

# ENHANCING PERSONNEL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT A STRONGER, MORE RESILIENT COAST GUARD

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(117-56)

## REMOTE HEARING

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JULY 27, 2022

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Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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JULY 22, 2022

**SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER**

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation  
FROM: Staff, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation  
RE: Hearing on “Enhancing Personnel Resources to Support a Stronger, More Resilient Coast Guard”

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**PURPOSE**

The Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation will hold a hearing on Wednesday, July 27, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. EDT in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building and via Zoom to examine the current state of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG or Coast Guard) workforce and highlight the investments and resources needed to support the servicemembers and civilian personnel executing the Coast Guard’s diverse array of missions. The Subcommittee will hear testimony from the U.S. Coast Guard.

**BACKGROUND**

The Coast Guard operates as the nation’s premier maritime law enforcement agency, charged with primary responsibility to enforce or assist in the enforcement of all applicable federal laws in, under, and over the high seas and waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to ensure safety of life and property at sea; protect the marine environment; carry out icebreaking activities; and ensure the safety and security of vessels, ports, waterways, and related facilities.<sup>1</sup> As one of the six Armed Forces, the Coast Guard also maintains defense readiness and may be called upon to operate as a specialized service in the Navy upon the declaration of war or at the direction of the president.<sup>2</sup>

In fiscal year 2021, the Coast Guard responded to over 16,400 search and rescue cases, saving 4,747 lives.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the Coast Guard conducted over 7,656 boardings of fishing vessels, issued 229,274 Certificates of Documentation to commercial and recreational vessels, maintained over 46,529 aids to navigation, investigated 11,062 pollution incident reports, performed 4,555 hours of icebreaking, and detained 635 suspected smugglers carrying over 380,000 pounds of cocaine.<sup>4</sup>

As the second smallest branch in the military, the Coast Guard achieved these mission objectives on a modest budget with just about 40,456 active-duty military

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<sup>1</sup> 14 U.S.C. § 102.

<sup>2</sup> 14 U.S.C. § 103.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, *Posture Statement: 2023 Budget Overview* available at <https://www.uscg.mil/Portals/0/documents/budget/2023/FY%202023%20Posture%20Statement.pdf?ver=nSivAr6imO5IsOC3m0PMsg%3D%3D&timestamp=1648484300591>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

members, 8,034 reservists, and 9,012 civilian employees.<sup>5</sup> For fiscal year 2022, the Coast Guard received an overall appropriation of \$13.2 billion, of which \$9.16 billion was dedicated to Operations and Support, a portion of which covers military pay and allowances for its servicemembers.<sup>6</sup>

In 2004, the Coast Guard began its largest recapitalization effort since World War II, investing billions of dollars in updating its legacy assets to enhance its capability to respond to an unprecedented demand for Coast Guard services.<sup>7</sup> By 2038, the Coast Guard will have invested well over \$26.8 billion in its acquisition program.<sup>8</sup> Alongside these extraordinary investments in Coast Guard assets, it's imperative that the concerns and needs of its servicemembers are equally addressed and resources are targeted toward enhancing their quality of life.

#### HOUSING

Housing poses a unique challenge for members of the Coast Guard stationed in high-cost areas. Due to the nature of Coast Guard missions, Coast Guard installations are based near desirable coastal cities, which have higher than average living costs as illustrated in *Figure 1*.<sup>9</sup> To offset the cost of housing, the Coast Guard provides a basic allowance for housing (BAH) to all active-duty servicemembers stationed in the United States. It helps cover a majority of monthly rent and utility costs for servicemembers.<sup>10</sup> The amount of BAH a servicemember is entitled to depends on that member's pay grade, dependency status, and the geographic location the member is assigned to.<sup>11</sup> The Secretary of the Department of Defense (DOD) sets the BAH rates for all uniformed services, including the Coast Guard, for the various military housing areas in the United States.<sup>12</sup> The rates are based on "the costs of adequate housing for civilians with comparable income levels in the same area" and are designed to cover approximately 95 percent of a member's housing costs.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>6</sup> Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-103), available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2471>.

<sup>7</sup> Congressional Research Service. *Coast Guard Cutter Procurement: Background and Issues for Congress*. <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/R42567> Updated April 13, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Coast Guard FY2022-2026 *Capital Investment Plan, Fiscal Year 2021 Report to Congress*, December 9, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Trulia, "Stationed in the Nation: Best Rental Markets for U.S. Military and Their Families," Trulia.com May 11, 2016, <https://www.trulia.com/research/military-rentals/>.

