

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

Subcommittee on Personnel

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN REVIEW OF THE
DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026
AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025

Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON COURT REPORTING
1029 VERMONT AVE, NW
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WASHINGTON, DC 20005
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1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PERSONNEL
2 POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
3 REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE
4 PROGRAM

5
6 Wednesday, April 9, 2025

7
8 U.S. Senate

9 Subcommittee on Personnel

10 Committee on Armed Services

11 Washington, D.C.

12
13 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:35 p.m. in
14 Room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Tommy
15 Tuberville, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

16 Committee Members Present: Senators Tuberville,
17 [presiding], Scott, Warren, Blumenthal, Hirono, and
18 Duckworth.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS H. TUBERVILLE, U.S.
2 SENATOR FROM ALABAMA

3 Senator Tuberville: Good morning. I'd like to call
4 this hearing in session from the Armed Services Personnel
5 Subcommittee. We appreciate our witnesses here today, and
6 thank you all for your service.

7 You're going to find today, and as the last couple
8 weeks have been very, very busy, so we'll have people in and
9 out. I think we have three votes going on, one going on as
10 we speak, and so we'll be in and out. Hopefully we can get
11 more people here today. We have other hearings going on, so
12 thank you for being here. And Ranking Member Warren, thank
13 you for being here, we had to sprint to get here, right?

14 Senator Warren: I did.

15 [Laughter.]

16 Senator Tuberville: All right. Senate Armed Service
17 Subcommittee on Personnel meets this afternoon to provide an
18 important opportunity for senior leaders at the Department
19 of Defense to highlight areas where Congress can support and
20 strengthen our military's most valuable asset; It's people.

21 People are our most valuable asset. I think we should
22 all know that those who volunteer to serve in and out of
23 uniform are the backbone of our National Defense. And this
24 is a critical discussion as we prepare for the NDAA for
25 Fiscal Year of 2026.

1 I want to thank our witness for joining us today,
2 Lieutenant General Brian Eifler, Deputy Chief of Staff for
3 Personnel for the United States Army, Vice Admiral Richard
4 Cheeseman, Chief of Naval Personnel for the United States
5 Navy, Lieutenant General Michael Borgschulte Sir, Deputy
6 Commandant for Manpower, and Reserve Affairs for the United
7 States Marine Corps. Lieutenant General Caroline m Miller,
8 Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services
9 for the United States Air Force and Ms. Katharine Kelley,
10 Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capital for the
11 United States Space Force.

12 I'm glad to see our military refocusing on war fighting
13 and readiness after the previous administration prioritized
14 DEI and abortion and other progressive policies initiatives
15 over lethality. One of the reasons we're here today. This
16 shift is already leading to renewed enthusiasm for personnel
17 for military services among the American people.

18 While I'm encouraged by the recent improvements in
19 military recruitment, I'm increasingly concerned about the
20 quality of the recruits we're bringing in. Many of the
21 services have lowered their standards to meet requirement
22 goals. The Army and Navy's Prep courses have seen some
23 success, but that success only matters if they're actually
24 raising the academic and physical performance of our
25 recruits. The caliber of men and women we bring in directly

1 effects readiness levels, and the long-term strength and
2 effectiveness of our military.

3 So, I'd like the witnesses to address the effect that
4 lowered enlistment standards could have on long-term
5 attrition and readiness, and how you are ensuring you're not
6 sacrificing quality for quantity.

7 I'd also like to address the health of the force in
8 this hearing. Military hospitals and clinics are facing
9 staffing shortages, leading to reduced access to care, which
10 ultimately impacts the health and retention of service
11 members and their families. This combined with lower
12 recruiting standards, means the force is more susceptible to
13 health issues like obesity and mental health challenges.
14 I'd like to hear what the services are doing to ensure the
15 health and readiness of their military personnel.

16 In recent years, this subcommittee has invested heavily
17 into the quality-of-life service members ensuring they and
18 their families have the resources and support necessary to
19 thrive, both in and out of uniform. This remains a
20 priority. However, these investments will be undermined if
21 we fail to address the quality of recruitment and health of
22 the force. Sustaining a healthy and effective military goes
23 beyond simply meeting and recruiting missions. It requires
24 a commitment to the wellbeing and long-term readiness of
25 every single service member.

1 So, thank all the witnesses for being here today. I
2 look forward to your testimony and Senator Warren now can
3 give her opening statement.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. ELIZABETH WARREN, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 MASSACHUSETTS

3 Senator Warren: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
4 So, our annual posture review hearing provides the
5 department and the military services the opportunity to
6 discuss personnel priorities for the coming year.

7 It's also a chance for members of this subcommittee to
8 continue to address the major challenges confronting our
9 all-volunteer force. After all, our ability to defend
10 ourselves and defeat our adversaries depends on brave men
11 and women stepping up and volunteering to serve. So, I am
12 pleased to see the military services are making progress in
13 addressing their recruiting challenges since our last
14 posture hearing.

15 It's critical that we welcome and support anyone who
16 wants to serve their country. But in just the last two
17 months, President Trump has fired General C. Q. Brown and
18 Admiral Lisa Franchetti. It sends a chilling message about
19 who is and who is not welcome in our military. Secretary
20 Hegseth has removed the military's top legal advisors, and
21 the army has reportedly cut training on combat medicine and
22 the laws of war.

23 Secretary Hegseth has announced plans to fire or push
24 out 50 to 60,000 civilians, and he has already fired
25 civilians who do everything from acquisitions to missile

1 defense to childcare for military families. So, let's start
2 with the civilian workforce. As Secretary Hegseth told this
3 committee during his confirmation process, "Civilians are
4 important and provide continuity and expertise to our armed
5 forces." DOD civilians are not just critical to supporting
6 the military, they're also a bargain for taxpayers.

7 The most recent study from the Federal Salary Council,
8 found that civilian employees earned nearly 25 percent less
9 than their counterparts in the private sector. They come to
10 work because they believe in the most important mission we
11 have, and that is to keep Americans safe. But what are co-
12 Presidents Trump and Musk doing? Well, just last week,
13 President Trump signed an illegal executive order attacking
14 federal unions and stripping federal employees of their
15 rights. At DOD, this won't make us safer. This won't make
16 us more efficient. It will diminish morale and harm
17 recruiting.

18 DOGE has plans to slash the DOD workforce by 8 percent.
19 The results will fall into one of three buckets, and none of
20 them are good. First, the military manpower could be
21 pressed into service to accomplish the tasks that are more
22 appropriately performed by civilians or the federal
23 government could pay billions more to backfill these
24 employees by using contractors or critical work could just
25 be left undone.

1 So far, neither Elon Musk nor Secretary Hegseth has
2 given any indication of how they plan to deal with the
3 workload that these civilian employees currently perform.
4 As part of the 8 percent planned reduction, Elon Musk has
5 taken a chainsaw to DODs probationary workforce. Think
6 about what that means. It means firing workers who've been
7 recently promoted or who've been hired to fill a critical
8 need, often to fill gaps identified by members of this very
9 committee.

10 The law makes it very clear that the Secretary must
11 make sure that reductions do not jeopardize our national
12 security, specifically the law. 10 U.S.C Section 129a
13 mandates that the Secretary may not reduce the civilian
14 workforce, "Unless the Secretary conducts an appropriate
15 analysis of the impacts of such reductions on workload,
16 military force structure, lethality, readiness, operational
17 effectiveness, stress on the military force, and fully
18 burdened costs."

19 We have no indication that this analysis has occurred,
20 and I look forward to working with members of this
21 subcommittee to ensure that this administration complies
22 with the law. It is also important for this subcommittee to
23 understand how damaging the Trump administration's efforts
24 to shut down the CFPB will be for service members and their
25 families. An entire division of the Consumer Financial

1 Protection Bureau functions as the cop on the beat to
2 enforce service members consumer rights, and it has been
3 remarkably effective.

4 The CFPB has discovered more than \$363 million in
5 financial scams directly affecting our service members and
6 veterans, and it has gotten that \$363 million returned
7 directly to the service members and vets who were cheated.
8 Dismantling the CFPB will devastate the enforcement of the
9 Service Member Civil Relief Act and the Military Lending
10 Act, which provides special protections for service members.

11 For example, current law permits service members to
12 break their lease if they are deployed or if their duty
13 station is transferred. The law also protects service
14 members from being foreclosed on or having their car
15 repossessed without a court order. Without the CFPB to
16 enforce these key laws, service members are now vulnerable
17 to scams and predatory practices that distract from the
18 mission and undermine our military readiness.

19 I also continue to be concerned that this
20 administration does not understand how essential women are
21 to our military. None of our military branches would have
22 met their recruiting goals if women had not volunteered, and
23 we cannot afford to dismiss the talents of more than half
24 our population. I am very concerned that this
25 administration is more focused on pushing women out of

1 combat roles and reinstalling a glass ceiling that will only
2 make us weaker.

3 There are several topics I want to focus on with our
4 witnesses today. First, childcare. We need to make sure
5 that service members have access to high quality affordable
6 childcare. The most recent Blue Star Family Survey
7 confirmed that "Childcare continues to be a top barrier to
8 employment for active-duty spouses." Failing to address
9 these shortfalls, threatens retention, and will drive out
10 the military families we need.

11 And second, making sure that service members receive
12 the benefits they deserve and are protected against
13 predatory companies. To thank service members for the
14 sacrifices they make, Congress has created programs like the
15 Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Tuition Assistance
16 program, making it easier for service members to get the
17 education that they want and that they need.

