

Advance Policy Questions for Shon Manasco
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Department of Defense Reforms

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 included the most sweeping reforms since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

Do you support these reforms?

Yes. It is clear the Department and nation benefited from the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. However, after 30 years of operations and with a shift to threats that are now transregional, multi-domain, and multifunctional in nature, it seems reform was needed.

What other areas for defense reform do you believe might be appropriate for this Committee to address?

I believe it is appropriate for this Committee to expect the Air Force and Department of Defense to pursue reforms that continue to identify opportunities for efficiency while maintaining or improving support to mission performance. We should strive to pursue reforms that drive simplicity while ensuring there is no degradation in the overall control environment. The Department-wide focus on reform across the lines of business (for example, Human Resources Management, Community Services, Contract Services and Supply Chain Management) and associated rationalization of workforce requirements (military, civilian and contract) should be of special interest to this Committee. How we leverage our Active and Reserve Components in that rationalization should also be of interest to this Committee. Finally, ensuring reform efforts are done in a manner that enhances our ability to continue to recruit, train and retain the world's most capable Air, Space and Cyber workforce should be of interest to this Committee.

Duties

Section 8016 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs shall have “as his principal duty the overall supervision of manpower and reserve component affairs of the Department of the Air Force.”

If confirmed, what duties do you expect that the Secretary of the Air Force will prescribe to you?

I understand that the duties of the office include providing guidance, direction, and oversight for Air Force military and civilian manpower/personnel programs; Reserve Component affairs; medical readiness and health care. I also understand that this role is responsible for oversight of the operation of the Air Force Review Boards Agency and its

component boards. If confirmed, I will work to execute these duties to the best of my abilities, as well as any other duties or tasks assigned to me by the Secretary of the Air Force. If the Secretary needs my help and or advice in other areas important to her and the Air Force, I stand ready to serve.

What actions will you take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

If confirmed, I will conduct a thorough review of current Air Force organizations, programs and personnel dedicated to the support of Airmen and their families. My intent will be to have a clear understanding of the specific challenges, resources and efforts needed to support the Total Force. If confirmed, I will seek input from a variety of sources, both internal and external to the Air Force. I intend to spend time in the field and down-range talking to men and women who are at the tip of the spear defending our country. I will seek to balance the well-being of our Airmen and the readiness of our force in every personnel decision we undertake. I will seek to include Congress on these decisions (when appropriate) and will work to maintain open and continuous engagement with the ultimate goal of providing a ready, lethal force.

Qualifications

I am servant leader who has been fortunate to lead teams who have had stellar records of achievement. I have led large, global teams at the most senior levels in several Fortune 100 companies. Furthermore, I have extensive experience working with boards of directors and senior teams in highly regulated and complex global institutions. My record shows I am skilled in bringing people, process, technology, and information together to create exceptional customer experiences and produce results.

Major Challenges

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

In my understanding, the three important issues to address are readiness, retention, and end strength growth. If confirmed, I plan to conduct a thorough review of the completed data-driven analysis to identify root causes and review the current and future plans to address these. I plan to bring a fresh, market driven perspective to help either validate existing plans or work to identify any needed modifications.

Relations with Congress

What are your views on the state of the relationship between the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?

It is my understanding that the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (and the Air Force A1) have frequent interactions with both the HASC and the SASC, including regularly scheduled staffer days, information visits to the Hill and of course response and participation in Committee testimony when required. If confirmed I will work to ensure my team does everything it can to not only maintain our existing relationship but to improve it over time. Strong relationships are formed by trust, through transparency and continuing engagement.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

I believe open and transparent communication is key to maintaining and improving these relations.

Officer Personnel Management

The Air Force manages its officer personnel according to the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) of 1980. In the report to accompany the original DOPMA legislation, the Committee said, “the simple fact is that if the system is working right, it will, of necessity, result in pass over for promotion of officers who are fully qualified to serve in the next-higher grade.”

Do you believe the recently announced Air Force policy of offering a 100% promotion opportunity to the rank of major complies with congressional intent as it relates to DOPMA legislation?

From what I understand, this group of officers has met Force Shaping Boards and Reduction-in-Force Boards in 2014, which the Air Force used to transition under-performing company grade officers. I have every reason to believe the Air Force is also committed to only promoting those captains who are fully qualified and recommended for promotion by their senior raters. If confirmed I will work to ensure that promotions for all Airmen are merit based and executed appropriately and in accordance with all applicable statutes.

What message does a 100% promotion opportunity send to the Air Force’s top-performing officers?

To me, the message this sends is still unknown. However, I am aware that Secretary Wilson and General Goldfein have publicly and directly stated they will hold commanders accountable to enforce the professionalism and standards required of Field Grade Officers. Promoting 100% of those fully qualified each year could be problematic over time, but in this instance, I understand it to be a temporary measure while other officer evaluation and performance talent management reforms are developed and instituted. As stated above, if confirmed I will work to ensure that promotions for all

Airmen are merit based and executed appropriately and in accordance with all applicable statutes.

Many majors serve as squadron commanders and key supervisors of enlisted and junior officers. Do you believe a 100% promotion opportunity to major devalues what it means to serve as a field grade officer?

As I understand it, this is a temporary effort to help solve critical manning shortages in Line of the Air Force Field Grade Officers across the Air Force. While I am not steeped in the details of the current promotion opportunities, if confirmed, I am committed to reviewing this and all promotion policies across the Air Force. Additionally, I would support our most talented officers being afforded the opportunity to have stretch assignments while we address critical shortages. These types of situations can drive accelerated development and further help us determine which leaders are capable of leading at a more senior level earlier than their peers.

The safe harbor rule and service culture mean that once an officer promotes to major, the Air Force will, in all likelihood, retain that officer until 20 years of service.

In a time of constrained resources, do you believe it is in the Air Force's best interests to guarantee lifetime retirement benefits to all officers after only 10 years of service, which is when an officer is normally selected to promote to major?

As I understand it, the decision to offer continuation is always informed by mission requirements and the resulting inventory needs. I also understand that decisions on continuation are assessed on a recurring basis. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor this process and ensure we are doing what is in the best interest of our force and tax payer dollars.

Does the Air Force have the authority to recall, on a voluntary basis, officers who were previously forced out of the military as a result of force shaping actions in 2014?