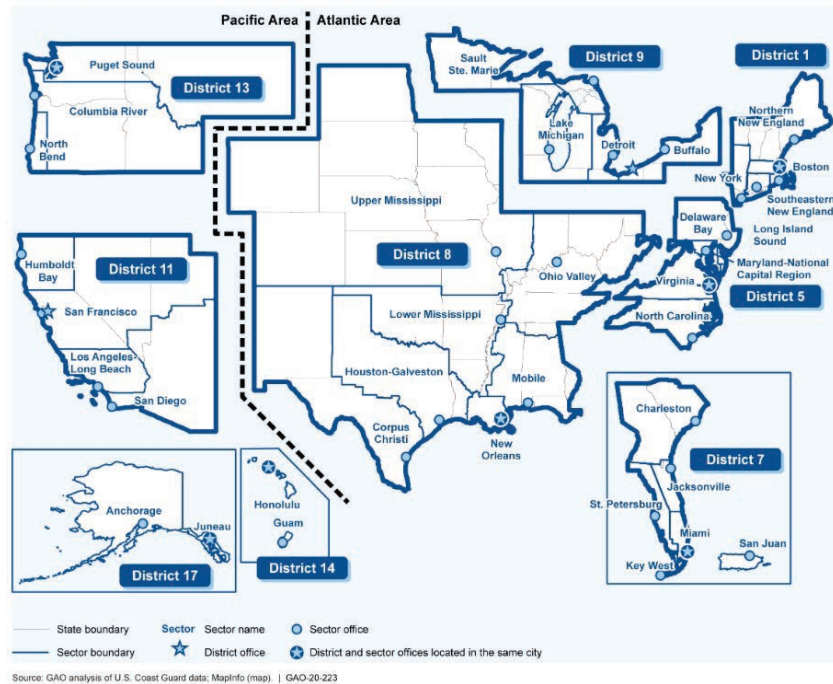
<sup>10</sup> GAO, "Military Housing: Actions Needed to Improve the Process for Setting Allowances for Servicemembers and Calculating Payments for Privatized Housing Projects," p. 17 GAO-21-137. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-137.pdf> January 2021.

<sup>11</sup> 37 U.S.C. § 403.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

Figure 1: Map Showing the U.S. Coast Guard's Two Area Commands, Nine Districts, and 37 Sectors



Note: This figure is not to scale and the nine Coast Guard districts are not numbered sequentially.

Figure 1—Location of Coast Guard's nine Districts and 37 Sectors (GAO-20-223)

BAH is calculated by a concerted effort of military representatives and contractors who gather data on rental rates of various housing types (e.g. one-bedroom apartment, two-bedroom townhouse, four-bedroom single-family home) in the private sector housing market one year in advance of each fiscal year for each of the 301 military housing areas in the U.S.<sup>14</sup> The Military Compensation Policy directorate within the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy reviews the data and makes adjustments where appropriate to calculate BAH rates for each of the 27 pay grades by dependency status.<sup>15</sup> The directorate then briefs each of the services on the rates, and the services approve the final rates after review.<sup>16</sup> During the process, each service is afforded the opportunity to provide ancillary information to be used in the BAH calculus, such as rental housing referral lists, apartment complex lists, and real estate contacts.<sup>17</sup>

During its 2021 review of DOD's process for setting housing allowances, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified a few discrepancies in DOD's methodology for determining BAH rates. It found that for certain locations DOD did not collect enough data to adequately meet its sample size targets and it did not always rely on current-year rental housing data.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, there are concerns that these shortcomings could result in an insufficient housing allowance provided to members of the Coast Guard. For instance, an E-5 rated servicemember with de-

<sup>14</sup> GAO, "Military Housing: Actions Needed to Improve the Process for Setting Allowances for Servicemembers and Calculating Payments for Privatized Housing Projects," p. 18 GAO-21-137. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-137.pdf> January 2021.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 17.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 18.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Coast Guard. *Coast Guard Housing Manual*. p. 2-1 Available at [https://media.defense.gov/2017/Mar/29/2001723590/-1/-1/0/CIM\\_11101\\_13G.PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2017/Mar/29/2001723590/-1/-1/0/CIM_11101_13G.PDF).

<sup>18</sup> GAO, "Military Housing: Actions Needed to Improve the Process for Setting Allowances for Servicemembers and Calculating Payments for Privatized Housing Projects," p. 12 GAO-21-137. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-137.pdf> January 2021.

pendents stationed at USCG Station Golden Gate in Sausalito, California receives a housing allowance of \$3,126 per month,<sup>19</sup> but a two-bedroom apartment in this vicinity has an average monthly rental rate of \$4,500, or \$1,374 more than the housing allowance, and this does not include utilities which BAH is intended to cover.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, the nearest DOD installation to USCG Station Golden Gate is Travis Air Force Base (Travis AFB) in Fairfield, CA, where an E-5 with dependents is entitled to \$2,811 per month for BAH.<sup>21</sup> The housing allowance provides that airman an excess of \$421 over the average rental rate of \$2,390 for a two-bedroom apartment in this area.<sup>22</sup>

Coast Guard policy states that the housing program strives to ensure access to adequate housing that is within two hours or less round-trip travel distance of a member's permanent duty station during peak commute times.<sup>23</sup> However, there are concerns that in order to obtain housing within the BAH allotment, junior members must endure longer commutes. For example, the drive from Fairfield, CA, to Sausalito, CA, is 90 minutes.

Service members are provided alternative housing options so that they do not have to obtain private sector housing, such as military housing or leased housing, but housing on base is awarded based on rank and dependency status, driving more junior members to join a lengthy waiting list and endure housing expenses above the BAH allotment until a home becomes available.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, many Coast Guard housing units are deteriorating and in dire need of recapitalization. According to GAO, the Coast Guard has 2,901 housing assets, 28 percent of which are past their service life and received a B- rating from the American Society of Civil Engineers.<sup>25</sup>

#### HEALTHCARE

In the area of healthcare, the Coast Guard faces several challenges to meet the needs of its servicemembers. The Coast Guard has 43 clinics, 65 shore-based sickbays, and 57 vessel-based sickbays which it staffs with enlisted members (health service technicians) and officers (physician assistants), as well as contractors, and physicians and dentists serving in the U.S. Public Health Service.<sup>26</sup> In a recent study, GAO discovered that Coast Guard's current staffing approach is inadequate, as it fails to account for surge deployments of medical staff for disaster missions, which quadrupled from 4,111 days in 2018 to more than 16,000 days in 2021.<sup>27</sup>