18 I look forward to discussing how we can improve those
19 programs in a bipartisan fashion. I want to thank all of
20 our witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to
21 your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Senator Warren.

23 Now, we'll have opening statements from each of our
24 witnesses. General, you'd like to start?

25

1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL BRIAN S. EIFLER,
2 DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL, G-1, UNITED STATES ARMY

3 General Eifler: Chairman Tuberville, Ranking Member
4 Warren, and distinguished members of the subcommittee.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

6 The Army stands ready to defend our nation. Our army
7 can provide combat power anywhere in the world to protect
8 American and allied interests. Our army is lethal,
9 cohesive, and ready. We are proud, but we are not
10 satisfied. The Army is transforming its organizations and
11 delivering technology to keep up with the evolving
12 battlefield. Continually transforming means the army is
13 more adaptable, flexible, and lethal.

14 The army is moving forward under four focus areas that
15 directly address an increasingly volatile world. These
16 pillars are war fighting, ready combat formations,
17 continuous transformation, and strengthening the profession.
18 Within these four pillars, our team of professionals will
19 execute all human resource actions that directly support our
20 most important asset, our people.

21 Under this framework, the goal is to improve,
22 streamline, and renovate how we do things in the HR
23 community, to be faster and more efficient. Our readiness
24 for large scale combat operations depends on it. As an
25 example, we will focus on the overhaul and revamping of our

1 retention processes. This will ensure quality over
2 quantity, and provide leaders the right skills for our
3 formations.

4 Next, we'll modernize our centralized promotion board
5 system and leverage artificial intelligence in an ethical
6 and responsible way to make sure we update the systems.
7 Additionally, we will work with this Congress to overhaul
8 the officer professional management system to make it
9 relevant to the current operational environment and the
10 future.

11 The Army remains committed to quality-of-life
12 initiatives to ensure our soldiers remain focused on their
13 missions. Barracks renovations, and modernization efforts
14 are correcting outdated housing, dining facilities are being
15 updated to provide more flexible and nutrition options. The
16 holistic health and fitness program, or H2F embeds experts
17 directly into our units to ensure peak performance.
18 Recruiting will remain a priority.

19 The Army exceeded its Fiscal Year 2024 goal with over
20 55,000 new soldiers and is targeting 61,000 in this FY, and
21 are currently on glide path to surpass without lowering
22 standards. With congressional support, we will keep the
23 army on a sustainable strategic path as we transform for the
24 future. We will deliver ready combat formations with
25 advanced capabilities to defend our nation and its interest.

1 As we celebrate our 250th anniversary this year, I
2 thank you for your unwavering support of our talented
3 soldiers, civilians, professionals, and their families.

4 [The prepared statement of General Eifler follows:]

5 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Tuberville: Admiral.

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1 STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD J. CHEESEMAN JR. USN
2 CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL, N-1, UNITED STATES NAVY

3 Admiral Cheeseman: Chairman Tuberville, Ranking Member
4 Warren, and distinguished subcommittee members. Thank you
5 for the opportunity to testify today, representing the
6 incredible sailors and families of our United States Navy.

7 Supporting me today is my Senior Enlisted Advisor,
8 Fleet Master Chief Delbert Terrell, who provides wise
9 counsel on all issues whether officer enlisted or civilian.
10 It is those sailors and civilians that we both serve who are
11 on duty around the clock and around the globe, a lethal
12 fighting force working to deter aggression, particularly in
13 the Red Sea, Eastern Mediterranean, and Western Pacific.

14 Continuing resolution 25 funds a thorough strategy
15 driven Navy budget that is focused on delivering resources
16 to ensure our naval forces remain ready, resilient, and
17 agile to execute national tasking, and preserve peace
18 through strength. I thank you for your support within CR
19 25, that helps Navy's recruiting and retention efforts, as
20 well as our quality-of-service initiatives writ large. They
21 are making a difference, and I encourage continued
22 congressional support in these areas for fiscal year 26 and
23 beyond.

24 Navy recruiters had a historic 2024, contracting more
25 sailors than in any given year since 2003. We exceeded our

1 increased contracting goal by implementing real time data
2 informed processes, capitalizing on the Future Sailor Prep
3 course, streamlining medical waiver reviews, increasing the
4 quality and number of recruiters, and identifying and
5 removing barriers to recruiter productivity. As a result,
6 we are on pace to exceed our fiscal year 25 recruiting goal
7 of 40,600 future sailors.

8 I remain focused on ensuring our schoolhouse supply
9 chain is ready to receive this influx of motivated students.
10 And we are ensuring every future sailor receives the
11 training they need to be ready on day one in a fiscally
12 responsible, efficient, and effective manner. Additionally,
13 we continue to exceed retention forecast across all zones,
14 in part due to consistent congressional support in funding
15 sailors' special incentive pay and bonuses.

16 Sea duty manning is an essential element of our
17 operational readiness, and I know our chronic shortfalls
18 impact job satisfaction and retention. We are driving
19 barrier removal across the enterprise, and we can now
20 predict a steady drop in gaps at sea over the next 18
21 months. My goal remains achieving 100 percent rating fill
22 by 2027.

23 Our sailors, civilians, and their families are the
24 backbone of our navy. It is our duty to take care of them
25 by delivering the highest standards of quality of service.

1 We must build great people, great leaders, and great teams
2 to innovate, solve hard problems, and dominate in combat.
3 Our sailors stand ready as a lethal fighting force to deter
4 or confront any adversary. You and every American can be
5 proud of your Navy and this team.

6 This is my last scheduled hearing in front of this body
7 as I retire later this summer. It's been a privilege to
8 serve in this role over the last three years, and I
9 sincerely thank all the members of this civic committee and
10 the staff for your continued support. Thank you.

11 [The prepared statement of Admiral Cheeseman follows:]

12 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Admiral. General
2 Borgschulte.

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL J. BORGSCHULTE
2 USMC, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS
3 UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

4 General Borgschulte: Chairman Tuberville, Ranking
5 Member Warren, and distinguished members of the
6 subcommittee, I am honored to appear before you and tell the
7 Marine Corps story through the personnel lens.

8 The Marine Corps approaches the challenges of this
9 critical manpower portfolio with a singular focus, and that
10 is delivering combat credible lethal forces to operational
11 units wherever they are needed. Every decision we make,
12 whether that's through recruiting, retention, assignment, or
13 policies are evaluated through the lens of lethality.

14 Today, your Marine Corps has over 30,000 Marines
15 operation deployed in over 35 countries across the globe.
16 These marines are supporting our nation's campaigning
17 efforts, underpinned deterrence, under the banner of peace,
18 through strength, and ready to respond when called upon.
19 Sustaining this high state of war fighting readiness depends
20 entirely on our ability to recruit and retain those lethal
21 warriors. I'm pleased to report that we continue to win on
22 the recruiting front and we will make mission again this
23 year.

24 We've achieved these recruiting goals while exceeding
25 all DOD quality standards without lowering and without ever

1 compromising those standards that define us, the Marines.
2 We believe our discipline culture, our war fighting ethos
3 and high standards, attracts the competitive high performing
4 Americans, that we need to fill our ranks with tough, smart,
5 and gritty marines.

6 The retention of our Marines has also reached historic
7 heights this year. We've exceeded last year's unprecedented
8 numbers, and just this last week we surpassed a hundred
9 percent of the retention goals that we need, and we're not
10 stopping. This marks the highest number and highest quality
11 we've retained of Marines in decades and proves that
12 warriors that earn the title Marine want to stay Marine and
13 are proud to protect and defend the nation that we love.

14 I'd also like to thank you, each of you on this
15 subcommittee for your ongoing support in providing each of
16 the services with the tools that make these successes
17 possible. Financial incentives, quality of life
18 initiatives, school access, family support programs, and
19 many, many more, make a difference when a young American
20 decides to become a marine or stay a marine.

21 Now I'm going to go a little bit, step further with a
22 request. If you have sons or daughters or family members or
23 friends that you think have what it takes to be a marine, I
24 know a general, they can make that happen. And I'll leave a
25 bunch of business cards out here after testimony so we can

1 get in contact with me.

2 But after all this success talk, I'd be remiss if I
3 didn't stress this. We can't stop here. The success each
4 service is going to highlight today, which has been
5 fantastic, it remains fragile. The force depends not only
6 on resources, but on something more enduring. And that's
7 the value of military service.

8 Our nation must reawaken a sense of purpose around
9 serving, around being part of something bigger than self.
10 And I ask you to help us restore the value and prestige of
11 service in the eyes of our fellow citizens.

12 And in closing, I'll ask that we all continue to commit
13 to attack each key decision through the lens of lethality
14 and war fighting excellence. Our marines and our nation are
15 counting on it. I look forward to your questions today.
16 Semper Fidelis.

17 [The prepared statement of General Borgschulte
18 follows:]

19 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Tuberville: Thank you General. General
2 Miller.

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL CAROLINE M. MILLER
2 USAF, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR MANPOWER, PERSONNEL, AND
3 SERVICES, A-1, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

4 General Miller: Chairman Tuberville, Ranking Member
5 Warren, and distinguished members of this subcommittee. I'm
6 honored to have the opportunity to appear before you with my
7 fellow service personnel colleagues.