It is my understanding the Air Force has the legal authority necessary to voluntarily recall these members back to active duty if deemed necessary to meet mission requirements. It is also my understanding the Air Force currently has employed, or is in the process of employing, several voluntary recall programs that may involve members who were previously involuntarily separated.

If so, and if confirmed, will you support programs to voluntarily recall officers who were previously forced out of the military as a result of force shaping actions in 2014?

If confirmed, I will consider all the tools available to ensure the Air Force continues to meet mission requirements. This will include a careful assessment of whether or not

recalling involuntarily separated officers should be one of the levers we need to enhance readiness, increase lethality, and ensure a diverse officer corps. The decision to offer voluntary recall of involuntarily separated officers would not be taken lightly and would depend on the gravity of the circumstances.

Does Congress need to modernize the legislation that manages officer careers?

If confirmed, I plan to take an extensive look at this and the myriad of other issues our current environment drives us to monitor. As is the case in any environment, it is my belief that efficiencies and improvements can always be made, and I intend to ensure that the Air Force is at the forefront of personnel policy best practices. I would hope the decisions made within the Air Force regarding talent management would engender such confidence that Congress would be satisfied with their important role to govern versus needing to manage. Through initiatives such as the Secretary of the Air Force's Workforce Summit, various efficiencies and improvements are being pursued to increase lethality and readiness of the force. This also includes how we manage the careers of our officers. In short, if confirmed, I will be fully engaged in the proposals to ensure our nation has the Air Force it needs and deserves.

If confirmed, you will have significant responsibilities with regard to officer management policies, the promotion system, and recommending officers for nomination to positions of authority and responsibility.

If confirmed, what modifications would you make to provide the Air Force the force management tools necessary to meet the needs of the 21st century joint, all-volunteer force?

Time and energy expended navigating complex systems is a detriment to making the best management decisions. This is true whether the subject is target acquisition or managing talent. I believe user experience design--and the information technology and bandwidth that supports it--is foundational to and should underscore all future technology programs that Airmen are responsible for managing. Secretary Wilson has stated, "The pace of change is going to accelerate. We're either going to have to rapidly accelerate ourselves and be able to spin-on innovation to the service, or we're going to be left behind."

As I understand it, the current digital capability within the Air Force, with regard to human resource management, is in fact in need of consolidation, upgrade, and transformation. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that modernization is at the forefront of our priorities.

Do you believe the current Air Force procedures and practices for reviewing the records of officers pending nomination by the President are sufficient to ensure the Secretary of the Air Force, the Secretary of Defense, and the President can make informed decisions?

Although I am familiar with the system based on my service as an Army officer, I have not had the opportunity to review the processes and procedures involved in records reviews pending nomination by the Secretary of the Air Force and Secretary of Defense to the President for consideration. However, I take this responsibility seriously and intend to conduct a thorough evaluation to ensure we are meeting this requirement and are ensuring the President is making sound/informed decisions.

In your view, are these procedures and practices fair and reasonable for the officers involved?

I assure you that, if confirmed, providing oversight and ensuring the processes involved in our promotion system are fair and reasonable will be a priority and of the highest importance during my tenure.

What modifications, if any, to the requirements for joint officer qualifications are necessary to ensure that military officers are able to attain meaningful joint and service-specific leadership experience and professional development?

One of the focus areas of both the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force is to enhance joint officer qualifications and experience throughout an officer's career. Although I have not had the opportunity to assess how to balance meaningful joint and service-specific leadership competencies, I believe building both is critically important to both the Air Force and Joint Force as a whole. The units I served in while in uniform were almost exclusively joint. This was during an era where joint operations were the exception and not the norm as they are today. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity of playing a role in assisting the Secretary in building the officer corps of the future.

Is the traditional 20-year military career long enough to allow officers to develop sufficient breadth as well as depth of experience in both Air Force and joint assignments?

Yes. Experience is the best classroom and for this to be a reality we must thoughtfully manage assignments in such a way as to build this competency. Since the adoption of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, it is my understanding that the Air Force has done a good job in building officers who have the depth and breadth of service and joint experience to execute the mission in a traditional 20-year military career. As the Chief of Staff of the Air Force states, because of the national security challenges we face, "it is essential we strengthen the development of Airmen who are not only steeped in the business of Airpower, but also knowledgeable in how to optimize every component of a Joint Task Force." If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring the Chief's vision and the Secretary of the Air Force's mandate to strengthen joint leaders and teams is achieved.

Officer Accessions

What, in your view, is the appropriate relative distribution from the different commissioning sources to meet the Air Force's officer accessions requirements and sustain the viability of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and Officer Candidate School?

I understand that the Air Force employs a balance among three officer accession sources to develop high quality officers reflecting a diversity of education, thought, and background. If confirmed, I will review the processes and analysis employed to determine the relative distribution of accessions and work to ensure a balanced approach is maintained to achieve a talented and diverse group of officers. Ultimately, in my view, we need to always critically evaluate the quality of our commissioning sources to ensure their graduates are meeting the needs of combatant commanders. In the event that is not the case, we should either adjust who we are admitting into those programs or modify the curriculum.

Section 509 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 authorized the Air Force to create a pilot program to award direct officer commissions to individuals with particular cyber-related skills or knowledge.

What is your assessment of the utility of such a pilot program?

It is my understanding that the Air Force is currently developing policy for the implementation of both Direct Commissioning for officers in a cyber specialty under Section 509 of the FY17 NDAA and application of constructive credit under Title 10 Sec 533(g), with the intent to incentivize direct commissions of highly educated and experienced cyber professionals into the Active Duty Cyberspace Officer workforce. While I am not currently steeped in the details of this effort, I support this concept in theory. If confirmed, I pledge to study this further.

What other officer specialties would be good candidates for direct commission authority?

It is my understanding that traditionally, constructive credit has been offered to Air Force Officer Specialties requiring a professional degree such as medical and legal. Employing this tool to cyber-related specialties represents a new type of usage, and is something that I understand the Air Force is assessing and working through via a pilot program. If confirmed, I will look at other specialties to which this may be successfully employed.

U.S. Air Force Academy

A recent RAND study found that officers commissioned from service academies have the lowest retention rates among all commissioning sources.