When healthcare staff are deployed to support surge operations, this exacerbates already strained staffing levels at Coast Guard clinics and sickbays. Clinics are forced to redistribute remaining staff to cover services, defer services, or reduce the number of patients they treat.<sup>28</sup> In a report on Coast Guard healthcare released February 2022, GAO determined that the Coast Guard lacked the necessary health care staffing standards relied upon by other health care organizations to determine staffing levels and staffing types needed to provide adequate medical care to servicemembers.<sup>29</sup> GAO assessed that the Coast Guard health services program's overall vacancy rate is seven percent as of July 2021.<sup>30</sup> The paper health record system used by the Coast Guard handicaps its ability to track the necessary information that would inform health care staffing standards and needs.<sup>31</sup> The Coast Guard is now transitioning to Military Health System (MHS) Genesis, an electronic health care record system used by the DOD, and aims to complete the initial rollout of the

<sup>19</sup> Defense Travel Management Office. *BAH Calculator*. <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm> Accessed June 28, 2022.

<sup>20</sup> Rent.com *Rental market trends in Sausalito, CA*. <https://www.rent.com/california/sausalito-apartments/rent-trends> Accessed July 4, 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Defense Travel Management Office. *BAH Calculator*. <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm> Accessed June 28, 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Rent.com *Rental market trends in Fairfield, CA*. <https://www.rent.com/california/fairfield-apartments/rent-trends> Accessed July 4, 2022.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Coast Guard. *Coast Guard Housing Manual*. p. 4-2 Available at [https://media.defense.gov/2017/Mar/29/2001723590/-1/-1/0/CIM\\_11101\\_13G.PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2017/Mar/29/2001723590/-1/-1/0/CIM_11101_13G.PDF).

<sup>24</sup> *Id.* at 7-3.

<sup>25</sup> GAO, "Coast Guard Actions Needed to Better Manage Shore Infrastructure," p. 3 GAO-22-105513. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105513.pdf> November 2021.

<sup>26</sup> GAO, "Coast Guard Health Care: Improvements Needed for Determining Staffing Needs and Monitoring Access to Care," p. 5 GAO-22-105152. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105152.pdf> February 2022.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 13.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.* at 14.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> *Id.* at 12.

<sup>31</sup> *Id.* at 15.

system by September 2022.<sup>32</sup> The Coast Guard hopes that the new system will enable it to determine appropriate medical staffing levels.<sup>33</sup>

Equally concerning is the Coast Guard's inability to assess whether it is meeting its access-to-care standards as its current system wholly relies on manual estimates of wait times for available appointments.<sup>34</sup> Coast Guard medical standards dictate that members needing specialty medical care, such as behavioral health care, should receive an appointment for such care within 28 days.<sup>35</sup> However, the Coast Guard cannot accurately determine whether it meets this medical standard because its current process for collecting access-to-care data does not reliably track appointment timelines and wait times.<sup>36</sup>

This is particularly concerning given the Coast Guard's role as a first responder and the impact that role has on mental health. The most common mental health conditions diagnosed in military servicemembers are posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression.<sup>37</sup> As mentioned previously, in 2021 the Coast Guard responded to over 16,020 search and rescue cases.<sup>38</sup> The search and rescue mission in particular levies a heavy burden on the mental wellness of Coast Guard personnel who not only save lives, but also face traumatic experiences of recovering lifeless bodies or witnessing firsthand the death of an attempted rescue. The Coast Guard has just 20 mental health providers servicing over 40,000 active duty members.<sup>39</sup> In 2021, RAND Corporation identified psychological distress (depression and PTSD) as having a "strong association" with military separation among all the services; servicemembers with depression or PTSD are 22.5 percent and 23.1 percent more likely to separate from service, respectively, than servicemembers who do not report having depression or PTSD.<sup>40</sup> RAND opined that improved care for employees experiencing psychological distress could increase retention in the military.<sup>41</sup>

#### RECRUITING AND RETENTION

Although the Coast Guard has the highest retention rate of all the services, it struggles with recruiting and retaining members in a tight job market as all military services are struggling to reach fiscal year 2022 recruiting numbers.<sup>42</sup> In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created significant obstacles to traditional recruiting mechanisms that all services had to navigate.<sup>43</sup> Each military branch restructured its recruiting policies and procedures to acclimate to a virtual setting.<sup>44</sup> DOD military branches actually achieved end-strength goals in fiscal year 2020 due to creative retention policy adjustments and recruiting strategies.<sup>45</sup> For instance, the Army offered short-term extension contracts to its enlisted soldiers ranging from three to 23 months to retain its members who would have likely separated during the pandemic.<sup>46</sup> End-strength is the number of individuals a service aims to have in its ranks at the end of the fiscal year and is approved by Congress.<sup>47</sup> The Coast Guard

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

<sup>34</sup> *Id.* at 16.

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, Coast Guard Medical Manual, COMDTINST M6000.1F.

<sup>36</sup> GAO, "Coast Guard Health Care: Improvements Needed for Determining Staffing Needs and Monitoring Access to Care," p. 16 GAO-22-105152. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105152.pdf> February 2022.

<sup>37</sup> RAND corporation, "Military Mental Health Care," August 14, 2017 Available at <https://www.rand.org/pubs/infographics/IG131.html>.