8 The Department of the Air Force is committed to
9 ensuring we are postured to deter and if necessary, prevail
10 against our sophisticated peer competitors to include China
11 and Russia. As the department looks to the future,
12 readiness continues to be the foundation of our mission
13 success

14 Readiness can be assessed through multiple lenses;
15 however, our most significant competitive advantage is our
16 people, our airmen. We exist to fly, fight and win, none of
17 which is possible without the dedication and talent of the
18 men and women who volunteer to serve. This year, we
19 continue to focus on recruiting, developing, and retaining
20 skilled and innovative individuals, ensuring they are
21 equipped with essential operational skills and resources.

22 Fiscal year 2024 saw improvements in recruiting due to
23 an increase in recruiter manning, changes to training
24 processes, and an increased in delayed entry program to its
25 highest level in 10 years. The department is also improving

1 pilot retention through increased sessions and training
2 through pit capacity, using monetary and non-monetary
3 authorities granted by Congress.

4 As readiness is directly linked to the welfare of our
5 airmen and their families, we continue to target barriers to
6 wellbeing and overall force readiness in areas including
7 economic security, access to quality childcare, sexual
8 assault and sexual harassment prevention and suicide
9 prevention.

10 Efforts to reduce financial stress include training
11 through programs such as the personal financial readiness
12 program and direct financial assistance authorized by the
13 fiscal year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act.

14 We also remain committed to improving access to
15 available, affordable, and quality childcare programs. To
16 bolster sexual assault and sexual harassment response and
17 prevention, we have implemented policies to establish
18 standards for care providers to ensure accountability and
19 facilitate inter-office collaboration.

20 Furthermore, the department has codified the DOD
21 suicide response system and implemented a postvention
22 command support team. This team delivers leader focused
23 training designed to implement rapid response activities
24 following a suicide event to minimize suicide contagion,
25 facilitate individual and unit cohesion, and reduce negative

1 impacts of force readiness.

2 Talent management remains one of the cornerstones of
3 our efforts to build and develop the force we need. Our
4 talent management philosophy is based on high standards,
5 accountability, and meritocracy. Each airman record is
6 evaluated on its own merits, specifically in terms of job
7 performance, demonstrated skills and war fighting readiness.
8 To improve readiness, the department is focused on
9 developing specialized skills to solve operational and
10 strategic challenges.

11 As the Department of the Air Force looks to the future
12 to preserve our supremacy against adversaries, I assure you
13 the Air Force leadership is wholly focused on maximizing
14 readiness and lethality, while caring for our force.

15 Thank you for your continued partnership and your
16 advocacy of the United States Air Force. I look forward to
17 your questions.

18 [The prepared statement of General Miller follows:]

19 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, General. Ms. Kelley.

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1 STATEMENT OF MS. KATHARINE KELLEY, DEPUTY CHIEF OF
2 SPACE OPERATIONS FOR HUMAN CAPITAL, UNITED STATES SPACE
3 FORCE

4 Ms. Kelley: Chairman Tuberville, Ranking Member
5 Warren, and distinguished members of this subcommittee.
6 Thank you for the opportunity to represent the United States
7 Space Force here today. And thank you for your opening
8 remarks about the importance of people. This subcommittee
9 like no other, is a huge supporter of the talent that we
10 have in the Space Force.

11 Our mission is clear: to secure our nation's interests
12 in, from, and to space. And strategic competition in space,
13 represents a serious threat to our national security and to
14 our global leadership presence.

15 The Space Force remains focused on developing guardians
16 with the foundational skills and experience necessary in
17 this highly technical, contested, and lethal 21st century
18 world that we find ourselves in. This past year, the Space
19 Force launched its inaugural officer training course. This
20 is a rigorous 12-month course covering space, operations,
21 intelligence, cyber, and acquisition, designed to develop
22 the most credible guardians possible.

23 Simultaneously, we evaluated our enlisted training and
24 development in our cyber and intelligence as applied to the
25 space domain. And for our civilians, we launched an

1 optimization for space course to enhance the civilian
2 expertise in this continuing evolving domain.

3 Building the force American needs requires the
4 continued growth and investments in all our space
5 professionals and all our guardians. As our uniform service
6 grows, we are ensuring the civilian workforce is aligned to
7 critical functions and indirect support of the war fighter
8 mission and the support the guardians give to the joint
9 fight.

10 I'm proud to share that the Space Force has exceeded
11 its fiscal goal in 24 for enlisted recruiting, and we are on
12 track in 25 to exceed as well. We are also at a retention
13 rate of 96 percent across our force, both officer and
14 enlisted. Currently, we have more than 440 recruits
15 awaiting entry into the Space Force, which will allow us a
16 further pipeline for next year as well,

17 To ensure the long-term pipeline of guardians, we've
18 established a recruiting squadron, which is the first time
19 for the Space Force to have a guardian recruiting other
20 potential guardians. And so, we are excited about what this
21 new model can bring. We're leveraging new marketing
22 platforms as well because we're cognizant of the talent that
23 we seek for the Space Force, leveraging technology and ways
24 to meet these potential guardians where they're at. And we
25 are excited about a new Space Force planetarium show, that

1 will be debuting around the country on National Space Day
2 next month.

3 The Space Force is committed to fostering support for
4 guardians and their families as well, as we recognize things
5 like childcare are one of the primary resources crucial for
6 quality of life and readiness, that allow our guardians to
7 focus on the 24-7 operational support that much of our force
8 provides on a day-to-day basis to the joint fight.

9 We've made significant progress in consolidating space
10 expertise across the Department of Defense. We've opened
11 our first application window for space professionals in the
12 reserves to transition over to the Space Force in a full-
13 time capacity. We have far outweighed our ability and
14 interest, and we continue to bring more into the Space Force
15 over the next subsequent years.

16 The flexible service options that this committee
17 provided us in the Personnel Management Act, enable
18 guardians to move between full and part-time work roles in a
19 much more seamless way and aligned to the service mission
20 needs. We are also leveraging the authorities you gave us
21 to incentivize and compensate our best and brightest, our
22 STEM focused talent and those guardians who represent this
23 nation

24 Chairman Tuberville, Ranking Member Warren, and all
25 distinguished members of this subcommittee, thank you again

1 for the opportunity to represent our Space Force guardians
2 with you today. As the space domain becomes increasingly
3 contested, no longer a benign environment, we remain
4 steadfast in our mission to secure our nation's interests.
5 And I very much look forward to your questions here today.

6 [The prepared statement of Ms. Kelley follows:]

7 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Ms. Kelley. Thank you
2 all of you. And y'all have very important jobs as we all
3 know. And we all know the consequences if you do great or
4 don't. So, thank you for your efforts.

5 I once was a recruiter in my former job. I know how
6 hard that is. And pretty much the same level, in the same
7 age group, and it's a thrill a minute, you know, when
8 recruiting 18, 19, 20-year-old young men and women. So,
9 we'll go through a few questions here.

10 General Eifler, you know, this week my office heard
11 from a constituent that the Army was planning to close its
12 command and General Staff College Satellite Campus at
13 Redstone Arsenal, my state of Huntsville, Alabama. When was
14 this decision made and can you share with the committee the
15 reasoning behind this closure?

16 General Eifler: Yes, chairman, there was no decision.
17 This is all pre-decisional. I know they're doing some
18 analysis out there based on some decisions for the delayed
19 retirement program, but no such decision has been made at
20 this time.

21 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Secretary Hegseth
22 recently ordered a 60-day review of military combat armed
23 standards to ensure that everyone who filled these roles was
24 held to the same equal standard. Each one of you, and we'll
25 start with the General on the left here. Can each of you --

1 if you have affected jobs, discuss your services approach to
2 meeting this deadline and creating sex-neutral standards
3 based solely on the operational demands of the occupation
4 and not an artificial desire to achieve a certain
5 representation number? Can each of you talk about these
6 requirements? General, we'll start with you.

7 General Eifler: Yes, Chairman. Specifically, we were
8 looking into this because of the NDAA last year that
9 directed the close combat units specifically in MOSs or
10 specialties like infantry, armor, special forces, engineers
11 have a higher standard for close combat activities. So, we
12 have already been working on that and we'll continue to work
13 on that here soon, that is due out by June to have in place,
14 according to this this committee, in this congress.

15 What the Secretary of Defense has asked us also to look
16 at as having one standard that is regardless of sex for
17 those close combat units. So, we're taking our analysis and
18 looking at all of that to make sure that we are focused on
19 lethality and focused on what we require for combat

20 Senator Tuberville: Admiral.

21 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, thanks for the question.
22 Navy's taking a similar approach as my Army colleague here.
23 We've done some nascent work with our seals and EOD folks,
24 also with some of our civil Engineering Corps folks. We
25 have a much smaller cadre given we're not necessarily ground

1 focused, but for those communities that are, we're working
2 with Manpower Reserve Affairs, we're developing those
3 standards, but their work to date is nascent Sir.

4 Senator Tuberville: General

5 General Borgschulte: Senator Tuberville, thanks for
6 asking this question. For Marines, we carry high standards
7 and we don't apologize for it. We're very proud of our high
8 standards. Every marine conducts a combat fitness test, and
9 a physical fitness test. These combat fitness tests; this
10 is where you carry a marine over your shoulder through an
11 agility test for 50 meters. You throw a grenade, a dummy
12 grenade, you carry ammo cans and we're pretty proud of that.
13 Every marine fires an automatic weapon and qualifies not
14 just from a hundred yards, from 500 yards, five football,
15 fields every marine.