How do you explain this, and given the high cost of a service academy education, do you have any ideas to boost service academy graduate retention?

I have not had an opportunity to review the RAND study. If confirmed, this is certainly something I will review in collaboration with Air Force Academy leadership to investigate ways to boost service academy graduate retention rates, if required.

Currently, service academy graduates must serve on active duty for a minimum of five years following graduation. Is that a sufficient amount of time to balance an education that costs over \$400,000?

The value of our service academies extends beyond assessments of monetary costs. Our academies are world-class academic and leadership institutions that enable us to develop generations of leaders, military and civilian. While the minimum service commitment for service academy graduates is five years, I understand that many graduates have longer commitments due to pilot training. As a service academy graduate, I can attest that many graduates who have left active-duty service after their initial active duty service commitment continue to serve their Nation in many ways. It isn't obvious to me officers attrit based on their commission source. We do need to ask ourselves what more the local commands (and potentially the Air Force more broadly) can/should do to retain officers from this commissioning source.

What is your assessment of the policies and procedures at the U.S. Air Force Academy to prevent and respond appropriately to sexual assaults and sexual harassment and to ensure essential oversight?

I have not yet had a chance to review the specific policies and procedures in place at the Air Force Academy. It is my understanding that the Air Force Academy is committed to setting an environment based upon respect for all that supports victims, eliminates sexual assault or harassment of any kind, and employs every tool available, including the Uniform Code of Military Justice, to hold perpetrators accountable. If confirmed, I would expect the Air Force Academy to not only be in full compliance with OSD and Air Force-wide policy, but set a leadership example to follow for other institutions of higher education. If improvements are needed, I am committed to making any required changes.

What is your assessment of the policies and procedures at the U.S. Air Force Academy to ensure religious tolerance and respect?

I have not yet had a chance to review the policies and procedures in effect at the Air Force Academy. I believe that common standards and policies throughout the Air Force, to include the Air Force Academy, contribute to a culture of religious tolerance and respect for diversity. It is my understanding that the Academy strives to foster a culture of respect where each person gives and receives dignity and respect regardless of differences. Diversity is a strength of our Academy and our Air Force. Intolerance for differences has no place at the Academy or in the Air Force. If confirmed, I would

expect the Air Force Academy to not only be in full compliance with OSD and Air Force-wide policy, but set a leadership example to follow for other institutions of higher education.

General Officer Nominations

Under DOD Instruction 1320.04, adverse and reportable information pertaining to general officers must be evaluated by senior leaders in the Services and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense prior to nomination.

If confirmed, what role would you play in the officer promotion system, particularly in reviewing general officer nominations?

I have been informed that both the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff are directly involved in the General Officer nomination process. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting them through the duties assigned to the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

What is your assessment of the ability of the Services to timely document credible information of an adverse nature for evaluation by promotion selection boards and military and civilian leaders?

My understanding is that the Department of the Air Force gathers information from multiple organizations to document and present adverse information to promotion selection boards. If confirmed, I will be in a better position to assess the timeliness of this process and its effect on promotion selection boards.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that only the best qualified officers are nominated for promotion to general officer rank?

As previously stated, both the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff are involved in this matter. If confirmed, I will provide my best advice and counsel to the Secretary of the Air Force to ensure the Air Force continues to nominate the best and most qualified officers for promotion to the rank of General Officer.

Pilot Retention

As of October 1, 2017, the Air Force estimates that it is short nearly 2,000 total force pilots. Fighter pilot manning is at 60% of the Air Force's requirement.

In your judgement, do retention bonuses incentivize pilots who are leaning towards leaving the Air Force to change their mind?

Based on my experience in corporate America, a multitude of tools are necessary to successfully recruit and retain talent. I do not believe a single tool is the answer. By

offering a bonus, the Air Force has acknowledged the need to offer incentives in order to retain them long enough for work-life balance efforts to take effect. While this act alone begins to rebuild the trust of the Air Force's junior pilots, it is my belief that a multitude of actions are necessary when attempting to recruit and retain excellent talent—the likes of which our Air Force needs to be successful.

At what point would the pilot shortage become such a crisis that stop-loss or some other involuntary retention measure would be required to meet mission needs?

As I understand, the Air Force currently has no plan or intent to initiate stop-loss---they are currently able to accomplish the mission without invoking stop-loss and are taking steps to grow our way out of the pilot shortage before this crisis prevents us from meeting combat mission demands. Of course, an additional major theater conflict has the potential to change the math in this discussion.

Based on my prior military service I believe stop-loss can sometimes provide short term relief for urgent critical needs; however, I do not believe it is a good option for dealing with long-term issues. I know the pilot shortage in the Air Force is a critical issue. I have begun studying the problem and, if confirmed, I pledge to work diligently to continue to turn the problem around.

What do you believe is the number one reason pilots are leaving the Air Force?

My understanding is that we have a national pilot shortage – commercial, transport and military – requiring national focus and solutions. This problem affects our Nation as a whole. Specific to the Air Force, my opinion is that after 25 years of continuous combat operations, pilots are leaving the Air Force because they are seeking stability in their lives. As I understand, this national problem is expected to continue through the next decade.

Sometimes retaining specialized expertise is about eliminating factors that cause them to attrite. In the private sector, compensation is rarely the determining factor although it can be a contributing factor. I do believe the authority provided for in the FY17 NDAA is helpful. We must continue to evaluate the improvements we can make in the quality of service and quality of life of these pilots. I do not underestimate the role the individual family unit and the resources available to them have to encourage our airmen to stay.

If confirmed, I will continue to pursue a comprehensive approach to recruiting and retention within the AF that includes increasing pilot production and enhancing overall quality of life.

What is your assessment of a “flying only” track for pilots uninterested or ill-suited for command and high-level staff assignments?

Based on my limited understanding of a flying only track, I see value in being able to provide flexible “technical track” options to help attract and retain talented aviators and other career fields. Some career field developmental paths may not lend themselves to a “one size fits all” development. If confirmed, I pledge to study the issue and work policy and legislation changes such as this that make sense for our force.

If confirmed, will you give serious consideration to the use of warrant officers as pilots to facilitate a flying-only track for pilots?