<sup>38</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, *Posture Statement: 2023 Budget Overview* available at <https://www.uscg.mil/Portals/0/documents/budget/2023/FY%202023%20Posture%20Statement.pdf?ver=nSlvAr6imO5IsOC3m0PMsg%3D%3D&timestamp=1648484300591>.

<sup>39</sup> GAO, "Coast Guard Health Care: Improvements Needed for Determining Staffing Needs and Monitoring Access to Care," p. 10 GAO-22-105152. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105152.pdf> February 2022.

<sup>40</sup> RAND corporation, "Symptoms of Depression and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as Predictors of Separation from the U.S. Military," p. 4 October 26, 2021 Available at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA1520-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1520-1.html).

<sup>41</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>42</sup> Boigon, Molly and Kube, Courtney, "Every branch of the military is struggling to make its 2022 recruiting goals, officials say," nbcnews.com, June 27, 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/military/every-branch-us-military-struggling-meet-2022-recruiting-goals-officials-rcna35078>.

<sup>43</sup> RAND, "What Happened to Military Recruiting and Retention of Enlisted Personnel in 2020 During the COVID-19 Pandemic?" January 18 2022 Available at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA1092-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1092-1.html).

<sup>44</sup> *Id.* at 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*

<sup>46</sup> *Id.* at 6.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 4.

is authorized an active-duty end-of-year strength of 44,500 for fiscal year 2021,<sup>48</sup> but currently has a deficit of over 4,000 active-duty personnel.<sup>49</sup> In April 2018, the Coast Guard reported to Congress that it did not have enough personnel to meet its mission needs.<sup>50</sup>

A shortage of personnel not only leaves gaps in mission capability but also strains the physical and mental capacities of the workforce. When members go on surge deployments for a humanitarian mission, take parental leave, or go on extended medical leave, the workers left behind must absorb the duties of those on temporary leave.<sup>51</sup> If that unit is already understaffed, this only exacerbates the stretched capacities of the workforce. In the major cutter community, the effects are especially onerous as RAND highlighted in its 2019 report, “Balancing Quality of Life with Mission Requirements.”<sup>52</sup> A major cutter is a large ocean-going vessel that spends significant amounts of time away from home port and includes the Coast Guard’s high-endurance cutters (378 feet in length), medium-endurance cutters (270 feet or 210 feet in length), the polar ice breakers, and the 282-foot medium-endurance cutter known as the *Alex Haley*.<sup>53</sup> These cutters are normally deployed out to sea for 60 to 90 days at a time under physically strenuous conditions.<sup>54</sup> Every summer, these cutters lose approximately one-third to one-half of its crew during transfer season, and when the new crew reports to the vessel they have to get qualified, meaning they have to meet a set of professional qualification standards before they can be considered certified to perform their job.<sup>55</sup> When there’s a shortage of personnel or a shortage of qualified crew members aboard the cutter, the remaining workforce is required to stand watch more frequently and take on additional duties beyond their primary jobs. This can lead to severe sleep deprivation and overexertion, which in turn can adversely impact the Coast Guard’s retention numbers.<sup>56</sup> More manning for major cutters and other specialties and units is necessary to relieve members of the hefty workload, but the process the Coast Guard uses to assess manning needs is also understaffed, making it nearly impossible for the Coast Guard to develop a clear understanding of its manning requirements.<sup>57</sup> As of February 2020, the Coast Guard had completed manpower requirements determinations for just two percent of its workforce.<sup>58</sup>

All the services, including the Coast Guard, offer enlistment bonuses of up to \$50,000 for qualified active-duty recruits; the amounts and disbursement timeframes depend on the type of rating or specialty and service commitment length.<sup>59</sup> However, it’s clear that DOD is better resourced to offer these sizable incentives. In fiscal year 2022, DOD received \$4.7 billion allocated for Special and Incentive (S&I) pays, or bonuses, to aid with recruiting and retention.<sup>60</sup> Earlier this year, the Navy offered a \$25,000 signing bonus to any recruit, regardless of rating, who enlisted active duty in the Navy between April and June 2022; the highest offer of all the services.<sup>61</sup> The Army provides a selective reenlistment bonus (SRB) in the form of a lump sum cash payment to soldiers who reenlist for approximately 120

<sup>48</sup> 14 U.S.C. § 4904.

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Coast Guard. *Posture Statement: 2023 Budget Overview* available at <https://www.uscg.mil/Portals/0/documents/budget/2023/FY%202023%20Posture%20Statement.pdf?ver=nSivAr6imO5IsOC3m0PMsg%3D%3D&timestamp=1648484300591>.

<sup>50</sup> GAO, “Actions Needed to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Organizational Changes and Determine Workforce Needs,” p. 1 GAO–20–223. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-20-223.pdf> February 2020.

<sup>51</sup> RAND, “*Balancing Quality of Life with Mission Requirements*,” July 29, 2019 Available at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2731.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2731.html).

<sup>52</sup> *Id.*

<sup>53</sup> RAND, “*Balancing Quality of Life with Mission Requirements*,” p. 1 July 29, 2019 Available at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2731.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2731.html).

<sup>54</sup> *Id.*

<sup>55</sup> *Id.* at 60.

<sup>56</sup> *Id.* at 62.

<sup>57</sup> GAO, “Actions Needed to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Organizational Changes and Determine Workforce Needs,” p. 32 GAO–20–223. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-20-223.pdf> February 2020.

<sup>58</sup> *Id.* at 24.