16 In addition, for our combat arms, all Marines have the
17 same standards. So, things such as wearing your full
18 combat, heavy equipment with your service weapon, and going
19 on a force march for 20 miles under a certain time, all
20 Marines. Another instance would be taking a mark 19, very
21 heavy weapon, grenade launch weapon system, putting that
22 over your head, doesn't matter. Male, female, all Marines.
23 Taking an Olympic bar, 115 pounds, putting it over your
24 head, all Marines. Taking an Olympic bar, 150 pounds up
25 holding, deadlift all Marines. So, we're again, very proud.

1 Thanks for asking that question, we hold our standards and
2 we don't apologize for it. If you can't meet that standard,
3 you're not in USMC.

4 Senator Tuberville: Can you carry somebody 50 yards on
5 your shoulders?

6 General Borgschulte: I can. Yes, sir.

7 Senator Tuberville: I see your group behind you saying
8 Yeah,

9 [Laughter.]

10 General Borgschulte: If you come down to Quantico,
11 sir, I'll carry you.

12 Senator Tuberville: General Miller.

13 General Miller: Yes, sir. We had already started
14 doing this. We already have a special force combat arms
15 physical fitness test, and we just wrapped up the EOD.
16 We've been working over the EOD for the last couple years
17 and they finalized it last week actually. So, the timing
18 was perfect. We're getting ready to demonstrate it to the
19 chief, and at that point we'll be in compliance with the
20 with the requirements.

21 Senator Tuberville: Were there a lot of adjustments to
22 it?

23 General Miller: Not at all. None. And ours are also
24 sex neutral, they always have been.

25 Senator Tuberville: Ms. Kelley?

1 Ms. Kelley: Yes. Chairman, on the Space Force side, I
2 would add one unique dynamic for us. In addition to the
3 review that we're in the midst of on combat relevant, the
4 piece for the Space Force that we're really looking at is
5 the cognitive abilities necessary on an ops floor for us. A
6 lot of what our focus is for guardians is to make sure that
7 they're coming to work ready, rested, awake, focused on what
8 they need to do.

9 So, in addition to the physical training and the
10 fitness that they're working on, we're also exploring
11 whether we can bring technology into that to help them see
12 and be more aware of how ready they are for that direct
13 fight that night.

14 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Senator Warren.

15 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, every
16 parent in this country understands how hard it is to find
17 high quality, affordable, available childcare. And for our
18 military families, the tasks can be just whole orders of
19 magnitude harder. Often, they have to navigate finding
20 childcare while they're on long deployments, abrupt
21 relocations, and non-standard work hours. And if military
22 families can't find childcare, they just may not be able to
23 serve.

24 I appreciate that at least two of you specifically
25 mentioned childcare when we talk about our service members

1 and our force readiness. DOD knows how important childcare
2 is, and that is why it runs the nation's largest employer-
3 based childcare system. It's high quality, it's affordable,
4 but right now it is facing a huge shortage of childcare
5 workers, which means fewer childcare slots, and literally
6 thousands of families on wait lists.

7 In 2023, A DOD task force investigated the staffing
8 shortages and confirmed that, in order to fix this problem,
9 we need to increase childcare wages. So, in last year's
10 NDAA, we tasked the DOD with redesigning the compensation
11 model and starting to implement it by April 1st. But here
12 we are a year later, and you haven't even finalized the
13 redesign, much less begun implementation that was supposed
14 to have started, what is it, eight days ago?

15 So, for each witness, I want to ask, when can we expect
16 to see the updated compensation model and when can we expect
17 to see implementation begin? Lieutenant General Eifler,
18 let's start with you.

19 General Eifler: Thanks, Ranking Member.

20 Senator Warren: And I'll be writing these down. So,
21 what's the date?

22 General Eifler: Yeah, so I am not clear on that date,
23 because I know, I believe all the services are working with
24 the Department of Defense on finalizing that. I do believe
25 the CR has some impacts because of funding for it because --

1 Senator Warren: No, I'm sorry. The CR has impacts on
2 your implementation.

3 General Eifler: Right.

4 Senator Warren: It does not have an impact on your
5 obligation to update your compensation model. You're
6 supposed to do the modeling with the money you got.

7 General Eifler: Yeah.

8 Senator Warren: So when can I expect to see your
9 updated model?

10 General Eifler: I would have to follow up with you,
11 Senator, because I am not clear on when that's going to be
12 in place.

13 Senator Warren: Okay. Well, I hope you're clear that
14 you're already way past due.

15 General Eifler: Yes, Senator.

16 Senator Warren: Alright. Vice Admiral Cheeseman, how
17 about you? What's the date?

18 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, similar answer. We're
19 working with our LSD partners on when that date would be,
20 and when I have a more informed name, I'll make sure I get
21 back with it, ma'am.

22 Senator Warren: Yeah. Well, I'd like to have an
23 answer that suggests that you guys are paying attention to
24 this. We didn't put this in the law just for the fun of it.
25 It wasn't advisory. It was for you to actually perform by a

1 date certain. Lieutenant General Borgschulte.

2 General Borgschulte: Senator, thank you very much for
3 bringing this up. This is personal to me. I've got kids,
4 I've got a spouse that has a career and we have used our
5 world class childcare at every duty station.

6 Senator Warren: Good for you. So, when?

7 General Borgschulte: And so, I'll get back, we have
8 increased the wages. I'll get back to you with a specific
9 date, but we have over 40,000 kids in our child and youth
10 programs. I mean, think about that. So that really a
11 retention effort and that allows them to be free to go
12 fight. And I just appreciate you bringing that up.

13 Senator Warren: Okay. So, you said many nice things
14 and the fact that you've actually moved toward increasing
15 wages put you a step ahead of the other two people to your
16 right.

17 General Borgschulte: We'll take that. Senator, I'll
18 get you back an exact answer on this.

19 Senator Warren: But I got to have this done. Okay.
20 Lieutenant General Miller.

21 General Miller: Yes, Ma'am. We've actually in
22 increased our wages --

23 Senator Warren: Also good, how about your plan?

24 General Miller: We have a plan. I can get it over to
25 you, ma'am.

1 Senator Warren: Oh, you actually, have it? because We
2 weren't able to find it, so I'm polite.

3 General Miller: I will initiate or I will send over
4 what we have done over the last year, which is quite
5 significant.

6 Senator Warren: It's an updated compensation model?

7 General Miller: Yes, ma'am.

8 Senator Warren: Is what you're required to do under
9 the law. And then start implementing that model. So, thank
10 you. I hope That's right. Lieutenant General Miller, Ms.
11 Kelley.

12 Ms. Kelley: Senator, we leverage the Air Force for our
13 CDC. So, the model that General Miller is referencing would
14 be applicable for Guardian as well.

15 Senator Warren: You're pointing back in the other
16 direction. Yours will be ready when his is ready.

17 Ms. Kelley. No ma'am.

18 General Miller: Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry. Yes, we
19 support her.

20 Senator Warren: I was taking you to the other end, I
21 apologize.

22 Ms. Kelley: The Air Force runs the child development
23 centers that the Space Force guardians leverage. So, the
24 adjusted salaries that the Air Force has, to include the fee
25 assistance programs that are unbelievably helpful for our

1 CDC workers, we've seen significant improvement.

2 Senator Warren: I just want to say on this, look, I
3 understand that I am unpleasant about this and intend to be
4 even more unpleasant if this doesn't get done. You all
5 fully understand why this is so important and so important
6 anytime. We don't say to our military families, here's this
7 really hard job, and then not give them the support that
8 they need to be able to carry it out.

9 So, I appreciate that you all seem to understand that.
10 And my job is just to keep turning up the heat until we
11 actually get this done and pay them better. Let me just
12 bring out one more of course. This is all about making sure
13 we have the staff needed to bring down military childcare
14 wait lists. But of course, that's not going to happen if
15 we're slashing the civilian workforce.

16 Two weeks ago, a child development center in Utah
17 closed because of cuts to its civilian staff. So, let just
18 ask, do you agree that cutting childcare by laying off
19 civilian childcare workers makes life harder for military
20 families? Ms. Kelley, we'll start at your end this time.

21 Ms. Kelley: Senator, I absolutely agree that lack of
22 childcare is a readiness issue for all the services and
23 certainly for the Space Force.

24 Senator Warren: Go ahead.

25 General Miller: Yes ma'am. It's a readiness issue.

1 Senator Warren: Thank you. General Borgschulte,

2 General Borgschulte: Senator Warren, I agree a hundred
3 percent. We have not shut any down and don't plan to.

4 Senator Warren: I hope that's right, but it really is
5 the reminder that these civilian cuts can have profound
6 effects for our active-duty service members. Vice Admiral
7 Cheeseman.

8 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, thanks for the question.
9 For our childcare employees, they are funded out of non-
10 appropriated funds. We have not let anybody go. In fact,
11 our staffing levels have increased by 10 percent over the
12 last year. And we've decreased the wait list by about a
13 thousand spots.

14 Senator Warren: That is really terrific to hear.
15 Thank you very much. And I appreciate your getting that on
16 the record. General Eifler.

17 General Eifler: Yes, Ranking Member, totally concur.
18 We have not shut down any, and we do believe it's a
19 readiness issue because of that.

20 Senator Warren: Good. I appreciate that. And now in
21 the name of the chair I call on Ms. Hirono.

22 Senator Hirono: Thank you very much. So, Senator
23 Warren, you said you can be very unpleasant about all this?
24 It's called oversight.

25 Senator Warren: Yes.

1 Senator Hirono: And if we need to be unpleasant about
2 it, so be it. So, Admiral, did you say that this is the
3 last time you're going to be testifying?

