

Opening Statement
Nomination of Richard L. Anderson
To be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve
Affairs)
Senate Armed Services Committee

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of this Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. I especially thank President Trump for nominating me to you for consideration.

Most of my adult life has been spent in the cloth of the country, and to find myself before you today is something I never expected after hanging up my uniform 16 years ago.

I am joined today by my wife, Ruth, a retired Air Force career nurse and senior medical commander. Our story is much like the one you heard earlier from Dr. Meink in his opening statement, when he acknowledged his wife, also a retired Air Force nurse. Like the Meinks, the Andersons got off to a rocky start with a disagreement when we met during my visit to an Air Force hospital emergency room more than four decades ago. Ruth was my nurse that night, and you can likely figure out the rest of the story. And like Ms. Meink, the future Ms. Anderson thought me to be, in the words of Dr. Meink, "somewhat of a nerd." Ruth and I celebrated our 39th wedding anniversary just days ago, and we count our greatest achievements to be our three great children and seven world-class grandchildren.

I began my Air Force career in 1979 after graduating from Virginia Tech and its Corps of Cadets. I spent the first half of my military career in the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile career field, focused on the strategic defense of the nation. I spent the second half of my career in the Air Force International Affairs career field, focused on building durable relationships between our Air Force and the air forces of 40 countries throughout the Asia-Pacific theater of operations. In total, I spent 30 years in uniform, retiring from active duty in 2009 after eight years in the Pentagon on the Air Staff and in OSD.

After the Air Force, I spent the better part of a decade representing Prince William County in the Virginia General Assembly, chairing the joint House-Senate Military and Veterans Caucus and touching every piece of legislation affecting 800,000 Virginia veterans.

Throughout my life, my focus has been on people. In that spirit, I relish the opportunity to be considered by this Committee for a position of trust to lead the Air Force organization that focuses exclusively on the great Airmen, Guardians and Department civilians who serve our nation. If confirmed to be the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force

for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, people will continue to be the central focus of my every waking hour.

I strongly believe that we must fly the flight plan articulated by Air Force Chief of Staff Dave Allvin and Chief of Space Operations Chance Saltzman for “More Air Force—More Space Force.” We must invest in 21st century weapon systems that will deter aggression—and failing that, be ready to fly, fight, and win the nation’s wars.

As America fields new weapon systems, a new generation of American warriors will be required to operate these platforms to ensure force readiness and mission success—and that’s where I wish to be, should I be fortunate enough to be confirmed as an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

Thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today. Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with you individually and collectively in ensuring that America’s Airmen and Guardians are fully ready to *Provide for the Common Defense* of the nation.

Thank you.