because what you have said
here is unbelievable.

Dr. Adirim, in the fiscal year 2017 NDAA, we addressed
some necessary changes to the Autism Care Demonstration
Program, yet I am still hearing concerns from constituents
about the execution of the demonstration program and that
many have found reduced services for military family members
with autism. One of the recent changes the Department of
Defense has implemented is the Navigator Program to help
families obtain coverage for applied behavioral analysis.
While this program is designed to make the system easier for families, what are you doing to ensure navigators are not acting as gatekeepers and preventing families from getting care? Are there other changes you anticipate making to the Autism Care Demonstration Program and how will these changes improve care for autistic military family members?

Dr. Adirim: Yes. Thank you, Senator, for this question, and the opportunity to clarify what these changes are and what they are not. First of all, we spent the last several years under the Autism Demonstration project working very closely, as many as 30 interactions with all stakeholders, including families, advocates, experts within the Military Health System and outside the military health system, academics, and researchers. And these are meant to be improvements to the demonstration program. They are not meant to inhibit families from seeking services. The navigator is there to help families, especially new families, understand what their scope of services that they could access and to help them access those services. Those navigators will not have the authority to be gatekeepers. That is number one.

Number two, there is a group of improvements that will be very helpful to families. So, for example, it eliminates the requirement for families to have to have a confirmatory diagnosis. So any Autism Demonstration Program approved
provider can refer families for ABA therapy. There are other improvements including creating programs for families to help them be more engaged in the care of their child, because evidence shows that when families are engaged in the care, outcomes are much better.

So I would say that if you are being told that these are inhibitors to access to the program, I would say that that is not true, and we are happy to meet with anybody to further clarify and explain what these improvements are.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Senator Tillis.

Senator Tillis: Madam Chair, if you don't mind I will defer to Senator Hawley and then I will be called on when you deem necessary.

Senator Gillibrand: Senator Hawley.

Senator Hawley: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Senator Tillis.

Dr. Adirim, am I pronouncing that correctly, by the way?

Dr. Adirim: Adirim.

Senator Hawley: Adirim. Thank you. All right. Be patient with me.

Senator Gillibrand: You were not here in the beginning, Josh, and I muddled everybody's name.

Dr. Adirim: No, you didn't. You got it perfectly.

Senator Hawley: Adirim. I will get it right. Okay.
Let me ask you about some of the unique challenges that medical treatment facilities are rural installations face. This is in my home state of Missouri, a particular issue for us, compared with rural installations, compared to urban or suburban centers.

My question is, how is the Department accounting for those challenges in order to ensure that patients at rural military hospitals get the care they need as DHA assumes responsibility for managing those facilities.

Dr. Adirim: Senator, I appreciate that question because it is a really tough challenge, I think, for all of health care, and how do we deliver health care in places where there may be gaps in services. And what we have done over the last year is greatly expand our virtual health footprint. We have expanded virtual health within our direct care system, where we could bring services to those more rural areas, from those areas where we may have more of those particular services. For example, behavioral health is one of them.

We have also greatly expanded virtual health within our purchased care system as well. So we see that as one piece of expanding health care into rural areas.

Senator Hawley: Very good. Thank you for that.

Mr. Herbert -- did I get that right? Is it E-bear? A- bear?
Mr. Herbert: A-bear.

Senator Hawley: Zero for two. Mr. Herbert, the Department of Defense stopped planning for a protracted war with a peer adversary after the Cold War ended. With the rise of China now we are obviously facing a new threat of potentially protected war between great powers. My question is, how does this threat of a protracted war, specifically -- emphasis, protracted -- influence the Department's planning as it think about end strength in both the active and reserve components?

Mr. Herbert: Thank you for the question. As you have articulated, trying to ensure the readiness of the force through protracted warfare is challenging at best. Having been in uniform a number of decades, I will tell you that the models that we followed of prepare for war, go to war, reset the force no longer persists, or are applicable in our case.

So we continue to try and ensure that our forces stay read throughout whatever engagements we are currently in, and whatever engagements we are planning for. In order to do that, we have to have a healthy, a robust, a well-trained force. We have to be agile in our force structure so that we can adapt to whatever requirements come our way.

On the HR side of things, on the personnel side of the business, we owe the forces very agile and adaptable human
resource systems and procedures, one that is not mired in bureaucracy but one that can react very readily to whatever individual needs are and whatever service demands are.

Senator Hawley: Very good. Thank you for that.

Dr. Van Winkle, the Department has struggled to reduce suicide rates among servicemembers. Let me ask you about your view on this. What are the weak points, in your view, in the Department's current approach to military suicide, and how does the Department plan to address those weaknesses, going forward?

Ms. Van Winkle: Thanks for the question. One of the initiatives that we have been taking in suicide have been targeted based on the population of highest concern right now. Our population of highest concern is our youngest military members. So we have been working a lot of initiatives to increase problem-solving skills, access to care, those types of things.

In terms of your question, when we I talk about the integrated violence prevention approach, and getting that visibility on the ground, the way we are doing that is by redesigning our command climate surveys. And within that there are metrics that are specifically there to try to get at servicemembers who may not be feeling connected, they don't feel valued, they are having additional stressors in their life, and how they are starting to be able to address
these things within their unit so that we will get an early
signal of where we may have a problem and we can try to
truly prevent that by getting ahead of it.

So that is another initiative that we are working in
that integrated violence prevention approach. Suicide
prevention is a critical part of that.

Senator Hawley: Very good. I may have an additional
question or two for you for the record, but I will leave it
at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Van Winkle: Of course.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Senator. Senator
Tillis.

Senator Tillis: Thank you, Chair Gillibrand, and thank
you all for being here. I had the benefit of getting your
pronunciations right, but I really do appreciate you being
here.

I want to start with Dr. Adirim. We got information
from the DoD this week that just a little under 27 percent
of our military personnel are fully vaccinated. It seems to
me that this could become a readiness problem for a large
part if a broader swath of the members of military decline
the vaccine. So I guess, are we reaching a point, if we are
saying to the public we need to get as many vaccinated and
achieve some steps towards herd immunity, have we reached a
point where the President may want to consider mandating
Dr. Adirim: I appreciate that question too. I never thought I would have those words come out of my mouth, but this is something that has been a concern for us, in how do we encourage and engage with our servicemembers for them to accept vaccination. It has been tough, and I think those who want vaccination have been able to get it.

Senator Tillis: It is not a supply problem anymore, right?

Dr. Adirim: Correct. And so what we are doing now is we are using every avenue available to us, from the installation level all the way on up, in order to really engage with those who are hesitant to get vaccinated. What we are finding is that even those who were in the earlier tiers of the prioritization scheme are slowly starting to accept vaccination. It is now 4 or 5 months after we started vaccinating, and I think a large proportion of our servicemembers, as well as other DoD beneficiaries, have said, "You know what? I would like to wait and see what happens." And I think a lot of those people we are starting to capture.

We, at this time, do not plan to make the vaccine mandatory. Certainly we are thinking about once the vaccines are licensed what we will do then, because we do mandate a number of vaccines. But right now the vaccine,
while it is under EUA, is voluntary.

Senator Tillis: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Herbert, I am hoping that when you were maybe in your 23rd year in the Air Force and you were a colonel, you would have led by example and gotten the vaccine by now. I think that we should say that to all the people in the senior ranks, you have got to lead by example. I assume you have had your vaccine.

I want to ask you a question about a GAO report, I think it was released last week. The GAO report said, "The DoD has not collected or reported accurate data for all domestic abuse allegations received, including those that did not meet DoD criteria," which is required by statute. Can you explain to us why we are not collecting that data according to the law?

Mr. Herbert: Yes, sir.

Senator Tillis: Thank you for your service.

Mr. Herbert: Thank you, sir. The GAO report I am very familiar with. There were ten findings that were specific to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Five of those had, as you indicated, directly to do with data collection. What the Department was doing was collecting data in accordance with the policy that it set forth, but it did not collect data at a much more acute level that would give us visibility to every allegation that was brought forward. It only captured those allegations that were brought forward
with certain parameters, that met certain parameters that followed the policy.

So we accepted every one of the findings of the GAO report, and we are redoubling our efforts to get after that in very short order.

Senator Tillis: Thank you. Dr. Van Winkle, thank you for your time yesterday, and giving a brief on what more you are learning about that. There are two things I wanted to give you an opportunity to talk about. One was the importance of the climate surveys, the command climate surveys, and how that is going to be a very important part of making process. And something else that you mentioned had to do with maybe some concern over recommendations that were set forth that had not been fully implemented on the ground. Can you just give this committee a brief summary of what we are talking about there, what we discussed yesterday?