Retaining technical talent is critical for the Air Force. I am open to consider all options available to make that a reality. While I grew up admiring the skills and competencies that warrant officers I served with in the Army brought to the organization, experience has taught me most often there are multiple solutions to problems organizations face.

I am open to a deliberate and objective discussions and assessments of any and all methods that can help the Air Force better manage its personnel inventory. Whether through Warrant Officers or other mechanisms, I plan to consider any and all ideas that better our force.

Do you agree that aviation incentive pays and bonuses should be tailored to target communities experiencing shortfalls, and not uniformly offered to every pilot at the maximum rate regardless of platform?

Yes. In my opinion, the Air Force should balance our nation’s precious resources with the need to attract and retain our best Airmen. The aviation bonus should be tailored to targeted skillsets with the greatest need as a tool to retain the experience and skills the Air Force requires to accomplish its mission. The bonus authority is vitally important to the Air Force’s retention strategy, especially as the commercial airline industry continues to hire and pay at an unprecedented rate. If confirmed, I will ensure the Air Force fully complies with the FY17 NDAA Aviation Bonus authority.

Enlisted Personnel Management

The Air Force recently completed training for its first enlisted Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) pilots.

Do you believe the Air Force should continue to increase the number of enlisted RPA pilots?

If these pilots prove competent, then I would support growing their ranks in a manner consistent with the threat/need. As I understand, the first graduates of the Enlisted Pilot Class are scheduled to complete their mission qualification training on 6 Nov 17. If confirmed, I pledge to monitor our progress in this realm and work with both internal and external leaders to ensure we have the appropriate force mix. Flight following the success of this program will be a priority.

Based on the reported success of this initiative, are other airframes in the Air Force inventory suitable for enlisted pilots?

Although we expect these enlisted pilots to continue to do well as they proceed, we will continue to assess the success of this initiative and the evolution of aviation. We will then need to examine the feasibility of all RPA in the Air Force inventory being operated with remotely and/or with enlisted pilots.

In 2012, following revelations of abuse and misconduct by Military Training Instructors (MTI) at Lackland Air Force Base, an Air Force investigation into the matter made 46 specific recommendations. Many of the recommendations focused on policies to ensure mature and high-quality Airmen are selected for MTI duty. In response to the recommendations, the Air Force stated that the minimum rank for MTIs would be technical sergeant. In June 2017, the Air Force announced that it had revised its 2012 policy to once again allow staff sergeants to serve as MTIs at basic training.

Do you agree with this policy change?

I support having our NCOs with the best performance track record and potential serving in this crucial roles. It is my understanding that the present policy authorizes staff sergeants with at least two years' time in grade to serve as Military Training Instructors. If confirmed I will take a closer look to ensure that the Air Force is utilizing only their top noncommissioned officers of the appropriate grade in this role.

What factors contributed to the Air Force's decision to revise its MTI policy?

My understanding is that the policy change was deliberate, well-defined, and the Air Force will continue to closely monitor during and after implementation. If confirmed, I am committed to playing a key role in this continued evaluation.

If confirmed, how will you ensure that mature staff sergeants as selected to serve in these critical MTI positions?

As stated above, my understanding is that the policy change was deliberate, well-defined, and that the Air Force will continue to closely monitor during and after implementation. If confirmed I committed to playing a key role in this continued evaluation.

Air Force End Strength

The Fiscal Year 2018 President's Budget requested an Air Force total force end strength of 502,000.

In your view, can the Air Force meet national defense objectives at this strength level?

Based on information I have received, it is my understanding that an Air Force total force end strength of approximately 502,000 would likely be sufficient to meet today's national defense objectives and operational requirements. If confirmed, however, I look forward to conducting a review and assessment of the Air Force's end strength requirements in coordination with the Air Force leadership.

If budget caps effective in current law remain in place, how will the Air Force's active and reserve component end strengths be impacted?

In my opinion, the optimal mix of Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel depends on the nature of the mission, component considerations, and national security requirements. If confirmed, I will work with all stakeholders to ensure the Air Force has the appropriate size and mix of personnel to meet the global demands while taking into account fiscal realities.

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

I have not yet had an opportunity to assess the efficacy of current tools and processes to restore Air Force end strength in response to urgent threats and operational needs. I understand the Air Force utilizes accession capacity to maintain the ability and flexibility to help surge the Air Force in response to any emerging national security threat. If confirmed, I would review these processes to determine whether any changes or adjustments are required and fully examine existing authorities with the Air Staff in order to determine which force shaping tools are necessary to retain and grow needed skill sets.

In Fiscal Year 2014, in response to the Budget Control Act, the Air Force cut its end strength by over 20,000 Airmen. If the Budget Control Act caps for Fiscal Year 2018 are not increased, how would you seek to balance Air Force end strength against other competing requirements, if confirmed?

My understanding is budget caps will drive the Air Force to evaluate and reprioritize its various programs and missions. Those choices will directly influence Air Force end-strength requirements. If confirmed, I will further assess the Air Force Total Force requirements and will advocate for an active-reserve force mix option which remains both effective and efficient.

Blended Retirement System

The Blended Retirement System (BRS) will come into effect during Fiscal Year 2018.

Do you believe BRS offers the Air Force an opportunity to re-evaluate how it determines its desired force manpower profile?

My understanding is that the Blended Retirement System could have a major change across DoD and the Air Force. As such, if confirmed, I will closely monitor how that change impacts recruiting and retention in order to consider the appropriate force management policies.

How can the Air Force take advantage of BRS to ensure it has the most efficient and effective total force?

From what I have learned, the Blended Retirement System can arguably be considered the most significant change in personnel policy since the decision to create an all-volunteer force. Because the program has not been implemented, the impacts and effects have yet to be determined. If confirmed, I will work to facilitate the successful implementation of the Blended Retirement System and identify a baseline to support future total force decisions. Before new programs such as this are implemented, it is important to understand clearly what problem you are looking to solve, ensuring you have the right measurement systems in place to evaluate progress towards those goals, and have already developed the playbook of actions to take if there are unintended consequences that are counter to the organization's goals.

What is your assessment of the progress of Air Force BRS implementation and education efforts?

It is my understanding the Air Force has been working closely with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the other Services, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, and other partners outside the Department of Defense to cover all the parts of this major program implementation including education and awareness, policy, and changes to information systems. From my recent engagements on this issue, I have learned the Air Force is on track for a successful transition into the Blended Retirement System on January 1, 2018.