4 Admiral Cheeseman: Yes.

5 Senator Hirono: Oh, thank you very much.
6 Congratulations for doing what you do and my best wishes to
7 you. So, you know, let's face it. I am deeply concerned
8 about Secretary Hegseth's personnel policy changes within
9 the DOD, and their impact on military personnel and overall
10 readiness. You all acknowledge how important all these
11 programs are, including childcare and everything else on
12 readiness, but he's making these cuts.

13 The reinstatement of the transgender service span and
14 the rollback of diversity, equity, and inclusion programs,
15 raise serious questions about their effects on recruiting,
16 retention, and unit cohesion. Furthermore, reports of
17 abrupt dismissals of tenured and nonpartisan military
18 officials most recently, General Hall, without clear
19 justification, call into question the institutional
20 stability and a political foundation of our military.

21 And these concerning developments require a thorough
22 examination to ensure that DOD policy supports a diverse,
23 inclusive, and effective fighting force. Even as there are
24 all these attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion, the
25 fact of the matter is that all of the services need to

1 recruit from as wide a swath of people as possible. So,
2 these attacks on DEI, they are the wrong way to go. As I
3 said, we should be recruiting from as wide a swath of people
4 as possible.

5 And this is for Admiral Cheeseman. The Navy currently
6 has over 20,000 gaps at sea billets. And this shortfall has
7 serious readiness implications since it requires a Navy to
8 pull sailors assigned to ships and submarines undergoing
9 maintenance and assign them to units going on deployment.
10 This cannibalization of personnel causes cascading and
11 disruptive effects across the service. Question to you,
12 does this gap concern you?

13 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, thanks for the question.
14 It keeps me awake at night. Yes.

15 Senator Hirono: So, it concerns you?

16 Admiral Cheeseman: That's right.

17 Senator Hirono: What are you doing about it?

18 Admiral Cheeseman: Yes, ma'am. Our survey data tells
19 us the single biggest concern among our sailors is burnout
20 due to lack of manning. All right, so with that, we've done
21 a number of things. First. we have completely merged our
22 distribution and advancement systems into something we call
23 billet base advancement. That has shown great strides in
24 this area from E-5 to E-9 I essentially have no gaps at sea.
25 In fact, I have a small surplus. All of our gaps at sea

1 right now are among apprentices, and it speaks directly to
2 the recruiting challenges we've had in the past.

3 When we contracted over 40,000 sailors in 2024, It
4 takes time to get those sailors through the pipeline. They
5 will start arriving to ships in 2025. By the end of this
6 fiscal year, we should have about 18,000 gaps. And by the
7 end of 2026, we should be down to about 8,000 gaps. It
8 takes on average nine months for a sailor to get through the
9 pipeline. Those new sailors are coming.

10 Senator Hirono: I hope you achieve those goals. And
11 in fact, we probably will be following up with you on how
12 you are doing because this is a huge, and you're not going
13 to eliminate the gaps by hoping that it will. I am just
14 going to ask you all, are women in the military important?
15 Let's start with you.

16 General Eifler: Senator, yes, they are.

17 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, absolutely.

18 General Borgschulte: Yes, Senator, absolutely.

19 General Miller: Absolutely. Yes, Ma'am.

20 Senator Hirono: So, when we talk about the how
21 important childcare is and all of those kinds of things, it
22 makes me wonder whether in fact women are important in the
23 military. And let me just point out a program that was
24 created, it's called the Women's Initiative Team. All the
25 services had Women's Initiative Teams. Apparently, they are

1 all gone. Are they gone in all your services? Are you
2 planning to bring them back? It's important, I would say if
3 women are important to the services, do you still have WITs?

4 General Eifler: I'm not aware of that we do, Senator.

5 Senator Hirono: Pardon Me?

6 General Eifler: I'm not aware that we do. Senator.

7 Senator Hirono: Did you ever have them?

8 General Eifler: I believe we did.

9 Senator Hirono: Okay. Well, what about you?

10 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, for the Navy, we folded
11 our Women's Initiative Team. But we are, we do have a Navy
12 culture advisory group that takes in all issues from all
13 sailors.

14 General Borgschulte: Senator, I'm not aware of that
15 particular initiative. But we incredibly value our females
16 in the Marine Corps.

17 Senator Hirono: Well, I'm told that all the services
18 have them, so the fact that you're not aware, and when you
19 say that women are important, and this is one of the ways
20 that we can recruit, retain them, and support them, I would
21 suggest, in fact, I'm going to follow up and put language in
22 the NDAA that requires all of you to reinstate this program,
23 so that if women in fact are important to the services, then
24 your policies and practices will reflect. General Miller.

25 General Miller: We all of our affinity clubs have been

1 stood down temporarily.

2 Senator Hirono: Yeah. I wonder why, I know why, that
3 is a rhetorical question. Ms. Kelley.

4 Ms. Kelley: Yes, Senator. We connected with the Air
5 Force for this as well. They have been stood down. But I
6 acknowledge your point.

7 Senator Hirono: Yeah. And they've been stood down
8 because they're all supposedly under attack for promoting
9 diversity, equity, and inclusion. It's like totally wrong.
10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Senator Warren.

12 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, when
13 Congress passed the GI Bill in 1944, a Grateful Nation
14 promised to help service members with the cost of their
15 education. This was a thank you for their sacrifices to our
16 country. The promise is not charity. It is an ironclad
17 commitment, and its key to how we recruit and maintain a
18 fighting force.

19 Survey after survey has demonstrated how important this
20 promise is, both to recruitment and to retention. And I see
21 you're nodding along with this. Too often, however, the
22 federal government has failed to live up to our promise, not
23 delivering on the student debt relief that service members
24 are entitled to, or leaving them vulnerable to predatory
25 lenders.

1 For example, after student loan repayments restarted
2 after the pandemic, the CFPB found that service member
3 complaints about student loan servicers went up, thanks to
4 hours long hold times, and other customers service failures
5 with their companies that were managing their loans.
6 Meanwhile, the VA has warned about the rise of scams, where
7 predatory schools will promise "immediate" student debt
8 cancellation that doesn't really exist in order to lure
9 veterans into enrolling.

10 So again, I'd like to go down the line, if we can, with
11 our witnesses for this question. Just yes or no. Does it
12 undermine our ability to recruit and retain personnel when
13 we let bad actors scam our service members out of the
14 educational benefits that they have earned and been promised
15 by the United States Government? Lieutenant General Eifler,
16 if I could start with you.

17 General Eifler: Yes. Ranking Member

18 Senator Warren: And Vice Admiral Cheeseman.

19 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, yes, ma'am. Absolutely.

20 Senator Warren: And Lieutenant General Borgschulte.

21 General Borgschulte: Yes, ma'am. Absolutely. No
22 armory should not be scammed.

23 Senator Warren: And Lieutenant General Miller?

24 General Miller: Yes, ma'am.

25 Senator Warren: And Ms. Kelley?

1 Ms. Kelley: Yes, ma'am. Absolutely.

2 Senator Warren: Well, that is the reason that I have
3 proposed language for this year's NDAA to protect service
4 members from predatory actors. This committee has worked in
5 a bipartisan fashion before to ensure that service members
6 get the educational benefits that they have earned under a
7 bipartisan law signed by President George W. Bush back in
8 2007.

9 The federal government will cancel the student loans of
10 people who work in public service and faithfully pay their
11 loans for at least a decade, as a way to honor their public
12 service. And last year, Senators Cortez Masto and Senator
13 Moran, led a successful effort to require DOD and the
14 Education Department to perform a data match so that all
15 eligible service members automatically receive the public
16 service loan forgiveness that the law says that they have
17 earned.

18 So, once again, I want to go down the line with our
19 witnesses. Is it important that DOD do everything it can to
20 deliver debt cancellation under the Public Service Loan
21 Forgiveness Program to all eligible service members as
22 statutorily required by Congress? Lieutenant General
23 Eifler?

24 General Eifler: Yes. Ranking Member.

25 Senator Warren: Vice Admiral Cheeseman?

1 Admiral Cheeseman: Yes, ma'am.

2 Senator Warren: Lieutenant General Borgschulte?

3 General Borgschulte: Yes, ma'am.

4 Senator Warren: Lieutenant General Miller?

5 General Miller: Yes, Senator Warren

6 Senator Warren: And Ms. Kelley?

7 Ms. Kelley: Yes, ma'am. Absolutely.

8 Senator Warren: Okay, good. We're in a good place.

9 Once again though, this is work that remains unfinished.

10 So, I have submitted an NDAA proposal for this year

11 requiring DOD to provide quarterly updates until the public

12 service loan forgiveness data match is implemented. And

13 also requiring the GAO to analyze the challenges that

14 service members face with student loan debt repayment.

15 I have also submitted a proposal to require DOD

16 implement the same risk-based surveys that the VA is already

17 statutorily required to use to monitor fraud and waste and

18 abuse at schools that receive more than \$600 million in

19 service member tuition assistance each year.

20 These are programs that matter to our service members,

21 and I appreciate having all of you as allies to make sure

22 that our service members get what the American people

23 promised them. So, thank you very much, and thank you, Mr.

24 Chairman, for letting me do this.

25 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Senator Warren. Let's

1 talk about healthcare really quick. The demanding nature of
2 military service loan deployments and challenges of
3 balancing military and family life can lead to a burnout,
4 and turnover among military medical professionals.