Ms. Van Winkle: Sure. I think what the concern is, is that as we have been putting forward policies and programs, and certainly over the next year with the Independent Review Commission and all that we are doing, we are going to be putting in a lot more really good ideas. But if they are not being implemented on the ground, we are simply not giving them a chance. And so that has been our concern. And then when the Fort Hood report came out it certainly
highlighted that that was a valid concern.

So one of the ways we are doing it, and it is not the only way, is by redesigning that command climate survey, so that we can truly get a sense of what is happening at the installation level, and then dive down further to find out are there certain units of concern, is this an installation issue. And the metrics on that survey cover the kind of continuum of harm, so all the way from those very low-level offensive behaviors, as I mentioned for suicide, things like connectedness, all the way to whether folks are experiencing sexual harassment or harassment based on their race/ethnicity, so that we can really start to take action early on and prevent these things from occurring.

Again, it is not going to be the one thing that will solve everything, but it gives us a little bit of a better visibility.

Senator Tillis: And Madam Chair, if I may, I have just one more question. I can't remember the name of the program. I think it is "Catch a Serial Offender." Talk about a little bit of the progress that has been made there. But you also mentioned about how there is a responsibility that falls on everyone in a unit. If they see something, say something. Is there an opportunity there to maybe even encourage, if they are not willing to do it through the normal channels, to possibly expand the Catch basin for data
that you can gather to possibly track somebody?

Ms. Van Winkle: Thanks for the question. The Catch program is to try to get at, for those folks who do not feel comfortable making an unrestricted report and going through the investigation.

Senator Tillis: That is for a victim -- am I correct?

Ms. Van Winkle: Correct. Now in terms of expanding that, I think these are some of the things that the Independent Review Commission is looking at. And so as they start to develop their recommendations they are look at all aspects of this, including how can we ensure that people have the confidence and the trust in the system to come forward and report, even these low-level behaviors.

Senator Tillis: Well, thank you. I think we have to make progress. You may have sensed a little frustration on the part of the chair. I share that frustration in terms of just executing what we have already authorized, what the Department has already said get it implemented, and we have got to make a lot of progress. A lot of lives are being affected.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Senator Tillis. I just have one more question, and if you guys want to take a second round, you may, on mental health. Obviously, there are a great deal of challenges with military life, including
frequent deployments, repeated moves, spousal unemployment, that put servicemembers and their families at increased risk of behavioral health and suicide.

This is becoming particularly acute during this pandemic. An August 2020 report by DoD Inspector General revealed significant barriers to accessing mental health care. Of the 13 military treatment facilities, included in the study, 7 failed to meet access to care standards each month. Even more concerning, the report showed that more than 50 percent of those referred to mental health treatment in the purchased care system never received care at all.

Dr. Adirim, three questions for you. Does the Department of Defense have access to the adequate number of behavioral health providers, one. Two, what can be done to increase access to behavioral health, both at military treatment facilities and at private facilities? And three, for those servicemembers and their families that prefer marital counseling outside of the military treatment facility, should TRICARE cover the cost of that counseling?

Dr. Adirim: Okay. I think I got all three, Senator. This is a concern of ours as well and something that is a priority and that we work on consistently.

With regard to adequate providers at military treatment facilities, we have, overall, for all behavioral health providers, we are at about a 96 percent fill rate, but that
masks some gaps, the gaps being in psychiatrists, which we have a lower fill rate for those, and that includes active duty, civilians, and contractors.

We are competing with the private sector where there is, you know, not enough behavioral health providers out in the civilian sector. So we use whatever levers that we have at our disposal in order to recruit and retain our behavioral health providers. It is very important to us, and so this is something that we are cognizant of.

I believe the report that you are referring to did talk about several MTFs that did not meet the 28-day specialty standard. I believe the number was 30 days for those. So it not meeting the standard, but it is just outside the standard.

Second, with regard to access to care within military treatment facilities, again, we work really hard, especially for active duty, to get priority access for mental health services. And we do this in multiple ways, not just within the military treatment facilities and embedding it within our primary care, but we also embed behavioral health within units as well.

And with regard to TRICARE, this is something that we press our managed care support contractors to maintain a robust directory of behavioral health providers. The problem with that is that we are competing in a system where
a significant proportion of behavioral health providers are cash-only practices, so keeping them within the network is very difficult. But we work on this consistently.

And as I told Senator Hawley, one of the things, if anything, you could say, that came out of the pandemic which was good, is virtual health, and one of the ways that we have been using it has been with behavioral health. And we are evaluating that to make sure that it meets the needs of our providers.

Now outside of the medical sphere, Military OneSource does provide non-medical counseling as well. So we use every avenue possible to provide support, and we completely agree, it is an increasing need and the pandemic really has exacerbated that need. Thank you.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Dr. Van Winkle and Mr. Herbert, we continue to hear that some do not avail themselves of behavioral health services because of the stigma attached to seeking this type of health care. What is being done, and what can be done to reduce the stigma of seeking behavioral health care?

Ms. Van Winkle: So I can take this from my portfolio. Absolutely, the stigma of coming forward is always one of the barriers, that we have good resources but if folks will not take us up on those, or do not feel comfortable coming forward it will always be a problem. So we are always
looking for different avenues by which individuals can seek help. We are also trying to work to ensure that we expand the scope of those people within the community that can offer help and have the tools to help, not only to help if somebody comes forward saying they are having a difficult time, but also recognize warning signs. So we have a pilot right now on recognizing warning signs on social media, and again, expanding that community, so working with chaplains, military families, those peers, so we can try to identify those things early on, as well as offering other types of confidential avenues by which to talk to somebody, whether it is peer-to-peer, through Military OneSource, or through our national hotline.

Senator Gillibrand: Mr. Herbert?

Mr. Herbert: Yes, ma'am. As Senator Tillis indicated earlier, it is a matter of leadership. It is a matter of setting an example. It is a matter of indicating from the top on down that this is expected, this is part of your readiness to be a servicemember, that you need to be mentally and physically fit, and accepting individual responsibility seek out that sort of help. But ultimately it comes from leadership, to make sure that individuals understand that if they seek help, it is not a career-impacting decision.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Senator Tillis?
Senator Tillis: Thank you, Madam Chair. Dr. Adirim, I just had one other question for you. It has to do with the DoD and the deadlines that Congress for transition of all MTFs into DHA. How is it going, and are there particular service lines that are doing better than others? Call them out by name.

Dr. Adirim: [Laughs.] Call them out by name. We are working really hard to make the September 30th deadline. I am hopeful that we will. Just even in recent weeks, we have had very good dialogue with all three services. I believe Air Force, we may be almost completely done. We still have some work to do with Army and Navy. But I believe we are getting towards the end, and filling out those last things that we need to do to complete the entire transition.

Senator Tillis: Thank you. And, Mr. Herbert, I just want to echo what you said about leadership. You know, if you follow behavioral health and you follow the stigma associated with it, there is virtually no one in a command position that does not know someone or have a family member that is not experiencing some behavioral health. It is just a statistical reality with 1 in 5 people experiencing it.

So I think that we need to commute from the command down that it is actually a show of strength to recognize you have a challenge that could impact your readiness, and that they should be proud of the fact that they are seeking help.
So this is something that we need to get from the top down, from the Pentagon down to the unit, socialized within our armed services so we can do right and be better prepared for the fight.

Mr. Herbert: Yes, sir.

Senator Tillis: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator Gillibrand: Senator Tuberville.

Senator Tuberville: Thank you very much for being here. I can see you all way back there. That is good. We picked a nice, big room.

I do know what all you all have talked about. I have been in another meeting. But the one thing that I am concerned about, in anything that we do, especially in the military, is recruiting. We have got to fight big tech. We have got to fight big business. There is a lot of money out there for kids coming out of school, kids coming out of high schools. They can make a great living. And we need a fighting machine.

And so one of those situations where I feel like, as a college recruiter for years, we had a small range of people every year that we felt we could pick from to be successful, and I am sure we are the same way. Any comments on recruiting, from any of you all, that you think that we can do better, in terms of building the pool of young men and women to make our services better? Anybody?
Mr. Herbert: Yes, sir. I appreciate the question.
Recruiting is near and dear to all of our hearts, as you can imagine. We bring in a quarter of a million young Americans, young, patriotic Americans every year, and to try and reach out to a population who, more and more, are further removed from knowing someone in their immediate family that has served in the military.

There are challenges. There are challenges in trying to explain what military life is like. There are challenges in being able to communicate in spaces and digital media where they operate, where traditional media does not reach them. The service, I will tell you, in all the years I have been in public service, I have never seen the services lean more forward to try and meet young Americans where they live, where they operate, and to try and approach them and explain to them the value of public service.