Lessons Learned

What do you believe are the major personnel lessons learned from the last 15 years of sustained combat operations and major budget fluctuations that you would seek to address if confirmed?

From what I understand, prolonged combat operations have taken a significant toll on our Airmen, who continue to meet unplanned mission requirements creating a normalized surge environment while resources continue to decrease. Having the resources to maintain a deliberate and steady force structure and end-strength is imperative to success. A steady and consistent budgeting process is critical to maintaining the unique skills developed through military service to ensure readiness while also assuring the

modernization of weapon systems to carry out the mission. We must establish a predictable balance of readiness, modernization and personnel.

National Guard Organization, Equipment, and Readiness

Legislative proposals introduced in recent years and recommendations of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves have proposed numerous changes to the roles and responsibilities of the National Guard and Reserves. Several of the proposed changes have been implemented, and numerous others remain under consideration.

How do you assess the changes in the role and authorities of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau?

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB) serves a vital role in advising the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on critical matters related to the Homeland—its defense and our capacity for rapid reaction during natural and man-made disasters. The CNGB is the channel of communication between the 54 States and Territories and the Department of Defense.

I understand that the changes in the role and authorities of the CNGB have bolstered the Air National Guard's (ANG) support of the war fighter through increased mission readiness for over 107,000 ready-now Airmen while simultaneously meeting the needs of the Governors, as recently witnessed with the Guard's simultaneous response to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria and the wildfires.

How do you assess the changes in the roles and mission of the Air National Guard?

It is my understanding that the Air National Guard has evolved from a strategic reserve to an operational force. I also understand that it is now almost impossible to distinguish between the active and reserve components in our associated wings—which seems to be a testament to our readiness, professionalism and contributions as a Total Force.

In your view, do the current Air Force processes for planning, programming, and budgeting sufficiently address the requirements of the Air National Guard? What is the appropriate role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and the Director of the Air National Guard in this regard?

My understanding is that the Air Force planning, programming and budgeting process is a Total Force activity with full participation from the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve. The Director of the Air National Guard plays a dual role of participating in the overall Air Staff budgeting process while ensuring the unique needs of the National Guard are met with regular communication and coordination with the Chief of the National Guard Bureau. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve to ensure that we maintain a Total Force approach.

In your view, what should be the Chief of the National Guard Bureau's role, if any, in the assignment of Directors and Deputy Directors of the Air National Guard?

It is my understanding the Directors and Deputy Directors of the Air National Guard are appointed by the Secretary of the Air Force in close consultation with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB). I believe this important consultative role played by the CNGB is appropriate.

Suicide Prevention

If confirmed, what role would you play in shaping suicide prevention programs and policies for the Department of the Air Force to prevent suicides and increase the resiliency of Airmen and their families?

Even one suicide in the Air Force is too many, and I understand that the Air Force has responded to this problem through a comprehensive approach focusing on Airmen fitness, resiliency, care and support. It is my understanding that the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program employs evidence-based methods and consists of a leadership-driven, Coordinated Community Approach. I fully support this strategy as consistent with a comprehensive Airman fitness and wingman culture. Airmen are impressively resilient but are also subject to many challenges. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Air Force continues to provide a wide range of quality services to support Airmen and families while firmly establishing a culture of positive support where Airmen seeking assistance is seen as a sign of strength. If confirmed, I will also work with the Secretary of the Air Force to implement efforts to reduce suicides by providing oversight and assuring that this issue is appropriately prioritized and addressed. I will work collaboratively with our sister Services, DoD, VA and other stakeholders to optimize our effectiveness, promote resilience and ensure that our Airmen and families receive the best medical and support services.

Military Family Readiness and Support

Airmen and their families in both the active and reserve components have made, and continue to make, tremendous sacrifices in support of operational deployments, short notice temporary duties, and frequent relocations. Senior military leaders have warned of concerns among military families resulting from these challenges.

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for Airmen and their families, and, if confirmed, how would you ensure that family readiness needs are addressed and adequately resourced, especially in light of current fiscal constraints?

Given my personal military experience and my recent civilian employment, it's clear to me, Airman and family readiness drive mission readiness. The skills and experiences

fostered through Morale, Welfare and Recreation and family programs are uniquely designed to provide foundational capabilities that directly impact Airman resiliency, readiness, and retention, and they contribute to building a wingman culture throughout the Air Force. The sense of belonging, stability, and psychological benefits gained through Airman and Family Readiness, Child and Youth, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs influence the decisions our Airmen make when considering their job satisfaction, length of service, as well as whether or not they will keep the family unit together as they move from assignment to assignment. Ensuring a clear understanding of the value these capabilities have within the Air Force and providing support for Airman and family readiness will be a priority for me, as I know they are vital to the long-term mission success of the Air Force. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with our Airmen and their families and developing policies that support our Airmen and their families so that our Total Force is resilient and ready to execute the mission.

Do you believe the current personnel management system was designed to accommodate the 70% of officers and 52% of enlisted Airmen who are currently married?

Yes, however it is my belief that real issues surround pay and allowances and other quality of life programs designed to promote military families.

Over 27,000 active duty Airmen are married to another active duty member. What do you believe are some steps that can be taken to ensure these “dual-military” couples are able to both continue serving?

It is my understanding that all services are focused on helping facilitate joint spouse assignments, childcare options, youth programs and other family oriented support networks. If confirmed I will look to ensure that we are doing what is right by our Airmen, regardless of their personal backgrounds.

Today, the majority of Americans are dual-income families, yet the military lifestyle discourages active duty spouses from being able to find and keep employment commensurate with education, experience, and skill level. This can be a major factor in service member retention decisions.

What policies can the Air Force pursue to make it easier for military spouses to find and keep employment?

It is my understanding that the DoD's Defense State Liaison Office continues to work with states regarding the issues of licensure portability for military spouses, with the intent of easing the burdens and complexities of military moves. I also understand the Department's Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program, or SECO, augments the AF's employment readiness programs through a variety of initiatives to include the My Career Advancement Account scholarship and the Military Spouse Employment Partnership, or MSEP.

If confirmed I will work to learn more about these programs and others that can assist our military members and their spouses.