<sup>59</sup> Toropin, Konstantin, “Navy offers \$25,000 to All Recruits to Ship Out Quickly,” Military.com, April 8, 2022, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/04/08/navy-offers-25000-all-recruits-ship-out-quickly.html>.

<sup>60</sup> Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year 2023 Available at [https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2023/FY2023\\_m1.pdf](https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2023/FY2023_m1.pdf).

<sup>61</sup> Toropin, Konstantin, “Navy offers \$25,000 to All Recruits to Ship Out Quickly,” Military.com, April 8, 2022, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/04/08/navy-offers-25000-all-recruits-ship-out-quickly.html>.

military occupational specialties (MOS) (out of over 150 MOSs).<sup>62</sup> SRB has been proven to increase the likelihood of reenlistment.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the Army alone boasts a robust recruiting program comprised of approximately 10,900 soldiers and civilians stationed at more than 1,400 recruiting offices not just in the United States, but overseas as well.<sup>64</sup> Comparatively, just 58 offices divided into four regions across America make up the Coast Guard's recruiting program as depicted in *Figure 2*. Due to its budget constraints, the Coast Guard judiciously offers SRB bonuses to only three of its 24 ratings identified as in critical need.<sup>65</sup> To further aid its recruiting efforts, the Coast Guard is currently offering \$500 cash bonuses for the first time in its history to personnel, both military and civilian, who help recruit qualified members to the Service.<sup>66</sup>



Figure 2—Coast Guard Recruiting Offices (provided by the U.S Coast Guard)

#### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In spite of the Coast Guard's efforts to improve representation of women and minorities within its workforce, the Service still struggles to reflect the demographics of the nation.<sup>67</sup> This underrepresentation becomes more salient as members climb the upper echelons of military ranks.<sup>68</sup> For instance, a RAND report published in 2021 examined the demographics of the officer ranks in the Coast Guard and found that representation of racial and ethnic minority groups is 32 percent at the O-2 level, but drops to 11 percent at the flag officer level.<sup>69</sup> For enlisted personnel, 35 percent of E-5s are of racial or ethnic minority groups, but only 18 percent are E-9s (master chief petty officer).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>62</sup> U.S. Army, *MILPER Message Number: 22-237 Selective Retention Bonus (SRB)*, June 23, 2022 Available at [https://armyrep.s3.amazonaws.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/23222247/SRB\\_22\\_237\\_20220623.pdf](https://armyrep.s3.amazonaws.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/23222247/SRB_22_237_20220623.pdf).

<sup>63</sup> RAND, *"Increasing Efficiency and Incentives for Performance in the Army's Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) Program"* p. v October 5, 2021 Available at <https://www.rand.org/pubs/research-reports/RR803-1.html>.

<sup>64</sup> U.S. Army Recruiting Command, *Recruiting*, <https://recruiting.army.mil/aboutUSAREC/#:~:text=There%20are%20approximately%2010%2C900%20Soldier,stations%20across%20America%20and%20overseas> Accessed June 30, 2022.

<sup>65</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, *ACN 104/21—OCT 2021 FY22 Military Workforce Planning Team Results—Enlisted Monetary Interventions*, Oct 19, 2021 Available at <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSCG/bulletins/2f8314d>.

<sup>66</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, *Here's your chance to grow the Coast Guard's workforce*, May 11, 2022 Available at <https://www.mycg.uscg.mil/News/Article/3028003/heres-your-chance-to-grow-the-coast-guards-workforce/#:~:text=The%20program%20called%20for%20all,%2C%20reserve%2C%20and%20civilian%20employees>.

<sup>67</sup> RAND corporation, *"Improving the Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Among U.S. Coast Guard Active-Duty members,"* p. 1 August 11, 2021 Available at <https://www.rand.org/pubs/research-reports/RR8362-2.html>.

<sup>68</sup> *Id.*

<sup>69</sup> *Id.*

<sup>70</sup> *Id.*

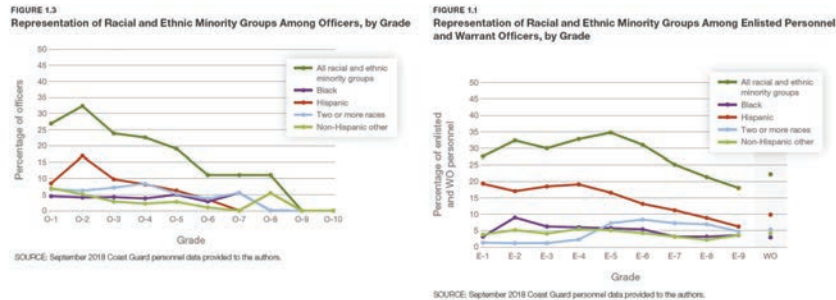


Figure 3—Coast Guard racial and ethnic demographics among officers and enlisted personnel.  
[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA362-2.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA362-2.html)

Female representation in the officer ranks is equally low—women comprise 33 percent of O-1s but just 11 percent of O-6s and 14 percent of flag officers.<sup>71</sup> “This representation problem is not only critical but also potentially growing, given that half the Coast Guard’s future recruiting pool (Americans younger than 15) are members of racial or ethnic minority groups.”<sup>72</sup> As the U.S. population is expected to be “minority white” by year 2045, the Coast Guard’s diversity problem will exist in perpetuity if it’s not able to adjust to the country’s changing demographics.<sup>73</sup>