We have a tremendous asset in that we have a mission that no corporation can match. They want to be part of something bigger than themselves. The United States military is an opportunity for that to happen.

Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Dr. Van Winkle, during your time with the Department in overseeing sexual assault prevention and response, do you feel like that resources to prevent sexual assault are being utilized the right way?

Ms. Van Winkle: Thank you for the question. I think
we can always do better in this space. I think the resources that we do have, I think where we have challenges is people feeling comfortable and confident coming forward to utilize those resources. So we provide resources that are both more confidential and anonymous as well as those where they can come forward and go forward with an investigation.

In addition, we also have the "Catch a Serial Offender" program that was previously mentioned, where we have folks who can make a confidential report but provide information to the Department about the offender. And if there is a match in the system they are offered the opportunity to convert to an unrestricted report so we can hold offenders more appropriately accountable.

So I think, again, there are resources that are there. It is important that people feel comfortable coming forward, and again, this is an area we can always do better, and the Independent Review Commission, one of their lines of effort is victim support and care, making sure that we have the right resources. So I look forward to the recommendation.

Senator Tuberville: Do you have any personal suggestions about what we can do to get better, from your insight?

Ms. Van Winkle: I think, again, we have to take this
from a very holistic standpoint. It is not only putting the right things in place but making sure there are no barriers to people getting there, including just their own fear, whether it is retaliation or fear of trust. So I think I do defer to the Independent Review Commission. It is the right body to be looking at this issue, and they are taking a very comprehensive approach.

Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Thank you to all the witnesses. We appreciate your testimony, and we would like to welcome the next set of witnesses. Thank you.

[Pause.]

Senator Gillibrand: Welcome, everyone. You may proceed with your testimony. Lieutenant General Brito, you are first.
STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL GARY M. BRITO, USA,

DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, G-1

General Brito: Thank you, Chairwoman Gillibrand. Good afternoon, Chair Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the men and women of the United States Army. I have submitted a statement for record and would like to highlight a few points from it now.

The Army's number one priority is its people. Our soldiers and Army civilians, families and veterans for life. We are putting people first, not only as a priority but as a philosophy.

Our personnel programs and initiatives are focused on promoting our culture of cohesion and dignity and respect, where every individual can advance as far as their talents and their skills will take them. We have moved quickly to implement new policies to keep our soldiers and their families safe while continuing to execute our mission during the global pandemic.

As our nation engages in discussion focused on race and equality, we launched listening sessions across the Army to hear the concerns and ideas of our soldiers and our civilians. Our People First task force, of which I am one of three co-chairs, is working very hard to combat sexual
harassment, sexual assault, violent crimes, and other harmful behaviors. Modernization efforts, programs, policy, and management models are transforming the Army's personnel systems. These efforts will give the Army an enduring advantage of a transparent, data-rich environment, and improve our ability to compete for and retain talent.

For example, the Integrated Personnel and Pay System Army, more commonly referred to as IPSS-A, is the number one resource modernization effort for the total Army, and I thank Congress for the support of this important program.

Manning the Army is a key component of readiness. Ongoing 21st century talent management initiatives and actions help us to attract, acquire, and retain a diverse and talented force from across the nation. Our nearly 300,000 Army civilians remain an integral part of the Army team, providing unmatched talent in critical areas.

Personnel readiness also means creating installation and environment that allows our soldiers and families to thrive. The Army is committed to quality-of-live priorities that include quality housing, barracks, child care, youth services, and meaningful employment for our Army spouses.

Resilience programs and initiatives aimed at harmful behaviors, and supported by Congress, are critical to help us combat sexual harassment and assault and factors that contribute to suicide. These efforts are also a major focus
of the previously mentioned People First Task Force.

As the Army G-1 and Army leader, and the father of a soldier, I acknowledge that sexual assault and harassment is a problem that has plagued our ranks for far too long. We are better than this. Our soldiers and civilians deserve better, and we will get at it.

The Army Soldier For Life program continues to support soldiers, veterans, and their families. The Army's retired soldiers are important to the Army family. I would also highlight that during the pandemic more than 200 retired soldiers with critical skills were recalled to active duty and executed critical roles, enabling us to execute our mission against an enemy called COVID-19.

The people of the United States, these men and women who serve our nation, both in and out of uniform, along with their families, are indeed our strength and our legacy. Accordingly, putting our people first, which is the Army Chief of Staff's number one priority, is key to readiness, modernization, and reform.

Chair Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, members of the committee, I thank you for your generous and unwavering support to our talented soldiers, civilian professionals, and their families, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Brito follows:]
Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Vice Admiral Nowell.
STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL JOHN B. NOWELL, JR., USN,
DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, N-1 AND CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL

Admiral Nowell: Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, and distinguished subcommittee members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to update you on your Navy's personnel programs. First, I would like to give you a quick picture of some of our men and women across the fleet today. You may have seen, this past, the USS Monterey seized a massive shipment of illicit weapons in the North Arabian Sea.

In the Indo-Pacific, sailors on the USS John S. McCain recently conducted a Taiwan strait transit, demonstrating dedication to our allies and freedom of the seas.

For COVID-19 relief efforts, our sailors continue to support community vaccination centers from Boston and New York to Norfolk and Jacksonville, and sailors on board the John Finn successfully shot down an ICBM in a critical test of our ballistic missile defense capability.

As we sit here, submariners prowl the depths on board ballistic missile submarines, preserving global peace through strategic deterrence. These are just a few examples of what the men and women of your Navy are doing right now.

Let me double-tap that it has been the service and sacrifice of our sailors and the Navy families, amidst the
incredible challenges of a global pandemic, that have enabled our Navy to project power across the world and accomplish all assigned missions here and abroad. And I want to start by saying thank you to all of them and to all of their families.

To fight and win in a long-term strategic competition we must attract, develop, and manage the most talented Navy workforce possible. COVID-19 mitigations forced us to shift our recruiting methods to 100 percent digital outreach to find outstanding millennial and centennial talent. Meanwhile, the herculean efforts of our men and women at the Recruit Training Command led to safe bubble-to-bubble training and shipping of new sailors. This prevented any significant COVID-19 outbreaks in our accessions pipeline, as our recruit training command went from an all-stop at the beginning of the pandemic to putting through over 50,000 sailors through our accession supply chain since COVID-19 started.

We have continued to develop this talent through initiatives such as Ready, Relevant Learning and a culture of excellence. Ready, Relevant Learning is the establishment of a career-long learning continuum which is transforming an industrial-age training model into a modern, responsive system. Additionally, our Culture of Excellence is a Navy-wide approach to achieving warfighting excellence
by creating an environment of psychological, physical, and emotional toughness, while promoting transparency, trust, inclusion, and connectedness among our sailors and their families.

Following the events of last summer, the CNO established Task Force One Navy, to evaluate issues in our society and military that detract from lethality and readiness, such as racism, sexism, and other biases, and they highlighted 56 recommendations, cultivating a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion that the Navy is folding back into our Culture of Excellence campaign plan.

Now without a doubt, the vast majority of our sailors in the Navy serve every day with honor, courage, commitment, and respect. However, we are not under any illusions that extremist behaviors do not exist in the Navy, and as directed by the Secretary of Defense, each command across the fleet conducted a stand-down to address extremism within our ranks, and we remain committed to eliminating it and all of its effects from the fleet.

And last, we are optimizing our talent management systems, providing greater flexibility for sailors in career choice, development, training, and assignments. Thanks to the support of Congress in fully funding our MyNavy HR Transformation programs, we are able to provide our sailors and families with new and innovative systems. Some of these
include our Navy Personnel and Pay System, countless mobile applications, and two MyNavy Career Center contact centers which have provided just-in-time capability to our sailors and their families with 24/7 human resource support during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we grow our force structure and manpower requirements across all ship classes, we will continue to attract, develop, and manage America's finest talent to ensure fleet readiness, capability, and capacity, with our greatest advantage over our adversaries always being our people.

Thank you for your support of these efforts and for your unwavering commitment to the men and women of the United States Navy and their families. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Nowell follows:]
Senator Gillibrand: Lieutenant General Kelly.
STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL BRIAN T. KELLY, USAF, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR MANPOWER, PERSONNEL AND SERVICES

General Kelly: I think it is on now.

Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, distinguished members of this subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to talk about our airmen and families. I am honored to appear here today with my fellow service personnel chiefs, and I am particularly proud to be here for the first time with my Department of the Air Force Partner, Ms. Pat Mulcahy, who is here representing the U.S. Space Force. The U.S. Space Force was purposely built as an agile and operationally focused service with the United States Air Force providing much of the support for Guardians and their families. As such, many of the programs we may discuss today are applicable to both airmen and Guardians.