When ordered to undergo a permanent change of station, many Airmen opt to separate from their family members in order to offer stability for a spouse's job or a child's education. Known as a "geo-bacheloring," this can result in stress for the family, the Airman, and the Airman's unit, degrading readiness and effectiveness.

What are some steps you could pursue to reduce the number of geo-bachelors in the Air Force?

While I am not readily aware of the pressures that drive "geo-baching," if confirmed I will work to ensure healthy policies continue to be implemented for all Airmen. I do not underestimate the importance of a healthy family unit and its positive impact on overall readiness within the AF.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)

If confirmed, what challenges do you foresee in sustaining Air Force MWR programs in the current and future fiscal environment of the Air Force?

MWR is a vital part of building the personal readiness and resilience of Airmen, families, and squadrons. If confirmed I will take a close look at our mix of appropriated and non-appropriated activities to make sure we are providing the best support possible to our military families.

Managing the Cost of Health Care

In the President's Fiscal Year 2018 budget request, the Department of Defense requested \$53.5 billion in operation and support funding for the military health system, about 9% of the total funding requested for the Department's base budget. CBO has calculated that those costs will reach \$64 billion by 2030 if their growth reflects anticipated national trends in health care costs.

In your view, what is the greatest threat to the long-term viability of the military health system?

It is my understanding that the cost of care and access to care by our military members are priority topics that our leaders are addressing to ensure our forces are ready for any fight, any time. I also understand that as the services implement section 702 of the FY 17 NDAA that the goal is to streamline and improve both of these areas. If confirmed I will take a much closer look at assessing this impact.

What is your assessment of the long-term impact of the Department's health care costs on military readiness and overall national security?

The rise in healthcare costs in our country is not insignificant. Managing costs while delivering quality care will require we remain cognizant of those developments in the private sector and apply best practices to our overall system. I believe we have health professionals in uniform that are ensuring we can meet our battlefield requirements for medical care. If confirmed I will work to ensure we deliver quality healthcare to all of our beneficiaries.

Mental Health Care

In your view, are the Air Force's current mental health resources adequate to serve all active duty and eligible reserve component members and their families, as well as retirees and their dependents?

I have not had the opportunity to properly assess the total capacity of the Air Force's mental health resources. If confirmed I will take a closer look to validate that we have the right mix of providers to take the best care of our Total Force Airmen as well as retirees and their dependents.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure that sufficient mental health resources are available to service members in theater and to service members and families upon return to home station locations with insufficient community-based mental health resources?

Again, I have not had the opportunity to properly assess the total capacity of the Air Force's mental health resources. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that these efforts are adequately manned and resourced so as to ensure our Airmen receive the best care our Nation can provide, and I pledge to take a specific look at support to those members who are living in communities away from our existing facilities.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

What is your assessment of the Air Force's sexual assault prevention and response program?

It is my understanding that the Air Force is currently reevaluating and re-tooling its sexual harassment and assault training program, placing more emphasis on prevention methods and leadership accountability. However, the emphasis on robust training programs and other Air Force-wide efforts must continue, and there is still much work to be done. In addition to training, we must foster a culture within our ranks that holds dearly the concept of doing the right thing. If all Airmen "do the right thing," our incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault will decline. If confirmed, improving the Air Force's prevention and response efforts will be one of my top priorities and I look forward to the opportunity to work with Air Force leadership to further address sexual harassment and the crime of sexual assault.

What is your view of the provision for restricted and unrestricted reporting of sexual assaults?

In my view, restricted and unrestricted reporting offer an opportunity for victims to file an official report of a sexual assault without initially launching an investigation because the victim desires confidentiality and access to services to help them recover. When a restricted report is filed, the victim can receive advocacy, medical and mental health care, legal advice and spiritual support services. The victim also has an option to change the report from restricted to unrestricted, which will immediately launch an investigation into the alleged crime. As with restricted reporting options, a plethora of advocacy and support services are available. Restricted and unrestricted reporting provides choices and empowers the victim's self-determination.

What is your view about the role of the chain of command in providing necessary support to the victims of sexual assault?

My belief is that commanders, supervisors and all leaders must actively support Sexual Assault and Prevention Response programs and ensure the physical safety, emotional security, medical treatment, and legal needs of the victim are met, so they can recover. They must also ensure that the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, or appropriate civilian criminal investigative agency, and Sexual Assault Response Coordinators are engaged. Commanders are ultimately responsible for victims and alleged subjects, as well as criminal justice procedures that enable the accused to be held appropriately accountable for their actions.

What is your understanding of the adequacy of Air Force resources and programs to provide victims of sexual assault the medical, psychological, and legal help they need?

It is obvious to me that we can never do enough in this regard. My understanding is the Air Force Surgeon General ensures the provision of care for medical and psychological needs through a variety of delivery systems. When medical or psychological care is not available on military installations proper, Memorandums of Understanding are established with health care facilities in the local area specialized in providing care for military sexual trauma. A Sexual Assault Medical Manager is designated at each Air Force Military Treatment Facility to ensure the intent of these memorandums is met. Further, health care advocates assist sexual assault victims with accessing additional community resources that are present in the Airmen's locale. The Air Force has a Special Victims' Counsel Program to provide legal representation to victims of sexual assault. The Air Force also has a Special Victim Investigation and Prosecution capability to ensure that investigations comply with best practices and victims get needed support. Lastly, the Special Victims Counsel Program is an important program because it provides advice to victims on the investigatory and military justice processes, protects the rights

afforded to victims in the military justice system, and empowers victims by removing barriers in their full participation in the military justice process.

What is your view of the Air Force's Special Victims' Counsel program?

In my view, the purpose of the Special Victims Counsel Program is to provide advice to victims on the investigatory and military justice processes, protect the rights afforded to victims in the military justice system, and empower victims by removing barriers to their full participation in the military justice process. As I understand it, this has proven to be a great success and has quickly become a key part of the multi-disciplinary team that supports victims.

What is your view of the steps the Air Force has taken to prevent additional sexual assaults both at home station and deployed locations?

The Air Force is employing a scientific evidence-based approach to prevention. As I understand, the Green Dot program is also working to instill culture change to reset norms in two ways: interpersonal violence will not be tolerated; and, everyone is expected to do his/her part to prevent violence. The Green Dot approach is a paradigm shift for how the Air Force has been addressing sexual assault prevention.