In 2019, RAND published a report on ways that the Coast Guard can improve gender diversity in its workforce. The report notes female retention in the Coast Guard is 12.6 percent lower than males for officers and 12.3 percent lower for enlisted members at the tenth year of service mark.<sup>74</sup> Female retention rates are highest in service or support ratings while operational ratings have the lowest retention rates for women.<sup>75</sup> Female attrition in the Coast Guard may be attributed to several factors, but none more consequential than the impact having children has on a woman’s career.<sup>76</sup> Pregnancy and maternity leave can cause women to submit “sparse or noncompetitive” performance evaluations compared to their peers making promotion acutely challenging because performance evaluations cannot indicate that a member was out due to pregnancy or parental leave.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, pregnancy can affect the opportunities for women to attain the necessary qualifications and experiences for certain specialties and ratings. For example, once a pilot becomes pregnant, she is grounded and can no longer achieve needed flight hours or a female in an afloat billet can no longer go underway while pregnant, sacrificing the requisite sea time needed to rise in rank.<sup>78</sup> Not surprising, “the most common family status for active-duty women is to be unmarried without children.”<sup>79</sup> Conversely, male active-duty members have the polar opposite status.<sup>80</sup> In general, women in the afloat community face limited options for going underway due to berthing requirements.<sup>81</sup> The conversion of the 210s (*Reliance*-class medium-endurance cutters) has made it difficult for women to serve on these vessels due to limited berthing spaces and Coast Guard requirements for female sleeping quarters to be separate “with privacy provided by rigid bulkheads.”<sup>82</sup> Some specific ratings require sea

<sup>71</sup>*Id.* at 2.

<sup>72</sup>RAND corporation, “*Shaping Coast Guard Culture to Enhance the Future Workforce*,” November 1, 2021 Available at <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA872-1.html>.

<sup>73</sup>Frey, William, “The US will become ‘minority white’ in 2045, Census projects,” Brookings, March 14, 2018 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/>.

<sup>74</sup>RAND, “*Improving Gender Diversity in the Coast Guard*,” p. 1 March 29, 2019 Available at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2770.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2770.html).

<sup>75</sup>*Id.* at xviii.

<sup>76</sup>*Id.* at 49.

<sup>77</sup>*Id.* at 50.

<sup>78</sup>U.S. Coast Guard, *Military Assignments and Authorized Absences*, COMDTINST M1000.8A, June 2019.

<sup>79</sup>RAND, “*Improving Gender Diversity in the Coast Guard*,” p. 61 March 29, 2019 Available at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2770.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2770.html).

<sup>80</sup>*Id.*

<sup>81</sup>RAND corporation, “*Improving the Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Among U.S. Coast Guard Active-Duty members*,” p. 32 August 11, 2021 Available at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA362-2.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA362-2.html).

<sup>82</sup>U.S. Coast Guard, *Military Assignments and Authorized Absences*, COMDTINST M1000.8A, June 2019.

time, but if women are unable to acquire the necessary time underway to advance, they remain in lower ranks. In the study, RAND also identified lack of childcare availability and costs as major concerns for women.<sup>83</sup>

#### CHILD CARE

Coast Guard families experience unique hardships when it comes to finding quality care for their children. Depending on their duties, military personnel may work duty shifts at odd hours, including overnight, and on weekends. Additionally, when changing duty stations, they may be challenged to find a child care provider, especially in remote or high-cost areas.<sup>84</sup> The Coast Guard has a total of nine Child Development Centers (CDC) with a capacity to serve up to 704 children.<sup>85</sup> As of March 2022, the Coast Guard had 361 children on its waitlists for enrollment in a CDC, most of whom were infants and toddlers.<sup>86</sup> By comparison, DOD has 761 CDCs with a capacity to serve approximately 104,000 children.<sup>87</sup> The Coast Guard also provides a Fee Assistance program called “Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood” to help personnel pay for care by community-based providers and has a Family Child Care program whereby individuals certified by the Coast Guard residing in Coast Guard-controlled housing provide child care in their homes.<sup>88</sup> The fee assistance program provides subsidies of up to \$900 per month for full-time care and \$450 per month for part-time care; in high-cost areas the subsidies are capped at \$1,200 for full-time care and \$600 for part-time care per month.<sup>89</sup> The Fee Assistance program provides care for 82 percent of the children enrolled in Coast Guard’s child care programs; it is the “most effective way” for the Coast Guard to provide affordable child care for its members.<sup>90</sup> Coast Guard personnel are also able to access DOD CDCs and vice versa through a memorandum of agreement formed in 2003.<sup>91</sup>

Families receiving care from community-based providers encounter space limitations, especially in the nine locations the Coast Guard has dubbed “child care deserts”: Alameda, California; Astoria, Oregon; Elizabeth City, North Carolina; Honolulu, Hawaii; Ketchikan, Alaska; Los Angeles, California; New London, Connecticut; Petaluma, California; and Valdez, Alaska.<sup>92</sup> These are areas where only 33 percent or less of the total number of children from birth to age five were able to receive care in that community mostly due to lack of availability.<sup>93</sup> As for the Family Child Care program, the number of certified families qualified to provide care in their homes dropped from 19 in 2019 to five in 2022 due to the pandemic.<sup>94</sup> Normally, these are providers capable of providing care during non-traditional hours and are more heavily relied upon by personnel stationed in remote or geographically isolated areas.<sup>95</sup> The Coast Guard plans to use \$120 million authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to build three new CDCs at bases that do not have them—Aviation Training Center in Mobile, Alabama; Astoria, Oregon; and Base Elizabeth City, North Carolina—and renovate existing ones.<sup>96</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The newly appointed Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Linda Fagan, indicates in the 2022 Commandant’s Intent that the Coast Guard workforce is her highest priority and promises to deliver innovative tools, inclusive policies, and reliable technology to support Coast Guard personnel in their mission objectives.<sup>97</sup> In this era of “the Great Resignation,” it is critical that the Coast Guard adapts to changing workforce dynamics to make it an employer of choice.