As the Air Force Chief of Staff has articulated, our national security challenges are growing at a rapid pace, and it is clear our Air Force must accelerate the changes we need to successfully meet those challenges or face losing. We are fully focused on this imperative and recognize that our airmen and their families for the essential foundation for our ability to meet those future challenges. As such, it is essential that we also accelerate the creation of the environment, development, and talent management systems
needed to unlock our airmen's ability to reach their full potential. We know success squarely depends on our airmen and on them having the ability to operate in a safe and inclusive environment where they can be the best airmen they can possibly be.

If the past year has taught us anything, it is that the world is full of uncertainty. COVID-19 changed the way we work and live, but our mission could not and did not stop. We were forced to accelerate change to meet the challenges of personnel permanent change-of-station moves, recruiting, retention, and increased care needs for our families who have been hit hard by school impacts, child care, and increased demands at home.

As we work through COVID-19, the year continued to bring critical issues to light. The death of George Floyd and the release of the Protect our Defenders report on Air Force military justice and development inequities sparked a renewed focus on the barriers minority groups face within our service. The events at Fort Hood and our own Airman Aposhian case reminded us we must explore new ideas and accelerate our efforts to eradicate sexual assault and forms of interpersonal violence from our ranks. The events of January 6th took us by surprise, revealing a potential challenge in creating the environment we require for our airmen.
Despite these challenges, the Air Force continues to accomplish our assigned missions and our airmen continue to shine.

Over the last 12 to 14 months, the Department of the Air Force independently launched our own Racial Disparity Review, an Interpersonal Violence Task Force, and a Resiliency Task Force. These major initiatives focused on identifying areas of immediate concern for the well-being and development of our airmen, while producing fresh solutions and strategies to build a culture of connectedness and trust.

The Department recognizes, despite strong efforts over many years, we have not made significant, measurable progress in preventing or reducing the number of sexual assault cases. We remain committed to being persistent in our efforts to combat sexual assault in the ranks and are 100 percent open to using any research or data-informed prevention strategies that can prove effective in helping us reduce and eventually eliminate sexual assault.

In response to the Department of Defense's concerning suicide trends, the Air Force established five prevention priorities which nest within the prevention strategies established by the Centers for Disease Control. Our work has shown that relationship issues are a top-tier factor, as well as personal firearms as the primary means, and we have
taken measure to address both. Recognizing a resilient environment for our families is also important. We made significant adjustments and what we believe are major improvements to the Exceptional Family Member Program, and have strengthened our efforts to manage our child care programs more effectively while increasing capacity within the system. The EFMP program, in particular, has made major strides in providing accessible information for our families and greatly increases the positive nature of the experience that they get when navigating permanent change of stations, legal hurdles with school accommodation, and medical care.

In conclusion, resilient airmen are our competitive advantage and they deserve nothing less than our best. Though we have made progress, the Air Force still has work to do before we have an environment that allows all airmen and their families to reach their full potential. We continue to pursue every practical solution that moves us closer to making this environment a reality, and we look forward to continuing to partner with the Congress in our endeavors to do so.

I thank you for your continued support of the Department of the Air Force and your airmen, both military and civilian, and the families that support them. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Kelly follows:]
Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Lieutenant General David Ottignon.
STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID A. OTTIGNON,
USMC, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

General Ottignon: Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss your Marines and our civilian Marines who support them. I, too, have submitted my written statement to this committee and my opening remarks will be brief.

This past year has been a challenging time for the nation as we all continue to navigate our way through the pandemic. However, your Marines and sailors continue to demonstrate their resiliency as we make Marines and service the nation's force and readiness.

To echo the sentiments of our commandant, the Marine Corps is entering a period of transformation to produce a modern, elite force that will meet the challenges of the National Defense Strategy and uncertainties of the future. Our Marines represent a diverse group of Americans, bonded together by a sense of duty. Our manpower programs and initiatives cover the spectrum of a Marine's career and are designed to maximize the fullest potential of our nation's most precious resources, those dedicated Americans who claim the title of U.S. Marine.

The Marine Corps remains fully committed to their families and civilian Marines in the programs that support
them. Their contributions and sacrifices are noble and worth our greatest respect and admiration. I am proud to represent your Marines, their families, and the civilian employees this afternoon, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Ottignon follows:]
Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Now Ms. Patricia Mulcahy.
STATEMENT OF PATRICIA MULCAHY, CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER, UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

Ms. Mulcahy: Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, and members of the committee, it is truly an honor to appear before you today, alongside my military colleagues. On behalf of all Guardians and families, thank you for your leadership and support that you have provided to the United States Space Force.

We are purposefully building the Space Force to be lean, to be agile, and mission focused, and our talent management efforts are synchronized to ensure we are developing the leaders and the warfighters who will secure space. Because of size in establishing this new warfighting culture, we believe it is vital to be collaborative and connected to all of our Guardians, and in a way that you could not be in a larger service. We are interested in what they think, as we provide feedback on their performance and potential.

The mission and the people of the United States Space Force are an ideal match for the information age, which is why Guardians are uniquely postured to be born digital. With the digital workforce, we must ensure we have Guardians who can lead the digital transformation and cultivate a digital fluency amongst all Guardians. And integrating, strengthening, and cultivating this personal resiliency of
every Guardian is key, as they are members of highly specialized teams who are pushing the frontiers of what is technologically possible in a complex, contested, and brutal space domain.

So to implement our vision, we designed a talent management approach with three principles in mind: managing positions based on competencies required to succeed; providing access to digital tools, training, and services; and developing each Guardian according to their needs. And interwoven in our strategy is an important work that we are doing with the Department of the Air Force's Office of Diversity and Inclusion, because our Space Force will be stronger when our ranks reflect the make-up of the nation we serve.

Over the past 17 months, we have secured a number of wins for our country. First I am proud that more than 11,000 military and civilian Guardians joined our ranks from the Air Force and across America. We are on target to achieve the end strength goals we outlined in fiscal year 2020, and we have launched initiatives to ensure we are competitive for the STEM talent we need through our partnerships with select colleges, universities, and other organizations. And our ubiquitous access to digital university and a boot camp-like approach training coders is increasing our digital fluency and impacting our mission
accomplishment.

We are developing and implementing our space-focused professional military education programs that will develop space-minded warfighters who are effective in multidomain operations and the joint environment.

And although I am pleased with the progress we have made, we have much work to do. In the second year of building the Space Force, we are focused on integration, including our reserve components and our sister services. Today we have space professionals in both the Air Guard and Air Force Reserve who provide a tremendous capability to the United States Space Force. We have studied ways to best organization to regular, the Reserve, and the Guard capabilities, and we look forward to working with the Congress once Executive branch coordination is complete.

We are also working closely with our sister services as we prepare to assume space missions from the Army and the Navy. We are excited by the number of soldiers, sailors, and Marines who would like to join us, and are assessing those who recently volunteered for transfer opportunities.

I am honored to serve in the United States Space Force. It is truly an opportunity of a lifetime to work alongside my fellow Guardians and to build the service that we need to deter and defend in space, and I look forward to your questions.
[The prepared statement of Ms. Mulcahy follows:]


Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. I appreciate your testimony.

Lieutenant General Brito, the Army attempted to implement a new physical fitness test, the Army Combat Fitness Test, without an objective assessment of its potential adverse effects on different demographics of the Army. Initial data showed that 60 percent of female soldiers could not pass the test and 83 percent failed the leg tuck portion of the test. As a result, last year's NDA included a provision that I worked on that prohibited the Army from implementing this test until completion of an evaluation by an independent entity of the test validity and its impact on different demographics in the Army. The Army has been allowed to continue to administer the test to provide data on the study as long as no test results are recorded in a soldier's record and the results are not used in any way to evaluate the soldier.

A recent article on military.com stated that "internal Army figures from April show 44 percent of women failed the ACFT compared to 7 percent of men since October 1.

I have several questions. What is the status of the independent study and who is conducting it? Are you concerned with the recent data showing that 44 percent of women failed the test compared to 7 percent of men? Has the ACFT been shown to actually improve combat readiness? The
last two decades have been a never-ending war and our Army was combat ready without the ACFT.

General Brito: Thank you, Chair Gillibrand, for that question. I am aware of the article as well. We patiently await the results of the RAND study, which is helping us conduct an independent study, and I would mention the actions of the commanders on the ground that are implementing the test, as mentioned, without a record score at this point, to help us assess the data on the six events and the impact that it has on all of our soldiers and genders.

I fully acknowledge that the initial implementation of the test did show that there was a large disparity, one which was a little bit troubling, between genders, and that we will continue to assess and work on.