5 Additionally, the potential for more lucrative
6 opportunities in the civilian sector can make it harder for
7 the military to retain these highly specialized medical
8 professionals. Last year's, NDAA included a provision to
9 increase the authorized number of nurse officers the
10 services could recommend for promotion. So one at a time,
11 what are you doing to recruit and retain military medical
12 personnel specifically, and what can we do to help assisting
13 and retaining medical personnel general?

14 General Eifler: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I think this,
15 as you articulated pretty good, it's a competition that we
16 have with our local communities across the service, across
17 all services. Having recently served in Alaska, we're in
18 competition with the hospitals in the area for healthcare
19 professionals, the whole gamut.

20 And so, we appreciate the support with being able to
21 provide the necessary bonuses and pay grade equal to what's
22 out there in the commercial sector to keep them in. I think
23 one of our biggest number one issues is job satisfaction.
24 Our providers want to be doing the things that they were
25 trained to do. They want to do more service on post. So,

1 every time, if we channel folks off post to other care, it
2 limits their experience and their satisfaction.

3 So, they want to do the surgeries, they want to do the
4 medical care. So, the more we can focus them on that, the
5 better off that they are with their satisfaction. And
6 that's one of the things we're working on to make sure that
7 all the medical professions are getting to do the things and
8 getting the service and the experience in the field that
9 they want to be doing.

10 Senator Tuberville: Are you seeing a lot of interest
11 in medical and recruiting?

12 General Eifler: We are. It's just a competition. It
13 is something that we've got to be creative, we can't rest.
14 We got to keep the gas pedal down. We can't rest on our
15 laurels. We always are looking at ways to bring them in
16 into the service of our nation. So, we're actively doing
17 that across our recruiting commands.

18 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Admiral.

19 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, thanks for the question.
20 First thanks to the authority for the Nurse Corps, Navy
21 intends to use that to our advantage. For the medical
22 community writ large in the Navy, it's similar to the
23 enlisted recruiting problem we have. And our issues are
24 because stress and burnout on the force.

25 So, we have doubled down on our medical recruiting. We

1 have changed the process, which way we do that. We've
2 outsourced some of that to medical professionals to do the
3 recruiting for us. And as a result, we've seen a tenfold
4 increase to date in the number of folks interested in
5 joining the Navy. So nascent efforts still, but trending in
6 the right direction. We're going to be much better this
7 year than we have been in the past, sir.

8 Senator Tuberville: Thank You. General Borgschulte.

9 General Borgschulte: Sir, in the Department of the
10 Navy, the Marines don't have any medical personnel, so we
11 rely on my good friend here by Vice Admiral Cheeseman to
12 support us. They do a very fine job of it, but I think it
13 goes deeper than that. That's in the military treatment
14 facilities, but also out in town. So, some of those bases
15 and stations can be an expeditionary force when we're out in
16 areas where they don't have access to a military treatment
17 facility.

18 And sometimes going out through TRICARE out in town can
19 take 30 days plus, especially with mental health physicians,
20 very difficult. So again, thanks for the help with the
21 Department of Navy. We certainly support them. And I would
22 ask for anything that you can do to help with the out-of-
23 town physicians

24 Senator Tuberville: General Miller?

25 General Miller: Yes, sir. We also have the same

1 struggles of trying to get our medical professionals on
2 board. I'll say that DHA has been challenging as well just
3 to work with them. General DeGoes, our SG, has been doing
4 everything he can to get out there and recruit the medical
5 specialties. We're trying to give them their credits so we
6 can bring them on at higher grades than they normally would.

7 Additionally, we're looking in the mental health
8 perspective of doing online. You know, so one provider can
9 do multiple areas, so they don't actually have to physically
10 be there, but they can do online mental health. So, it is a
11 struggle. We're trying everything that we can to get our
12 force back up because we've got to have them.

13 Senator Tuberville: Ms. Kelley.

14 Ms. Kelley: Yes, chairman. Much like the Marines, we
15 rely on the Air Force for medical support. So, from a
16 Guardian perspective, a guardian is going to a MTF that the
17 Air Force is running underneath the auspices of defense
18 health. I would agree that the recruiting is a challenge.
19 I would also agree that the way that the Air Force is
20 attempting to tackle this and that changes that they're
21 making in that additional pay structure are going to be very
22 pivotal for the Guardian as well.

23 Senator Tuberville: This question, if anybody can
24 answer if you want. There's been discussion over the past
25 few years about unnecessary and burdensome barriers to entry

1 for DOD nurses, including in one-year prior experience
2 required barrier. Can any of you speak to these barriers
3 and are they hurting or helping recruiting? I mean, have
4 you seen any of that? Anybody want to throw anything in?

5 Admiral Cheeseman: Sir, from the Navy, I have not seen
6 that or familiar with that, so I'll take that for the record
7 and get you a more fruit answer.

8 Senator Tuberville: Okay. Thank you. Senator Scott.

9 Senator Scott: Thank you. Chairman. First off,
10 thanks to each of you for your hard work. I don't think
11 what you do is easy. So, we've had a tough time other than
12 the Marines of hitting our recruitment numbers right, for
13 quite a few years. So, should anybody be held accountable,
14 and if so, have they been held accountable for not meeting
15 our recruiting goals?

16 General Miller: I'll start, sir. So, our recruiting
17 numbers in the Air Force have gone up. We're actually
18 exceeding where we thought we would be. The last two, three
19 years, it was a little more difficult based on COVID I think
20 was one of the factors, the other thing is just the
21 propensity to serve across our nation was down.

22 And so, what we have done, we have put every effort we
23 can into increasing our recruits, and we have exceeded our
24 goals. We actually were planning to exceed it by about 3000
25 this year. And we'll see if we have enough MILPERS to cover

1 that.

2 Senator Scott: But y'all didn't meet the goals?

3 General Miller: Yes, sir. We did this year.

4 Senator Scott: But the prior years?

5 General Miller: No, sir. We did not. And so, we
6 looked at what was, we had our own barriers internal to the
7 Air Force, and so we removed those barriers. One of them,
8 you know, we had very strict for example, tattoo policies
9 and so we removed some of those because it was a barrier for
10 entrance from some of the population of our nation. So that
11 increased it.

12 The other thing that we did was we noted that
13 internally to the Air Force, you had to have a driver's
14 license in order to enter our Air Force. We removed that,
15 and then it's required for your position, we will work on
16 getting the driver's license. So, all of the internal
17 barriers were moved and we have since seen a larger
18 population and from which we can recruit. Additionally, we
19 did not lower our standards at all. We have maintained our
20 standards, DOD standards.

21 Senator Scott: But the individuals that were
22 responsible for recruiting before you started making your
23 numbers, should they have been held accountable or not? Or
24 is it something that was completely outside your control?

25 General Miller: It's not, I don't think it's in my

1 control, but I think that they were held accountable in the
2 fact that they were given specific goals. We used to do
3 goals every quarter, and now we do them monthly. And so,
4 our recruiter, who's a one star general reports to a four
5 star. So, I think the accountability was there from that
6 aspect, sir. Okay.

7 Senator Scott: But nothing happened to anybody for not
8 meeting their goals? They were promoted just like anybody
9 else?

10 General Miller: Well, he's been a one star the whole
11 time, so he hasn't yet been promoted.

12 Senator Scott: Okay. How's the Navy? How about the
13 Navy?

14 Admiral Cheeseman: Sir, thanks for the question. And
15 also, thanks for the opportunity yesterday to speak in your
16 office --

17 Senator Scott: And you're meeting goals, right?

18 Admiral Cheeseman: Sir, we're far exceeding our goals.
19 Absolutely, in 2025. I anticipate sending 44,000 future
20 sailors to bootcamp, probably just under that number, our
21 goal is 40,600. So, we're well above it. I think inside of
22 our enterprise, my Navy HR enterprise, we took a really hard
23 look about who was tasked to do what. We upgraded the
24 position of the Navy recruiting commander from a one star to
25 a two star. And with that came a recruiting operations

1 center, increased data analytics, a review of medical waiver
2 processes came. We understand the data behind recruiting.

3 To be candid, sir, I think we had to learn how to
4 recruit coming out of COVID. And I cannot speak for my
5 fellow service members here, but that's how it was for the
6 Navy. I think prior to COVID, we were very good at
7 processing the people who walked in the recruiting stations.
8 Coming out of COVID with a decrease in propensity that
9 General Miller just mentioned, we really had to learn how to
10 recruit. We're up on step now, and we're running on all
11 cylinders, sir.

12 Senator Scott: How about the Army?

13 General Eifler: Yeah, thanks, Senator. As you know,
14 probably a couple years ago, we completely revamped it. I
15 think this was an Army entirety fault. I wouldn't say an
16 individual, but I would say the Army was at fault. We were
17 sleeping at the wheel for years on recruiting, resting on
18 our laurels and we put General Davis and a team of folks in
19 there to revamp and re-look how we did recruiting,
20 systemically from the top and the bottom.

21 Over the last 12 to 18 months have been putting these
22 in place and we're seeing now the fruition. We saw that
23 last year was a good year, this year is a great year. We
24 are exceeding -- we're over 50,000 recruits out of the
25 61,000 that we are shooting for this year, just six months

1 in. So, we're having, as I call it, catastrophic success
2 with this, with how we're doing now.

3 Senator Scott: But the ones in charge when we weren't
4 successful, nothing's happened to them. They were promoted
5 just like normal? Like I think that's true.