<sup>83</sup> RAND, “Improving Gender Diversity in the Coast Guard,” March 29, 2019 Available at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2770.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2770.html).

<sup>84</sup> GAO, “Military Child Care: Coast Guard is Taking Steps to Increase Access for Families,” GAO-22-105262. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-105262.pdf> June 2022.

<sup>85</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>86</sup> *Id.* at 10.

<sup>87</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>88</sup> *Id.* at 4.

<sup>89</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>90</sup> *Id.* at 12.

<sup>91</sup> *Id.* at 17.

<sup>92</sup> *Id.* at 13.

<sup>93</sup> *Id.*

<sup>94</sup> *Id.* at 14.

<sup>95</sup> *Id.*

<sup>96</sup> *Id.* at 16.

<sup>97</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, *Commandant’s Intent 2022*, June 1, 2022 Available at <https://www.uscg.mil/Portals/0/seniorleadership/alwaysready/2022-Commandant-Intent-Hi%20Res.pdf>.

WITNESS LIST

- Admiral Linda L. Fagan, Commandant, United States Coast Guard

## ENHANCING PERSONNEL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT A STRONGER, MORE RESILIENT COAST GUARD

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2022

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND  
MARITIME TRANSPORTATION,  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:01 a.m. in room 2167 Rayburn House Office Building and via Zoom, Hon. Salud O. Carbajal (Chair of the subcommittee) presiding.

Members present in person: Mr. Carbajal, Mr. DeFazio, Mr. Larsen of Washington, Mr. Auchincloss, Mr. Gibbs, and Dr. Van Drew.

Members present remotely: Mr. Brown of Maryland, Mr. Weber of Texas, and Ms. Malliotakis.

Mr. CARBAJAL. The subcommittee will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that the chair be authorized to declare a recess at any time during today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

I also ask unanimous consent that Members not on the subcommittee be permitted to sit with the subcommittee at today's hearing, and ask questions.

Without objection, so ordered.

As a reminder, please keep your microphones muted unless speaking. Should I hear any inadvertent background noise, I will request that the Member please mute their microphone.

And to insert a document into the record, please have your staff email it to DocumentsT&I@mail.house.gov.

Good morning, and welcome to today's hearing on enhancing personnel resources to support a stronger and more resilient Coast Guard. Today, we are joined by Admiral Linda Fagan, the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, who will provide insight on the state of the Coast Guard workforce, areas where more resources should be targeted for the benefit of its personnel, and challenges that exist in a time of shifting workforce dynamics.

First, Admiral Fagan, congratulations on your new role as Commandant of the Coast Guard. I know you are going to do an amazing job. You have already been doing an amazing job. So, welcome and congratulations. I am confident that your wealth of knowledge and experience will make you an excellent leader, and I trust that the future of the Coast Guard is in good hands—better than good hands—excellent hands.

The Coast Guard is our country's primary maritime law enforcement agency. It oversees a diverse array of responsibilities including search and rescue; protecting the marine environment; securing vessels, ports, and waterways; and supporting the free flow of \$5.4 trillion of goods through the maritime transportation system.

Despite the critical role the Coast Guard plays in our national security, economy, and ensuring the safety of lives at sea, the Coast Guard is the second smallest branch in the military, and chronic divestment in the Coast Guard has forced them to do more with less. Unfortunately, this has resulted in deficiencies in the support and benefits offered to servicemembers and their families, including in housing, healthcare, and childcare. We must do more to improve the lives of these hard-working individuals by providing the quality care they deserve.

Due to the nature of Coast Guard missions, Coast Guard stations are often based in coastal cities with higher-than-average coastal costs. For some, the basic allowance for housing is insufficient, and servicemembers are forced to either make up the difference of costly rent prices with their personal funds or commute unacceptable distances.

I have heard from many of my constituents that the basic allowance for housing has been insufficient to meet the high housing costs in the Central Coast of California. As a result, many have had to move to areas that can be over an hour commute. Most of the members stationed at United States Coast Guard Station Morro Bay are living outside the emergency 20-minute recall area because housing costs are too expensive for their basic allowance for housing. I am looking forward to learning more about how the Coast Guard can address the lack of affordable housing for Coasties and their families.

It also has come to my attention that much of the military-provided housing is in dire need of renovation. I would like to hear more about the Coast Guard's plans to address these shortcomings.

Additionally, I am very interested in how to improve healthcare access for Coast Guard personnel. Some Coast Guard stations are located in remote areas, some of which I have visited, with extremely limited access to basic healthcare services like dental or general practitioners. The Coast Guard's role in law enforcement and first response requires considerable mental and physical resilience. I am concerned that the Service only has 20 mental health professionals and is understaffed in its medical clinics and sickbays.

The search-and-rescue mission places a heavy toll on the mental health of servicemembers, who often face traumatic experiences. One study showed that servicemembers with depression or PTSD were nearly 25 percent more likely to leave the Service. In order to sufficiently fulfill their duties in the Coast Guard, servicemembers must be able to access medical services to care for their own physical and mental health.

Similarly, access to childcare is crucial for long-term retention of personnel and quality of life for both servicemembers and their families. Providing adequate childcare is especially important in retaining female personnel, who face unique barriers to promotional opportunities.