I would like to mention at this point the ACFT is being trained and tested on across the Army, in all three components, and we are asking the units to put this data into the system so that we can, one, truly assess how soldiers are doing and the validity of all six events. We will continue to do that up until the next year or so, into 2022, likely, and we will fully take the measurements of the RAND study when we do receive those results.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Lieutenant General Kelly, the RAND Corporation has raised questions about the
appropriateness of the Air Force PT test across age and gender for all airmen, recommending revision of the test to incorporate more practical measures of everyday health. Is the Air Force reassessing its PT test, and will you commit to ensuring that the Air Force PT test will not discriminate against women and other demographics?

General Kelly: Chairwoman Gillibrand, thank you for that question. So yes, we are committed to that. In fact, we are taking the opportunity right now that COVID provided us. When COVID first started, we suspended PT testing for lots of reasons, based on the health assessment and the health risks for that. During that time, we were able to start some assessments of new testing tools and put those into place, and we will be resuming testing on 1 July. When we resume testing on 1 July, we are going to be making some modifications to the previous test, that was a four-component test, down to a three-component test, and we will be looking at alternate methods for providing options for our airmen, all genders, all everybody, to have options for when they take their PT test.

I would tell you, though, that when we first looked at a number of our qualifications, if you remember when we did the Women in Service Review as an example, we went through an exhaustive process with RAND participating, to make sure that all of the standards that we put in place were gender-
neutral, operationally focused, and not biased. I think we are in the same study process here now with our current PT test, and I think we will come out with good results. But yes, we will be committed to that, and you will see some changes in our PT test in the coming months.

Senator Gillibrand: Lieutenant General Ottignon, I understand that the Marine Corps is conducting a highly sophisticated study of body composition standards. What is the status of this study, and will it finally tie body composition standards to the ability to perform military duties?

General Ottignon: Madam Chairwoman, thank you for the question. Yes, I am familiar with that, and I sat on the brief not more than 45 days ago. It is tied to the body mass index is what the original test was, and if you read the periodicals there is enough data that tells us that that is not a good measure of someone's strength.

So we are looking very hard at that. There are two numbers, for men and women. We have got an independent study that is looking at it as well as Marines that are participating in that. I suspect within the next couple of months there will be additional information that will come on that. I think we are close to finding a standard across both genders.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Senator Tillis.
Senator Tillis: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you all for being here. I always hate it when members ask yes-no questions because there are virtually none of these, but I think this may be close to one.

We have had a lot of focus on military housing in this committee. We passed a slew of provisions in the 2020 NDA to try and improve the situation that we found. I am particularly focused on Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune. I understand I think in June we should have the final pieces of the Tenant Bill of Rights complete. Just going down the line, start with General Brito, are we on track for having that complete, implemented, rolled out by the summer?

General Brito: Senator Tillis, from the indicators I have and the data, yes, we are on track. I have a very responsive bill of rights, and I do know that we are doing some discussions and negotiating with the partners that run our housing as well. And that will also be a key to success that, I think, can provide the proper services to all our families and soldiers that clearly do deserve quality housing.

Senator Tillis: Thank you. Admiral Nowell?

Admiral Nowell: Yes, sir, we are.

Senator Tillis: Thank you. General Kelly?

General Kelly: Yes, Senator. I believe we are. As was stated by General Brito, I do think there are a few
negotiation issues that are going on with the contractors, but I believe our folks who lead this effort in SAF/IE are working those and should be on completion by June.

Senator Tillis: General Ottignon?

General Ottignon: Yes, sir, we are.

Senator Tillis: Ms. Mulcahy?

Ms. Mulcahy: Thank you, Senator. And in concert with General Kelly's response, yes.

Senator Tillis: I have a question I want to drill down on for, I believe, actually General Kelly. It has to do with the Exceptional Family Member Program. Can you give me, or describe for me, the work that has been done to standardize and improve the program within the Air Force?

General Kelly: Yes, Senator. Thank you for that question. Let me first start by saying I would have said, 18 months ago, if I assessed that program, our EFMP program would have been an F-minus-minus, absolutely not meeting the needs of our airmen and families. About 18 months ago, we took on the effort to bring in airmen and families, get their feedback, and hold some rapid improvement events and some process changes, and through process change and innovation and IT changes, I think we have made some real headway.

Here are some of the key parts of that program. First, we created a centralized cell for us. The centralized cell
has medical expertise, it has assignment expertise, it has lawyers in there that can help with legal issues, it has school liaison members in there that can help, and it has folks in there that really can help navigate. So there is a one-stop shop for airmen and families.

Two, we took on an IT challenge and said we have got to make this system better for our airmen and families. They now have a thing we call the My Family Vector where they can reach out and see what they have out there in terms of what are the medical capabilities at a base. If I go to Base X, if I go down to Pope and I am going to be assigned there, and I have this medical condition, or my dependent has this medical condition, what is the likelihood I am going to be able to get service and what is it going to look like? How many hours away do I have to drive? How long do I have to wait for an appointment and TRICARE? All that kind of information is now available to them.

And then the last part is the way we screen and check for them and go through. We now have an ability in that process to use past claims and past medical data so that we don't have to have every single family member go to see a doctor. In the past, 100 percent went to see a doctor. We are down to like 15 percent of those folks now having to see a doctor before they PCS. A much higher rate of satisfaction and much less distraction. You can imagine a
family of five or six with EFMP members all having to go to see a medical appointment for something they maybe have looked at 2 or 3 years before when they PCS'd.

So lots of changes and lots of positive aspects to that. More to following there, Senator, but I think we are on the right track and we are pretty happy with what we are being able to do with centralizing that program and providing much more standardized care for our family members.

Senator Tillis: Thank you for that. I tend to agree with your initial grade awhile back, but we have gotten positive reports. You are making progress. And we will submit a question for the record to the other service chiefs, just to see how you are doing, and I would appreciate your feedback in what help we can provide.

Admiral Nowell, I had a question. I am hearing that the Navy is planning on reducing medical billets at a number of facilities -- Walter Reed, Camp Lejeune, Camp Pendleton, and Bellingham, I think, at least. I am kind of curious. I got a briefing from MARSOC Commander a couple of weeks ago and we are seeing some movement of more Marines to Camp Lejeune. So we are increasing the number of Marines and their families there, and I am wondering if factors like that were taken into account when the billet reductions at Camp Lejeune were being factored in. So I would like to get
your feedback on that, and I also wanted to know to what extent did you all work with the DHA to gauge the impact in making sure you have capacity, not only for the servicemembers but for their families through TRICARE.

Admiral Nowell: Senator, thank you for that, and I would first share that the Military Medical Manpower Report to Congress should be submitted shortly. That will have all the details. But we have worked closely with DHA, along with the other services, to assess the capacity, as you look at the MTFs, getting back to the rural areas, how they can support.

But I will assure you that we will not shift any family member or retiree care, or care for our servicemembers, if it affects military medical force readiness, areas where the network does not have the capability or capacity to absorb it, or any of our graduate medical education, because it is very important in many places. That is how we train those medical providers that we put forward.

And then last I would just mention regarding your specific concerns about Camp Lejeune, we have not cut billets here. In fact, we have increased organic support to the Marine Corps there.

Senator Tillis: Very good. General Brito, I am not going to go further so that I can get Senator Tuberville's questions in. We have both got a vote that is coming up. I
understand that Chair Gillibrand does have a second round of
questions so we may have to briefly recess if I get to a
point where I have got to go vote, so I am not the last
person holding up all the other Senate members.

Senator Tuberville.

Senator Tuberville: Thank you very much. Thanks for
your service, and Ms. Mulcahy, thank you for being here
today and we look forward to Space Command moving to
Huntsville, Alabama, in the near future. We are excited
about that.

I want to talk a little bit about, going back to
recruiting, which is, you know, people are the lifeblood of
what we all do. You have got a tough job, because we went
through a Selective Service interview a few weeks ago, and
Selective Service people that did this evaluation said that
we need to definitely put women in the Selective Service
rotation. They need to file for the draft. Now, we might
not ever have it again, but they said we need to do that,
which is great.

Every year we have between 30 and 35 million eligible
people in the age range of draftable. That is the same
group that you are recruiting from. Out of those 30 to 35
million, only 450,000 of them are eligible to be taken in
the military because of drugs, felonies, not graduating from
high school, and not passing the test, so to speak.
And there is one other that we are getting ready to add, obviously, and I want to hear your thoughts on this, domestic terrorism. I want to know how we are going to decide and define somebody that is a domestic terrorist in our country. They are not going to add up to it. I just want to kind of go down the line here and get your thoughts on that, because this is going to be huge for our young people trying to get into the military.

General?