6 General Eifler: No, they weren't Senator.

7 Senator Scott: Okay. All right. Okay. So, so what's
8 the slogan for the Marines?

9 General Borgschulte: Senator Scott, good to see you.
10 We talked a bit about this. We put our best Marines in
11 recruiting even if they want to --

12 Senator Scott: Do you have a slogan?

13 General Borgschulte: A slogan?

14 Senator Scott: You have a slogan?

15 General Borgschulte: The few, the proud, we have a lot
16 of slogans, sir, if that's the one you're after. We don't
17 promise you a rose garden. Many different, we'll stop
18 there.

19 Senator Scott: Army, do you guys have one?

20 General Eifler: Yeah, This We'll Defend, Senator.

21 Senator Scott: And how about the Navy?

22 Admiral Cheeseman: Sir, Forged by the Sea.

23 Senator Scott: Air Force.

24 General Miller: Fly, fight, and win. Aim high

25 Senator Scott: Space Force?

1 Ms. Kelley: Semper Supra, always above.

2 Senator Scott: And do you think that when people come
3 in, they know what your mission is? When you're recruiting,
4 do they know what your mission is? I think we've all heard
5 for years the marine slogan, and we've all heard for years
6 the Army slogan. But I don't know, do you think we've heard
7 the others? And do you think that that's the reason why
8 we've had a hard time? Are people not sure what we're
9 doing? Anybody?

10 Admiral Cheeseman: So, Senator, I'll speak to it from
11 a Navy component. We've been with the Forge by the Sea
12 Marketing campaign for a little bit of time. It resonates
13 well with younger folks. The average age of our recruit is
14 22, not necessarily 18 like some of the others are, So
15 they're a little older. It resonates that slogan, that
16 culture manifests through bootcamp, through ACE schools now
17 into the fleet. So, I think it's -- pretty well,

18 General Miller: Senator, I'll offer from the Space
19 Force perspective, being just over five years old, we took a
20 concerted effort to market what a Guardian is and more
21 importantly, what they do specifically for the joint fight.
22 So, I acknowledge your point. It's one of the focuses that
23 we have right now. We've actually built a planetarium show
24 that we're debuting in a month at Planetariums around the
25 nation, to get after exactly your point, which is, does the

1 average American know what the Space Force is, and that they
2 can join it as its newest service.

3 Senator Scott: You think they do?

4 General Miller: Our data right now shows us that we
5 have a brand awareness problem. Absolutely.

6 Senator Scott: That's right. That's what I would say
7 in Florida. Yes.

8 General Miller: Yes. Space Force, for sure, sir.

9 Senator Scott: Yeah. So, have so the Marines
10 continued to be successful. After the problems that we had,
11 did the other branches -- did they follow what the Marines
12 were doing? Did you guys look at what the Marines were
13 doing as

14 I used to be the one that never had a problem. I was
15 doing business. I always wanted to be number one. You
16 know, I always wanted to be the one that nobody ever
17 questioned my numbers.

18 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator from a Navy perspective, we
19 did take a little bit of a look at what the Marines had
20 done. We had already been involved in increasing the
21 quality of our recruiters. In talking to my good friend
22 here, you know, that manifests in what they're doing.

23 So, the communities that provide our officer recruiters
24 have increased the quality of those commanding officers that
25 go to recruiting the Commodore that oversee them. And we do

1 provide a large amount of incentives for our enlisted
2 sailors to head out to recruiting and the quality there is
3 increasing as well.

4 General Miller: Senator, from the Air Force
5 perspective, we absolutely did look at the Marines and their
6 recruiting and the way that they attack it, and that they do
7 put their best and brightest on there. So, we did modify
8 that over the last year, when we added additional 400 plus
9 recruiters, and that you have to be selected to be there as
10 opposed to just throw your name in the hat because you
11 thought it would be fun to do so. Yes, sir. We did do
12 that.

13 Ms. Kelley: Senator, if I may, I would be remiss if I
14 did not go on the record and note that the Space Force has
15 made its recruiting numbers for the last five years, albeit
16 small. We are absolutely focused on finding the talent
17 where it is and leveraging some technical ways to connect
18 directly with those potential Guardians.

19 General Eifler: Yes, Senator. The Army took into a
20 consideration even further professionalizing the recruiting
21 force. So, creating a new MOS, a new warrant officer that
22 you know, taking some things from industry training with
23 industry and how they do that, how do they relate, to get a
24 little bit better, and selecting. Not everybody is a good
25 recruiter, some people are better than others, and we're

1 just making sure that we're putting the right people in the
2 right places to access the people that we're trying to bring
3 in.

4 Senator Scott: Thank you for what you do. Thank you,
5 Chairman.

6 Senator Tuberville: Thanks Senator Scott. Senator
7 Duckworth.

8 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank
9 you for keeping the hearing open so that I can make it here.
10 I appreciate it. Each of our services claims to build the
11 best and most capable leaders within the world's greatest
12 fighting force, capable of thinking critically, navigating
13 the fog of war and leading diverse teams in times of
14 uncertainty. But how can the department train leaders to
15 make decisions for themselves if it is actively banning
16 books from service academies, and micromanaging their access
17 to information?

18 This administration's obsession with removing diversity
19 within the force has now expanded into attacking diversity
20 of thought. Censorship does not produce stronger leaders;
21 it produces brittle ones. Suppressing ideas is not a sign
22 of might, it is an expression of fear and if we allow fear
23 to drive policy, we fail not only our cadets and service
24 members seeking to develop themselves as leaders, but also
25 the American people who count on them to lead with wisdom

1 and critical thinking.

2 For each witness, do you believe our future commanders
3 will be fully prepared to navigate the complexity of
4 tomorrow's war fighting environment, if we continue to
5 micromanage their exposure to the world and different
6 perspectives? Should we be limiting their perspectives and
7 banning books in our academies? Would that make them better
8 leaders?

9 General Eifler: Oh, no, Senator,

10 Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

11 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, I'm generally familiar
12 with the issue you're talking about, but I've not seen
13 specifically the issues at the Naval Academy, or nor have I
14 talked to Admiral Davis about that. What I can tell you, I
15 agree with you. You know, I believe the Naval Academy
16 should have everything they need to create future naval
17 officers. Within my domain, I'm certain that we have
18 everything we need to make sure every sailor is qualified to
19 do their job.

20 General Borgschulte: Yes, ma'am. Nice to see you.
21 I'm a proud graduate at one of those service academies, and
22 it, --

23 Senator Duckworth: I could never make it in, I'm an
24 ROTC guy.

25 [Laughter.]

1 General Borgschulte: But it matters to us in the sense
2 we take 25 percent of that class, of that Naval Academy
3 class that comes into the Marine Corps, and we get eye
4 watering talent. And so just inspiring, attracting our top
5 young Americans to attend that school is important to us.
6 And I just wanted to put a plug for how important that
7 school is, how much it means to us.

8 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. General Miller?

9 General Miller: Yes, ma'am. I would concur. You
10 know, I don't know exactly what they're doing at USFA as far
11 as the libraries and going through the curriculum, but I do
12 know that we have the best airmen and a large portion of
13 them come from the academy. And I think that we need to
14 make sure that we continue to draw similar to the Marines
15 and Navy, the best individuals from the United States.

16 Senator Duckworth: But they need to be exposed to all
17 elements of thought and we should not be banning books in
18 our training of our service members.

19 General Miller: I think they should definitely be --
20 they should have all trains of thought. Yes, ma'am.

21 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Ms. Kelley.

22 Ms. Kelley: Ma'am, I agree with your point.
23 Absolutely.

24 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I do think that we owe
25 service members protection from moral injury by empowering

1 them with the training to operate in complex wartime
2 environments with life-or-death decisions for their brothers
3 and sisters in arms, as well as civilians who find
4 themselves caught in the middle.

5 But I heard some concerning things from the General
6 counsel nominee yesterday regarding this administration's
7 commitment to the law of armed conflict. Will each of you
8 commit to ensuring that service members receive the
9 appropriate training and education on the law of armed
10 conflict?

11 General Eifler: Yes, Senator.

12 Admiral Cheeseman: Thank you, Senator. Yes, ma'am.

13 General Borgschulte: Senator, this is key to our war
14 fighting effectiveness. Absolutely.

15 General Miller: Yes, ma'am.

16 Ms. Kelley: Agree, ma'am.

17 Senator Duckworth: That is why we're the greatest
18 fighting force on the face of the Earth. We set the
19 standards for the rest of the world. And I'd like now to
20 pivot to the Indo-Pacific. And I'd like to shift your
21 attention specifically to the current makeup of our active
22 reserve and guard forces, and whether our forces are
23 prepared for the reality of fighting and sustaining large
24 scale conflict in the Indo-Pacific region.

25 For each of you, do you believe your service currently

1 has the force, structure, and personnel necessary to meet
2 the demands of such a fight in the Indo-Pacific? And if
3 not, given our current personal projections and plans, are
4 you confident your service will be prepared to execute large
5 scale mobilization and sustain power projection across
6 contested domains? And what can this committee do to ensure
7 you're fully supported? Because I would tell you, it is a
8 bipartisan issue.

9 We have talked about this in a bipartisan way, and I
10 want to make sure you have the ability, I think probably the
11 Army and the Marines would be most on this, Navy obviously,
12 as well. But can we sustain the fight where we are right,
13 now, and what kind of support do you need?