What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources that the Air Force has in place to investigate and prosecute allegations of sexual assault?

The Air Force has special victim's investigation and prosecution teams which are formed to respond to sexual assault cases. These units receive comprehensive training to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault. If confirmed I will take a closer look and will work to address any shortfalls I find.

What is your view about the role of the chain of command in changing the military culture in which these sexual assaults occur?

I believe the chain of command is an essential element in creating a culture in which sexual assaults do not occur. The chain of command must demonstrate leadership, empathy, and zero-tolerance, at a minimum, to effect change and must ensure resources are available and accessible to both victim and alleged offender. An effective leader will develop ways to monitor the climate and highlight unit successes.

If confirmed, what will you do to address the issue of retaliation for reporting a sexual assault?

Recognizing the issues and the importance of the issues surrounding retaliation is key. As I understand, the Air Force has already taken significant steps to prevent and respond to retaliation, especially related to reports of sexual assault. Confirmation of any retaliatory activity against the victim, witnesses, bystanders, or responders should be met

with a swift and severe response by the chain of command. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response team, Inspector General and Judge Advocates to continue providing education for commanders and Airmen at all levels about the impact of sexual assault on individuals and proper ways to care for one another.

In your view, what would be the impact of requiring a judge advocate outside the chain of command, instead of a military commander in the grade of O-6 or above as is currently the Department of Defense's policy, to determine whether allegations of sexual assault should be prosecuted?

My view is that ultimately, the commander is responsible for good order and discipline. The military justice system is a commander's tool to ensure a disciplined force. Removing commanders' disposition authority undermines the effectiveness of the military justice system. Commanders do not and cannot make their decisions in a legal vacuum. Every commander is informed and advised by his or her staff judge advocate throughout the life of a case, from report and investigation through disposition and adjudication. The military justice system depends on both a judge advocate, who advises a commander, and the commander, who then decides what happens with a case. This system best ensures fairness, justice, and discipline and keeps the commander responsible and accountable for the climate, training, prevention and response to infractions in the unit.

What additional steps would you take, if confirmed, to address the problem of sexual assaults in the Air Force?

If confirmed, my objective will be to reduce the incidence of sexual assault in the Air Force, to ensure victims are cared for, and to ensure perpetrators are appropriately punished. I am aware that the Air Force is seeking to get beyond "awareness" to implement prevention strategies that have proven results, particularly focused on bystander training and positive unit culture.

Religious Accommodation

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

In your view, do policies concerning religious accommodation in the military appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion and other beliefs, including

individual expressions of belief, without impinging on those who have different beliefs, including no religious belief?

I believe Air Force leaders are responsible for protecting the free exercise of religion for all Airmen and avoiding the appearance of an official endorsement of any particular religion. It is my understanding all Airmen are able to choose to practice their particular religion or subscribe to no religious belief at all.

Under current law and policy, are individual expressions of belief accommodated so long as they do not impact unit cohesion and good order and discipline?

I understand the Air Force Chaplain Corps has consolidated guidance on accommodating religious practices into a single instruction series that guides leaders to ensure member's religious liberties are protected.

In your view, does a military climate that welcomes and respects open and candid discussions about personal religious faith and beliefs in a garrison environment contribute in a positive way to preparing U.S. forces to be effective in overseas assignments?

Yes, I believe that relationships and an environment of respect amongst all our service members that foster these conversations in a positive and respectful manner will always be beneficial.

Would a policy that discourages open discussions about personal faith and beliefs be more or less effective at preparing service members to work and operate in a pluralistic environment?

As stated above, I believe that relationships and an environment of respect amongst all our service members that foster these conversations in a positive and respectful manner will always be beneficial.

In your view, when performing official military duties outside a worship service, should military chaplains be encouraged to express their personal religious beliefs and tenets of their faith freely, or must they avoid making statements based on their religious beliefs?

It is my understanding that Air Force chaplains are well trained to provide faith based services in a pluralistic setting. This requires sensitivity to their audience which includes individuals from various religious traditions, as well as those who profess no religious belief at all.

Do you believe chaplains should be tasked with conducting non-religious training in front of mandatory formations, even if they may be uniquely qualified to speak on

the particular topic, such as suicide prevention or substance abuse? If so, do you believe guidance provided to those chaplains on what they should and should not say with respect to their faith is adequate?

It is my understanding that Chaplains play a vital role in ensuring the resilience of Airmen and families and provide an important avenue for Airmen who are looking for spiritual guidance. If confirmed, I will work to ensure policies associated with our Chaplains are in the best interest of all Airmen.

Management and Development of the Senior Executive Service

What is your vision for the management and development of the Air Force senior executive workforce, especially in the critically important areas of acquisition, financial management, and the scientific and technical fields?

As I understand, this is an area the Air Force continues to focus on and knows it must improve. In particular, the Air Force realizes it must transform current hiring practices to attract talented individuals needed in the future. I also understand that the Secretary of the Air Force tasked the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services to develop a draft proposal for a civilian talent management program that the Air Force can pilot for the Department of Defense. The goal is become the "employer of choice" by improving all personnel management actions, including hiring, compensating, managing performance, and promoting, and provide the Secretary with greater flexibilities by giving her more direct control over the personnel management of the Air Force civilian workforce. If confirmed, I look forward to bringing the knowledge and experience I have from the civilian sector into the mix to assist the Secretary and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services in this critical endeavor.

Balance Between Civilian and Contractor Employees

The Air Force employs many contractors and civilian employees. In many cases, contractor employees work in the same offices, serve on the same projects and task forces, and perform many of the same functions as federal employees. Both contractors and civilians make up an integral part of the Department of the Air Force's total workforce.

Do you believe that the current balance between civilian employees and contractor employees is in the best interests of the Air Force?

Decisions around how to appropriately staff the Air Force based on its current mission sets must include a discussion of manpower resources holistically (Active, Guard, Reserve, Civilian, and Contractors). The Department of Defense, including the Air Force, currently relies on a total workforce comprised of military, civilian employees and contracted support to meet missions and requirements. If confirmed, I would work with the Secretary of the Air Force, and leaders across the Air Force to assess the current mix of military civilians and contracted support against current and projected resources and

missions while ensuring that the Air Force remains compliant with all applicable statutes and policies across the Department.