General Brito: Yes. Thank you, Senator, for the question. I would like to start by highlighting our Army people strategy and our actions on this with our 21st Century Talent Management as well. And I would say that the actions and activities of our recruiting command for soldiers and command for officers are truly two of the major lines of efforts tied to that strategy.

To break it down a bit further, we are very much focused on the quality of the soldier versus quantity, and I would highlight the aggressive moves for virtual hiring, presence in a vocation that did not have physical presence before, a very aggressive marketing campaign to attract soldiers and allow us to compete for talent, officers as well, across all ranks.

I would also mention through the great and innovative efforts of our recruiting command they do have some very
aggressive and thought-provoking vetting procedures to ensure that those soldiers that do want to join, one, meet the quality marks, do not fall into any one of the bins that you mentioned like drugs, alcohol, or other things, and show any tendencies that may put them in an extremist organization of which they may advocate for any violence for intolerance against genders, nationalities, or any types of religions.

As you did mention in your question, sir, that may not be admitted when they come to the recruiter, but certainly aggressive dialogue with the recruiter to the soldier, checking of tattoos and other measures like that, will hopefully prevent any soldier from joining the ranks with that in their mind.

And I would mention that same level of building a positive culture of dignity and respect carries on into the initial entry training and on to their first unit of assignment, to assure that we just do not have those plagues in the ranks. Thank you.

Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Anyone else want to add to that?

General Kelly: Sir, I will jump in there, not to repeat what General Brito said, but I will tell you that we were in the midst of transforming the way that we do recruiting prior to COVID, but it meant that we were well
postured for COVID. So specifically, we had gone to
digital, and in FY 2017, 34 percent of our marketing and
advertising was digital. Today it is 98 percent. So that
postured us well to go totally virtual, to find those high-
quality recruits, which you head the nail right on the head
with dwindling numbers, where they are at, and in the medium
that they used.

We formed e-talent teams to take all of that and to get
a better return on investment for what we got back. To put
a fine point on that as you look at our e-talent, 10 percent
of advertising leads under the old system resulted in
prospective recruits, 30 percent now. We brought new
customer relationship management software in, what the
civilian world uses, and now we can use better predictive
analytics to figure out where we need to go and how do we do
a better job attracting and then bringing them on board.

And to give you the numbers, last year, amidst COVID,
we met a 40,000-sailor accession mission. To put that in
perspective, in FY 2016 we brought in 31,000. So we think
that those are some ways to really get after it smarter.

Senator Tuberville: Thank you. We probably can
continue this, Senator, when we come back?

Senator Tillis: Keep going. There are only about 40
members that need to vote.

Senator Tuberville: Okay. Anybody else want to add to
General Kelly: Senator, I will just add a little bit to the discussion we just had. So the Air Force made their recruiting goal in FY 2020, and we will make it again in FY 2021. We are on track and we will do well here in FY 2021.

But what we have recognized, and what you heard previously from this discussion of the war for talent now, if you want to call it that, is we have to go out and shift our resources. And we shifted our resources to going out and exposing and inspiring. We talk about engagements and we talk about, for instance, flight academies, to expose communities of people to aviation that have not been previously exposed to aviation, and understanding what it means and what the opportunities might be.

And so whereas we had a lot of resources before that were pretty easily just processing folks that came to us, we have now shifted that to be much more of an outreach organizations, from a recruiting perspective. Engaging them in the e-environment, as was discussed by my colleagues, but other ways.

And then the one other point I would want to make on the discussion of extremism is when we had our stand-downs, and we went through the SecDef directive stand-down, one of the big pieces of feedback that came back is there is some room for interpretation in that space, and there is some
discussion there, right? So how do you balance the individual constitutional rights of somebody, and what do you do? Clearly on the conduct side we understand that. But on the thought side we do not understand it as well. And so what we owe the force and what we owe people back, part of this and part of the screening process is, how do we look at it, how do we clearly define it better than what it is today, and how do we make it easier for our airmen to understand what is permissible and what is not permissible.

Senator Tuberville: Thank you.

General Ottignon: Senator, just a couple of things on extremism. One I would say is the Marine Corps is fully committed to supporting the Department's efforts, and Congress, with the support of Congress, to help eliminate supremist and extremist behavior.

Our stand-down revealed very similar reflections, but I also though the feedback was incredibly positive to have a small unit conversation, really Civics 101, and understanding about what the oath of office is, and the reflections were very positive.

Our sessions, programs, the way we screen to discover, and the way we process at sessions was considered, you know, a best practice within the Department. So I am confident on the front end, of course with the help of Congress, the
tools necessary. It is a comment that was spoken -- how do you continue to find people who are in your ranks?

We have a unique order that was written in 2018, a Prohibitive Conduct Order -- Activities Conduct Order, excuse me -- and since its inception it was designed to go after behavior that was inconsistent with our ethos. And we have identified Marines. We have had 16 cases, substantiated cases, where those were either adjudicated through administrative or judicial means, and those individuals were removed from our ranks.

With regards to recruiting and retention, I would just offer that it is a competitive market. We go into the FY 2022 with about 50 percent in our ready pool for enlistments. We do not compromise the quality that we are looking for. We maintain an exceptionally high quality for Tier 1 at 99.5 percent, and we are well above the DoD standard for mental categories.

And so it is a challenge for our recruiters. They showed great resiliency through COVID. We are coming out of that, but that direct engagement, that sitting in the living room with a young man or young woman with their family, and understanding what we do and the benefits of service to this great country of ours are invaluable, and I think our recruiters who represent our country in every corner of our great 50 states would say that that is the one thing that we
want to get back to.

Senator Tuberville: Medicaid. Mulcahy?

Ms. Mulcahy: Thank you, Senator. I want to start first to echo some of my colleagues' comments on extremism. That was a very sobering but positive experience throughout the Space Force with hearing from senior leaders and then having discussions at the small group level. It was a very positive experience.

As far as recruiting goes, we have the benefit of small numbers and people wanting to join the Space Force, and that is very exciting. What I would say, though, is that we would like to be, especially when you look at STEM talent, it tends to be not as diverse and as representative as we would like it to be, and we know we would be stronger with that. So we are looking at some different strategies, especially when it comes to females, about how better to be able to reach out and attract that talent.

Senator Tuberville: Thank you. I used to tell my football team, "I don't care whether you like each other or not. You better love each other, because you are going to fight with each other on Saturday afternoon." And I think you are pretty much the same way. You have got different personalities. I mean, there is no way you can bring everybody to think the same way, but they can at the time of need, and I think that is what you are all looking for.
Thank you very much.

Senator Gillibrand: Senator Tillis.

Senator Tillis: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. I am going to be brief and then I have to go vote. I have some questions for the record, and General Brito, I will just follow up on the incident I was talking about at Fort Bragg. We will just follow up on the discussion that you and I had yesterday.

But Admiral Nowell, the Navy has grown more than any other service line over the last 5 years. Now we are looking at DoD budgets that are going to be flat. Can you give me an idea of how that is going to create a stress on force management?

Admiral Nowell: Thank you for that, and I will say, you know, we have seen pretty tremendous billet growth again. Our billets are tied to the force of record, and as we are growing those numbers, just to put it in perspective, over the last 3 to 4 years we have increased Navy billets by about 23,000. About 12,000 of those are at sea, and we have already got about 5,000 of those filled. Again, for the Navy Technical Service, it takes me about 1 to 3 years to get folks through that, but again, we have been increasing the accession mission.

So as we look at the future, as we look at the draw on that talent, we know that we have to manage that talent
differently. And so as we look at what we call the
detailing marketplace, how do we do that? How do we do it
more agilely. I think that is going to be very important.

As we look at great power competition and how we train
those sailors, what is that continuum of learning, how can
we repurpose that, critical. And then as we look at what
skills do we need and how would they change, I was down at
Corry Station in Pensacola last week. We have always called
that the cradle of Navy aviation. Now we call it the cradle
of cyber warfare as well, at how we are doing the cyber
mission.

So we are looking hard at do we have that right mix,
and then do we also have it in the Reserve component? COVID
helped us test out and accelerate some of the ways we could
do distributed mass mobilization, and now we are bringing
the systems, with Congress' support, of our transformation,
to go ahead and get things like this Integrated Personnel
System for the AC and the RC. That total force, as we look
at the future and great power competition is going to be
critical.

Senator Tillis: Thank you. Just maybe a final notice
and then a final comment. The notice is that I am going to
back down at Camp Lejeune and back down at Fort Bragg for
military housing town halls. It is probably going to happen
sometime in July or August. I hate to say this but I have
said it before. Every time I announce a town hall with military families to focus on housing and other military family issues, the military housing service requests tend to go down precipitously before I get there. I just want to make it very clear to the families at Camp Lejeune and at Fort Bragg that they are still on my radar and we are going to hear their voice here over the next couple of months.