14 General Eifler: Thanks, Senator. Yes, we can, but I'm
15 not satisfied. I don't think we're satisfied that we need
16 to continue to transform to prepare for that even more. And
17 as you know firsthand, the more readiness, the better we're
18 going to be. We have to transform, not just our
19 modernization, our force, but how we do things in large
20 scale combat operations.

21 So, when our Chief says, hey, transformation and
22 contact or continuous transformation, that's what we're
23 doing. We can't rest on our laurels. We can't say we, hey,
24 we won the last war, we're good. We have to continually
25 look and adapt, because as we've seen in the battlefields

1 across the globe, things are changing faster than our budget
2 cycle. They're faster than how we can acquire equipment,
3 for the acquisition. So, we have to be faster. So, we
4 can't say, hey, we're ready, we're good, stop. No, we
5 actually need to keep getting more ready, keep adapting.

6 And I think your support absolutely with your
7 oversight, but also with the proper appropriations and
8 flexible funding so that when something changes, like we're
9 talking about with counter UAS, and that technology that is
10 changing so frequently inside that budget cycle, we've got
11 to be able to adjust and not get consumed by buying this one
12 thing that was good for that time and is no longer, and it's
13 obsolete. So that's what I would say we need help with.

14 Senator Duckworth: Thank you,

15 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, thanks for the question.
16 I believe in our operators, I'm certain we'll get the
17 mission done. That being said, the Navy is on a journey.
18 One of our lines of effort is to make sure that we're very
19 much aligned within our maritime operation centers. We want
20 to fight from those operation centers in the future.

21 There's a lot of things going on in here with hardware,
22 software, people. From my portfolio, I'm sure I'll need
23 more people in those specific skill sets when it comes to
24 the IW community, the crypto audit community, the Intel
25 community, the space community. So, we're on a growth

1 profile in those areas. Additionally, I know working
2 closely with the chief of Navy Reserve, Admiral Lacore, they
3 are organized around the fight from the mock concept.

4 So, the training that they do is so they're able to
5 fight, you know, fall in on those mocks when trouble is
6 brewing, so they can support the fight as well. So, we're
7 modernizing the entire approach towards the fight from the
8 mock, and we just look forward to continue to working with
9 this committee to get that done.

10 Senator Duckworth: General Borgschulte.

11 General Borgschulte: Senator, thanks very much. The
12 Indo-Pacific theater is one of the most challenging
13 theaters. In my last job before this role, commanding
14 aviators, you know, the distances at which we may need to
15 fight in that theater makes it very difficult with the
16 geographical dispersion.

17 As you know, six years ago we started down this page
18 with General Berger and now General Smith on force design.
19 Force design was clearly meant to grow the force to the
20 right type of marine, right skillset, divest to invest. Now
21 we're into the invest phase, where we have the right numbers
22 of Marines, capacity, and capability. We don't have the
23 capacity we need, so we are on a plan.

24 So, to your question, I really appreciate that, is to
25 grow our end strength, and we have a plan to get there, but

1 it's quite frankly, not fast enough. And so, any help that
2 you can provide us, any funding really for that in-strength
3 we would applaud. Thank you.

4 Senator Duckworth: Thank You, General.

5 General Miller: Yes, we too are shifting to the
6 Pacific. The tyranny of distance is a challenge for us
7 because we have tankers and where we're going to put them
8 and how we're going to fight from there. So, we are doing
9 large scale exercises to make sure that we're ready. But we
10 too need to increase our end strength probably. And then we
11 just have to have the right kit forward, and so that's our
12 challenge right now.

13 Senator Duckworth: If we're going up the PRC, it's not
14 going to be dominating the skies. We're going to have to
15 fight our way in and fight our way out, same with the
16 surface Warfare.

17 General Miller: Yes ma'am.

18 Ms. Kelley: Senator, I'd just like to add that from
19 this space perspective, the INDOPACOM fight is absolutely
20 enabled by the space capabilities that our war fighters
21 need. So, the ability for this service that is now five
22 years old to continue to grow with the support of this
23 committee, is going to be very critical, because the space
24 enabling war fighter has got to be part of what we deliver
25 for the fight.

1 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. You've been incredibly
2 generous, Mr. Chairman.

3 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. Senator Duckworth, I
4 just have one more question here before we finish. Mainly
5 for the NDAA. Specifically talking about bonuses and
6 special pays, retention. Obviously y'all want to recruit
7 new people, but we also have to recruit the people we
8 already have in the service.

9 So, I'll start. General Miller, 24 NDAA Congress
10 authorized the Air Force to increase aviation retention
11 bonuses up to \$50,000 for pilots who agreed to extend their
12 contracts earlier than initially planned. Could you give us
13 some kind of update on the status of how these are working?

14 General Miller: Yes, Senator. Actually, they're
15 working incredibly well. We are right now across our rated
16 population, we are where we need to be with exception of the
17 11AFs, which are fighters. However, we have completely
18 closed the gap based on a lot of the aviation bonuses.

19 Additionally, we're looking at the how the trainers --
20 were a little bit short on the trainers, so we're training
21 by simulators too and we're finding that we're closing that
22 gap. And we expect that we will get there relatively
23 quickly. But thank you very much for that NDAA, it's been
24 very helpful.

25 Senator Tuberville: Yep. So, we'll start down here.

1 General, just what you think recruiting-wise in terms of
2 bonuses for retention, or what do you think we could do in
3 the future for just normal recruiting?

4 General Eifler: Yeah, I think the support for the
5 Future Soldier Prep course has been great. That's tapped
6 into another population that we haven't been able to access
7 before funding for that. And again, I hate to keep beating
8 that horse on the funding for those type of things that are
9 not accounted for typically in the budget cycle. So, I
10 think that supports the bonuses, obviously that's huge for
11 retention as well as recruiting and getting the people that
12 we want to get into the service. I think if you continue to
13 get that support and oversight for us, that'll be definitely
14 helpful.

15 Senator Tuberville: Admiral.

16 Admiral Cheeseman: Senator, thanks for the question
17 and allowing me the ability to highlight the importance of
18 these special incentive pays, the bonuses and such. It's
19 incredibly important to the retention game. We're doing
20 very well in retention, but we still shorten our manpower
21 accounts right now, so we're going to have to move some
22 money around to make sure we meet our obligations to our
23 sailors and we don't get to the point where we create an IOU
24 situation.

25 I would like to highlight as we move into FY 26. If we

1 start the year with a continuing resolution FY 26, this will
2 be problematic for that account. Right now, you know, I
3 appreciate the 10 percent pay raise for our junior illicit
4 sailors that's funded for FY 25 only. If we move into FY 26
5 with a CR only, it'll severely depress the manpower account,
6 and I'll have trouble paying those bonuses, which are
7 obligated to our sailors.

8 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. General.

9 General Borgschulte: Yes. Senator Tuberville, thanks
10 very much for this question. The aviation bonuses are key,
11 so are all the other bonuses. As Vice Admiral Cheeseman had
12 mentioned, the selective retention bonus, some are really
13 exquisite skilled senior enlisted and middle grade enlisted
14 that have cyber signals intelligence. Those type are really
15 difficult to retain.

16 But for the pilots in a sense, the bonuses are -- it's
17 kind of a combined arms effect. It's the bonuses are
18 important, but it's also climate, culture and it really just
19 selling that, hey, flying a commercial aircraft is one
20 thing, but flying a gray aircraft with a trigger is another
21 thing. And we got to have the bonuses that's important, but
22 it's climate and culture as well. Thanks for your support
23 there.

24 Senator Tuberville: Ms. Kelley.

25 Ms. Kelley: Senator, I would add for the Space Force,

1 the targeted bonuses are crucial. The space, cyber and
2 Intel skill sets, that is essentially the guardian
3 population that we have in the Space Force, are exquisite
4 skills themselves. And much like the other colleagues here
5 today, the ability to retain and attract and hold that type
6 of exquisite skill is critical. The targeted incentives
7 help us do that.

8 Senator Tuberville: You just go to General Miller and
9 say, well, who's your best ones? I need your best ones.
10 Right? That's actually, she does that, right?

11 General Miller: Yeah,

12 Senator Tuberville: I would too.

13 Ms. Kelley: People want to join the Space Force, sir.

14 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. I apologize for all
15 the rigmarole here, but we got more hearings and people in -
16 - you notice the lines outside. They're rather big.

17 But thanks for what you do. You have a great
18 responsibility. I don't think people really understand that
19 the responsibility, you know, you win with people and you
20 know, obviously we got weapons and all that, but you got to
21 have good people. And we thank for what you do.

22 Admiral Cheeseman, thank you for your service. I will
23 tell you this, I did the same thing. I retired and after a
24 few weeks, my wife walked by my couch, when I was drinking
25 coffee one morning, she says, hey, this has been my house

1 for 40 years, go get you a damn job.

2 Admiral Cheeseman: I'm hearing it already. Yes, sir.

3 Senator Tuberville: But thanks for what you do. And
4 we want to help as much as we can. That's one reason we had
5 this today. A lot of people will watch this on video, a lot
6 of our members. So, if there's anything that we can do to
7 help in your capacity, we want to help.

8 We're in harm's way every day and we got a lot of
9 enemies out there, but the bigger and better we have our
10 military, the less problems we'll have, because they don't
11 want to mess with the United States of America. And we sure
12 want them to know that, but you're the beginning of it.

13 So, thank you-all, and look forward to visiting with
14 and working with you many, many times. Again, Admiral, good
15 luck. Thank you.

16 This hearing's adjourned. Thank you.

17 [Whereupon, at 3:59 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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