In your view, has the Air Force utilized contractors to perform basic functions in an appropriate manner?

As I understand it, the Federal Acquisition Regulation provides guidance on the appropriate use of contractors and specifically restricts the use of personal services contracts. If confirmed, I pledge to work with the Secretary of the Air Force, and leaders across the Air Force to continue to ensure we are in compliance with all applicable law and policy.

Do you believe that the Air Force should continuously assess “inherently governmental functions” and other critical government functions, and how they are performed?

Yes, I support the existing Federal Government-wide guidance that agencies should review existing contracts in order to identify contracts that are wasteful, inefficient, or not otherwise likely to meet the agency's needs and to formulate appropriate corrective action in a timely manner. I believe that any such review must include a review of inherently governmental functions and other critical government functions and how they are performed. If confirmed, I will support any such review and corrective action, particularly as it relates to matters under the purview of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

What should be the primary factor in determining the allocation of work between the civilian and contractor workforces?

Again, decisions around how to appropriately staff the Air Force based on its current mission set, must include a discussion of manpower resources holistically (Active, Guard, Reserve, Civilian, and Contractors). The primary factor should be compliance with rules regarding inherently governmental functions. Consideration of the duties and functions that should reside within the government must be a primary consideration in allocating any work between a civilian workforce and contracted support.

If confirmed, will you work to remove any artificial constraints placed on the size of the Air Force’s civilian and contractor workforce, so that the Air Force can hire the number and type of employees most appropriate to accomplish its mission?

If confirmed, I would support all efforts to ensure compliance with the law, and if modifications are determined to be necessary, to work with Congress as necessary.

Currently, the Department of Defense provides very limited information on current and future budgets allocated to fund service contracts. This limits transparency, as well as

the Department's ability to actively manage and coordinate disparate service contracting activities.

If confirmed, will you commit to improving the way the Air Force plans, programs, coordinates, and oversees the use of service contracts?

Yes, if confirmed I will examine opportunities to reduce cost through the use of enterprise-wide vehicles as well as partnerships with other agencies.

Headquarters Reductions

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

If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that the Air Force does not lose personnel with special technical or managerial skills as a result of these reductions?

If confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to ensuring talent force management across the Total Force is prioritized.

To date, how many Air Force civilians have been divested as a result of this 25% reduction?

As the nominee I have not been privy to this information. If confirmed, I am committed to returning exact answers to this committee.

What financial options were offered to those employees who were divested? Was VERA/VSIP used?)

As the nominee I have not been privy to this information. If confirmed, I am committed to returning exact answers to this committee.

How many have been retrained and moved into other jobs within the Air Force?

As the nominee I have not been privy to this information. If confirmed, I am committed to returning exact answers to this committee.

How many of the positions "reduced" were cuts to unencumbered billeted positions?

As the nominee I have not been privy to this information. If confirmed, I am committed to returning exact answers to this committee.

How many military billets were cut as a result of the 25% reduction?

The Air Force FY18 budget complied with the FY16 NDAA through monetary savings so there was no additional requirement for military reductions.

Provide examples of functions and activities that were eliminated as a result of the Air Force's 25% headquarters reduction.

From what I understand, one of the ways the Air Force met the requirement was to consolidate installation management support at multiple headquarters locations into a single staff.

Acquisition, Technology, and Cyber Workforce

The Department of Defense is in a global competition for the highest quality STEM professionals at the entry-level, mid-career, and senior levels. These individuals are charged with managing billions of dollars' worth of taxpayer resources in complex acquisition programs, directly providing technical support to military operations, supporting the development of technically informed policies and regulations in areas ranging from cybersecurity to use of drones, and performing world class research and engineering functions in in-house labs and centers.

Do you feel that the Air Force can currently compete with the private sector for the highest quality technical performers at the early career, mid-career, and senior levels?

The Air Force has a multitude of challenging tasks that require cutting-edge technology. The opportunity to work with and on this technology provides significant opportunities for highly-skilled, technically-focused individuals. The Air Force's many successes indicate they have great talent but, like the private sector, sustaining that talent is essential. If confirmed, I will diligently work to ensure that the Air Force gets and keeps the cutting edge talent needed across its many mission areas.

How will you work to enhance policies and flexibilities necessary to allow the Air Force to compete with the private sector for this talent?

Over the last several years, the Congress has provided the Department of Defense with expanded personnel authorities for our technical workforce. Other authorities, such as broadened and expedited civilian hiring and compensation authorities, will help the Air Force continue to compete with the private sector for the best talent. If confirmed, I will review the Air Force's implementation of these authorities and tools and ensure that the Air Force adopts the necessary policies to fully implement the provided authorities.

Congress has provided the Department of Defense and the Air Force with a number of personnel flexibilities to support building improved acquisition, technology, and cybersecurity workforces.

Do you commit to working to ensure that these flexibilities are used to the fullest extent possible so as to support the mission of relevant Air Force organizations?

Yes.

Senior Military and Civilian Accountability

While representative of a small number of individuals in the Department of Defense, reports of abuses of rank and authority by senior military and civilian leaders and failures to perform up to accepted standards are frequently received. Whistleblowers and victims of such abuses often report that they felt that no one would pay attention to or believe their complaints. Accusations of unduly lenient treatment of senior officers and senior officials against whom accusations have been substantiated are also frequently heard.

What are your views regarding the appropriate standard of accountability for senior civilian and military leaders of the Department?

I expect the Air Force to take all allegations of inappropriate conduct very seriously and expect our senior leaders to uphold the highest standards of behavior. Airmen at every level should be held accountable for their misconduct, and it should start at the top.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that senior leaders of the Air Force are held accountable for their actions and performance?

I will support the Secretary's efforts to ensure that allegations are promptly investigated and that substantiated allegations are referred for appropriate command action.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs?

Yes.

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate committees in a timely manner?

Yes.

Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted committee, or to consult with this Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Yes.

Do you agree to answer letters and requests for information from individual Senators who are members of this Committee?

Yes.

If confirmed, do you agree to provide to this Committee relevant information within the jurisdictional oversight of the Committee when requested by the Committee, even in the absence of the formality of a letter from the Chairman?

Yes.