And then a final statement for all of you. You are the service chiefs. Military sexual assault is a big problem. We heard, in the first panel, from Dr. Van Winkle, that we have command climate surveys. It seems like there is a disconnect, sometime at the command level, sometimes down at the unit level. We hear that some of the programs that we expected to be implemented on the ground have not been implemented on the ground. You guys are the leaders. You men and women are the leaders of the service lines. It comes from the top first, and we expect to see a lot of progress there.

And I applaud Senator Gillibrand for all the work she has done staying focus on this. We have not made near the progress that she or I would like to make, but I appreciate her leadership and keeping her shoulder into it.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you very much, Senator Tillis, and I echo your comments. I appreciate your
leadership on this committee and I appreciate all the
questions.

Since I missed a couple of the questions the others
asked while I went to vote, I just wanted to ask a little
bit about extremism. And I know somebody did mention that
earlier.

Earlier this year, Secretary of Defense Austin directed
a military stand-down to address extremism in the ranks.
What did your service learn during the stand-down about
extremism in the ranks? What is your personal assessment
about the extent of extremism in your service?

Why don't we just start at the beginning and go down
the line.

General Brito: Yes. Thank you, Chair Gillibrand.
One, we did conduct, at all three components, the training,
and the one that directed but more desired from the unit
leadership with the soldiers and civilians. And what we did
learn, that it is definitely a concern of our soldiers. I
would assess that extremism is not a rampant problem across
the United States Army. What I would offer, one is too
many, and clearly something that we need to look at.
Anything that fractures the cohesion and dignity and respect
and cohesive teams that our Army deserves, and the contract
that we have with the parents of the soldiers that join,
needs to be addressed.
So not a rampant problem, one is too many, and definitely something we learned from listening to our soldiers and our civilians. Thank you.

Admiral Nowell: Madam Chairwoman, what we found was that, one, many sailors said, "I don't see it at the unit I am at but I have seen it before in the Navy." So we do think those numbers are small, but we think that it is there. So the one thing that the stand-down did, across the entire Navy -- active, Reserve -- as well as our civilians, was to draw a clear line in the sand and say, "Not in our Navy. Not now. Not ever." And I think that was important.

The other thing that we heard is at these listening sessions that we started as part of Task Force One Navy last summer -- and they can be hard conversations, in listening to experiences that our shipmates have had -- continuing those in the stand-down, and they continue today, that our sailors appreciate that and they think that is very important. And then it emphasized the fact that this is about deckplate leadership. It is about the culture and climate. We are doing many things there in a concerted fashion. But it just reinforced that it is about shipmates taking care of shipmates. We expect bystander intervention. And I think it helped clear up some issues with what do I do when I see something.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Lieutenant General
Kelly?

General Kelly: Madam Chairwoman, I think similar to my colleagues I would say the sessions that we had and the feedback that we got from airmen was that it was good to have these small group discussions and they felt it was helpful to be able to talk through the issues.

I think, just like the others had said, I think our numbers are small, but we frankly learned we don't know what we don't know. You know, A1C McCaffrey is a pretty visible case for us. He made it through basic training, made it to tech school, and before we realized a lot of things that were available to folks out on social media.

So some of the feedback that came back to us from this discussion, and is right now being addressed in an OSD working group, are we need a little bit better definition for the force in terms of what is extremism, as the definitions are in the DoD instructions today about active participation, and what does active participation mean, and what are permissible and impermissible behaviors?

And then lastly, and this follows from Senator Tuberville's question, is screen. Social media screening for our recruiters is a spot that we have to improve upon. We don't do social media screening today. We do lots of other law enforcement checks. We do lots of other asking. You know, we check for tattoos, we check for extremest
behavior, and ask questions. But the ability to scale and
look at the social media thing I think is going to come back
to us, and I think the OSD working group, for which we are
all participating, is going to take that on, and I think
that will be an important aspect going forward as well.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

General Ottignon: Madam Chairwoman, just again,
echoing my colleagues. Definitely the feedback we got was
incredibly positive. The small unit leader discussions were
very fruitful. I am reminded that, you know, this is
something that has got the Commandant's attention, clearly.
We also remember 2018 from Charlottesville. And so this was
not our first time at this.

And so we took steps, as well, 3 years ago, to create
the Prohibitive Activities Conduct Order that kind of closed
the seam that gave a commander a tool to hold people
accountable. And we have had 16 cases where they were
either administratively or judiciously removed from service
because of it.

So we have the means to do that. I think I would echo
what Admiral Nowell said. I think there were some
reflections of "I have seen it but it is not in my unit,"
which I thought was a pretty good reflection. And I think,
finally, what I would say is that many of the commanders
said they appreciated the opportunity to have that time to
talk to their Marines and sailors, to readminister the oath of office, and to really double-tap why it is important, what we do as a Marine Corps for our great nation.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Ms. Mulcahy?

Ms. Mulcahy: Yes, Chairwoman Gillibrand. I am going to echo my colleagues as well. The training was really well received, especially because we were able to do a combination of senior leader introduction into the importance of the values and the oaths of the office that we take, and then get it down to the small unit discussions. Many of our organizations also included local authorities and FBI, and that was very informative as well.

Our Guardians, as I know similar have said, for some clarity on this distinction between membership and active participation, and we are in full concert with DoD to work through that.

I would say it does not seem to be, from our view, an apparent problem pervasive in the Space Force, but I would also echo General Kelly, that there is a little bit of you don't know what you don't know.

Senator Gillibrand: Right. Thank you. With regard to Space Force transition, we understand that the Space Force will transition several thousand more servicemembers into the ranks by the end of fiscal year 2022, as many as 9,000. What challenges are you experiencing as the Space Force
executes this transition, and both for Lieutenant General Kelly and Ms. Mulcahy.

Ms. Mulcahy: Thank you for that question, Chairwoman Gillibrand. I think maybe one of the challenges is we have had overwhelming support and folks who are looking to join the space for in concert with the other services, so making those selections is a bit of a challenge for next year. I think by virtue of the manpower and the end strength that we are targeting for the end of next year, we do not see any issue with being able to make that number. I would say, though, that because of how quickly we are growing, we will, over time, have some challenges with senior NCOs and with officers, field-grade officers, so we expected that. But again, trying to ameliorate that with getting some expertise from the other services as well.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. And Lieutenant General?

General Kelly: Madam Chair, thank you for the question. As Ms. Mulcahy said, we have been working hand-in-hand with them, and I think, you know, the process of transferring airmen into the Space Force has worked pretty well.

What we have been doing internal management, at Ms. Mulcahy's and my level, is even though we do not have a separate appropriation or a separate end strength, we are
already managing that way inside the Department. So we know what are numbers are. We are managing toward it in the Space Force and the Air Force and sort of keeping track on that, which helps.

One of the challenges for us, on the Air Force side, is how do we make sure the airmen who are supporting and are assigned as Space Force base or Space Force unit, how do we make sure that those airmen are not either disadvantaged or advantaged in any way. We need our airmen to go to those units and not feel any different than they do if they went to an Air Force unit. So we are working really hard with our partners and trying to make sure that is a seamless thing for our airmen so they do not feel any different when they are out there supporting or assigned to a Space Force unit.

Senator Gillibrand: With regard to -- we have talked about this with some of the other Senators, the cyber workforce, we had a hearing a couple of weeks ago about the make-up of the cyber workforce, and who we need, how do we get them, how do we pay them, how do we keep them, with an eye towards building and sustaining the force we need over the next 10 years.

Much of the discussion was about recruiting and retention, the appropriate mix between military and civilian workforces. What are your views on the appropriate mix of
personnel and our ability to recruit and retain this specialized workforce? And also, do you believe we should use National Guard in performance of the cyber mission, and is there any untapped capacity in the Guard for these missions?

Let's start with Lieutenant General.

General Brito: Yes, ma'am. It would be hard to put an actual percentage on the mix for military and civilian, but I would mention that we definitely need specialized skill, both in our civilian and military, in uniformed skills as well.

I would mention that we are working in conjunction with Army Cyber, that we have redesigned our traditional legacy hiring practices, and they have actually set up a centralized [inaudible] -- I am sorry, Rock Island, Illinois, to help us recruit the talented civilians that we need and expedite the talent hiring practices, to get this talented skill into the force.

If I may shift to the military, one, if it took it back about 2 years ago, we assessed and recruited the talent, many of which right out of college, and put them into our direct commissioning program. And present day we are assessing leaders and soldiers into this specific branch. Clearly, looking at the talents of some of the soldiers of all ranks in our National Guard and Reserves, if they have
the skills and talent, certainly it is an asset that we should tap to execute our very important cyber mission for our country.

Admiral Nowell: Madam Chairwoman, thank you. As I mentioned earlier, I was down at Corry Station just last week, looking at how we are training these operators, both offensive and defensive, and it is a mix, enlisted and officer. And I will tell you that one of the things we have been doing is, is that force the way that we want it organized now, what could it look like in the future, and then leveraging some of the authorities that you have given us, I think, of the NDAA '19 DOTMA reforms, which we have used with lateral entry for cyber, to permit doing that at higher grades with respect to the age restrictions.

And, you know, some of this is about bonuses and things like that. I mentioned earlier some of our recruiting initiatives, getting into digital, how do we go find folks. But then, as well, we have actually recreated some rates or ranks, if you will. We brought back our Warrant 1 for the first time since Vietnam and applied it to cyber. And when I was in Corry Station, the feedback there was great. We would take an E-5 who has got about 5 or 6 years in, but who has the aptitude, and then we can entice them, because it is a great pay raise, they get to do what they want to do as a Warrant 1, which is sit in a dark room and defend or attack.
And we get about an extra 5 or 6 years out of them as an operator, as compared to the old model.

Additionally, we expanded our cyber warfare engineer designator career path from O-1 to O-3, to O-1 to O-6, and so we can commission them at all pay grades.

So we are leaning into this, not just with the tools we have but are we organized for what we need in the future.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Lieutenant General Kelly?

General Kelly: Madam Chairwoman, I will not repeat what my colleagues have already put out there, but I would just add to that and say, because we are all thinking about it very similarly, but we have been thinking about on trying to work on, how do you change your model, from a model that as you brought talent in and talent stayed with you for a long time, to understanding, in the cyberspace, sometimes talent is going to come in for a few years, work on a specific problem, and depart out. So being able to tap into the Guard and Reserve and our component, being able to tap into civilians who are going to be extremely talented in the cyberspace but are not going to be necessarily interested in uniformed service, and how do you make sure you do that?

And so we have been thinking about civilian auxiliary services and civilian cyber services, and that in that way we have been thinking about the portability and the lateral
entry, not lateral entry for career but lateral entry for 2 or 3 years, to work on a specific cyber problem and provide specific talent, and then transition in and out.

So we are thinking about this cyber talent in a much more flexible way than we did in our human capital before.

General Ottignon: Madam Chairwoman, I just would acknowledge a very complex problem, as we try to fulfill the requirements of both joint and within service. I have regular conversations with the Deputy Commandant for Information as well as our Commanding General for Marine Forces Cyber. For us, again, it a tailor of incentives, both monetary and non-monetary, to do that to retain and attract. But it is an absolute challenge.

Senator Gillibrand: Ms. Mulcahy?

Ms. Mulcahy: Yes, Chairwoman Gillibrand. You asked for about what percent of the force, so for us in the Space Force it is about 20 percent. But what we are also realizing is that this business of coding is so important in all of our disciplines in space. And so it is not just the cyber experts, but we are identifying folks in the other specialties that we have to become coders. And we have this 12-week boot camp that we just ran this past year, and had some 25 graduates, and they came from different specialties, and then they will go back in all functions and be able to support and help, and we just think that is so important in
our service.

We are also working on fluency. And so digital university has licenses, and as we got started we had hundreds of them. Now we have thousands of them. So it is part of the culture now, and not just our military but our civilian as well, we have this high expectation.

And the last thing I would like to say is one of our NCOs had the idea, as we brought our first seven Guardians into the Force last fall, to issue a tablet and some of this license and courseware. And there was back and forth -- how much would they do on their own? Those seven Guardians did 122 hours in about the first 10 days of basic military training.

So there is a way that we believe that we can still connect and make use as we are trying to expand to get more talent in for cyber.

Senator Gillibrand: So I have an idea that I want to get your thoughts on. So I have been sitting on the Board of Visitors for West Point for most of the last decade, and it has been one of the most helpful experiences I have ever had and extremely inspiring. And we do not have a special school for cyber, but we need cyber professionals in the whole of government. So we need them in the DoD, we need them in the intelligence services, we need them in Commerce, we need them everywhere.
What do you think about the idea of having a national cyber school that is for whole-of-government, not just one service, so that you would be able to recruit from this school directly? And the reason why I am suggesting this is one of the challenges we have in cyber, specifically, that I think is so important, is we really excel when we have diversity. When we have kids from all over the globe, all over the country coming to do cyber, their expertise and skills are so extraordinary, we want to be able to cultivate them. And because the service academies are so successful at bringing up men and women to not only have a heart of service but a dedication to this country, I think it would be worth considering having a cyber school that can be recruited from each of the services but also from the intelligence services and other aspects of government where we need it.

To develop that love of public service and love of leadership, what is so unique about the service academies, they teach leadership. You do not go to any other school in America where they teach leadership except for the service academies. And I think that makes them profoundly important to the future of this country.

And so I would like your thoughts, and if you do not have one today, because I did not ask you in advance, I would like your thoughts of what would you want if we did
stand up a cyber school that could be used for whole-of-
government needs so that we get the diversity we are looking
for, so that we get the upfront training in areas that we
need our kids to have.

And we do have some already in the service academies.
West Point has one of the best cyber majors you could have,
and it is fantastic. But I thinking to create an onramp for
public service of all types of students. Because as we have
discussed, it is a hard mix, because you have talent that
may not look like a typical servicemember. They may not be
able to bench press X number of pounds and do so many
pushups and all those things. They may not want to become
an expert in shooting and arms and everything else that our
military members develop. But they may be the best in the
country, and we want access to them.

So I was thinking that might be a way to recruit
directly from the best of the best. What are your thoughts
on that? Whoever has one can jump in.

Admiral Nowell: Ma'am, I will just jump in there,
because the Naval Academy just recently opened Hopper Hall,
named for Grace Hopper, which is all about cyber operations,
state of the art, I think probably similar to West Point.
And when we looked at that, some of this is how you think
about it. It is also accepting that when we say
"warfighters," what we have been working in the Navy is
typically that is applied to a surface warfare officer, like me, an aviator, explosive ordnance, a SEAL, a submariner. But our cyber warriors may very well be the ones who launch the first attack or, you know, defend against that last salvo.

So I think looking at different models would be good, and certainly we are doing that a micro scale, if you look at what we are doing at the Academy. And we have increased the number of folks that we are allowing now to go into that specialty, as they come out of the Academy, recognizing that that is a necessity.

Senator Gillibrand: Let me just comment on that. So to get into the Naval Academy, it is really hard. You have to be top of your class, excellent scores, excellent physical fitness, several sports would be preferred. I mean, it is a certain person. But that is not going to get all the talent we need in cyber. So that is why I think the service academies are smart to have cyber specialties at each of them. But the pond is not big enough, is my problem. Only certain kids know about service academies. I mean, that is a huge problem. Only certain kids know about it, aspire to it, and then create a high school career to be able to get in.

And so I am looking for a larger pond that you can then feed from, do your specialized training at the service
academies, for people who know they want to be in the Navy since they were age 15 and that is where they are going. But this other kid, who just might be a fantastic engineer or coder, who we could inspire to do public service, through free education with the commitment for service, that is a big net.

So to the extent you want to spend some time thinking about it, and how you might be able to recruit from that one body, the extra 10 percent of cyber specialists you need, that might be the key to the competitiveness that we are lacking. Because lots of kid would love to do public service, but not lots of kids have a background in military or aspire to it. But we want access to those kids too, and I think if we created something meaningful we could get it.

Any other comments before we finish? And, Ms. Mulcahy, I would like to know your opinion, since you do not have a specific service academy for Space Force.

Ms. Mulcahy: Yeah, this is intriguing, Chairwoman Gillibrand. I would say, as far as a separate academy goes for Space Force, I think nesting with the Air Force Academy is just right and just perfect for us now. But this is something to think about, as a separate school. I have also been thinking about -- and I know that we have certain missions in all of our services that have to be done by military people that have cyber skills, but we have other
ones that civilians can do. And so perhaps this is
something that caters to both.

General Brito: Yes, and Chair Gillibrand, if I may
add, similar to an approach we are trying, we are working
with our 21st Century Talent Management now. We have seen
the challenges of, one, attracting, inviting those special
skills to the service, and more importantly, retaining them,
because Google and others may offer more money and
opportunities. So certainly an exciting approach, and
definitely something I would like to learn more about.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you all for your testimony.
Thank you all for your service. I am deeply grateful that
you continue to serve our country as ably and as bravely as
you do. And count on this subcommittee to support the men
and women who serve under you. It is our job to make sure
the personnel are ready and strong and able. So thank you

[Whereupon, at 4:27 p.m., the subcommittee was
adjourned.]