Recruiting and retaining personnel is imperative for the success of the Coast Guard, as it is in all branches of the military. I am interested to hear about the Coast Guard's plans to recruit and retain personnel, with a particular focus on diversity and inclusion, in the coming years.

Despite the Coast Guard's efforts to improve representation of women and minorities within its workforce, the Service still struggles to reflect the demographics of the Nation, and it is the least diverse branch of the military. We must build on the efforts being made to recruit and retain diverse personnel, as well as ensure that these demographics are representative in leadership roles.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Coast Guard adapted by offering increased flexibility and remote work options. Many employees continue to want this flexibility moving forward, and it will be important to carefully consider how to recruit and retain diverse personnel in a modern work environment.

Lastly, I want to highlight the great strides the Service has made in sexual assault and sexual harassment response, partly due to the insistence of Congress. However, this continues to be a pervasive problem. The annual sexual assault report from the Coast Guard was due over 6 months ago. We must hold the Coast Guard accountable, and I look forward to receiving this report in the near future.

Servicemembers have always been at the core of the Service, and without them, mission success would not be possible. I look forward to hearing from Admiral Fagan about how we can best support personnel to strengthen our Coast Guard.

[Mr. Carbajal's prepared statement follows:]

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**Prepared Statement of Hon. Salud O. Carbajal, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, and Chair, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation**

Good morning, and welcome to today's hearing on "Enhancing Personnel Resources to Support a Stronger, More Resilient Coast Guard". Today, we are joined by Admiral Linda Fagan, the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, who will provide insight on the state of the Coast Guard workforce, areas where more resources should be targeted for the benefit of its personnel, and challenges that exist in a time of shifting workforce dynamics.

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Servicemembers have always been at the core of the Service and without them mission success would not be possible. I look forward to hearing from Admiral Fagan about how we can best support personnel to strengthen our Coast Guard.

Mr. CARBAJAL. I ask unanimous consent to insert a statement from the Government Accountability Office into the hearing record.

Without objection.

[The information follows:]



**“Coast Guard: Increasing Mission Demands Highlight Importance of Assessing Its Workforce Needs,” Statement of Heather MacLeod, Acting Director, Homeland Security and Justice, U.S. Government Accountability Office, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Salud O. Carbajal**

The 23-page statement is retained in committee files and is available online at <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-106135.pdf>.

Mr. CARBAJAL. And now I will call on the ranking member of the subcommittee, Ranking Member Gibbs, for an opening statement.

Mr. GIBBS. Thank you, Chairman Carbajal.

Admiral Fagan, it is a pleasure to have you here today for your first testimony before the subcommittee as Commandant. Congratulations. I know you earned it, for sure.

Much progress has been made, as you are first female Service Chief. However, I believe you are also the first Commandant with primarily a marine safety background, or at least the first such Commandant in a long time. I look forward to working with you to bring more attention to the Coast Guard’s marine safety programs, which have gotten less attention over the last 15 years as attention has been focused on the crucially important recapitalization of the Service’s oceangoing and air assets.

In 2008, the Coast Guard undertook a structural reorganization called modernization. It established the Deputy Commandant positions for mission support and operations; logistics centers for ships, IT, and personnel; and sectors and bases. Unfortunately, the follow-on Coast Guard-wide manpower requirement analyses and determinations that were to complete the modernization process have lagged substantially behind the structural changes. I hope to hear today what actions, as the new Commandant, you plan to take to complete these analyses and determinations.

I am also interested in what progress is being made on assuring that members of the Coast Guard with ship operating experience are able to convert that experience to receive Coast Guard-issued mariner licenses as part of the Military to Mariner initiative. Given our current shortage of mariners for national defense sealift, we should encourage Coast Guard and Navy mariners to get licenses if they wish to do so.

Finally, I look forward to hearing whether the Coast Guard is having the same issues finding recruits that the other armed services are facing, and if the low unemployment rate is making it more difficult to retain servicemembers.

[Mr. Gibbs’ prepared statement follows:]

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**Prepared Statement of Hon. Bob Gibbs, a Representative in Congress from the State of Ohio, and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation**

Admiral Fagan, it is a pleasure to have you here for your first testimony before the Subcommittee as Commandant. Much progress has been made, as you are the first female Service chief. However, I believe you are also the first Commandant with primarily a marine safety background, or at least the first such Commandant in a long time. I look forward to working with you to bring more attention to the Coast Guard’s marine safety programs, which have gotten less attention over the last fifteen years as attention has been focused on the crucially important recapitalization of the Service’s ocean-going and air assets.

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Finally, I look forward to hearing whether the Coast Guard is having the same issues finding recruits that the other armed services are facing, and if the low unemployment rate is making it more difficult to retain service members.

Mr. GIBBS. Thank you, Chairman Carbajal. I look forward to the Commandant's testimony, and I yield back.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Representative Gibbs. Now I would like to recognize the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Mr. DeFazio.

Mr. DEFazio. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for this.

And Admiral Fagan, welcome to your first formal presentation. Congratulations, again. And I am really pleased to see that your intention is to make the workforce your highest priority.

And as the ranking member just mentioned, we have finally begun to invest in capitalization of assets that the Coast Guard needs. That has been quite a struggle, getting to the icebreakers and the other things. But we are still, obviously, in terms of our shoreside facilities, which impact your workforce dramatically, way, way, way behind. And that is something that Congress needs to do better in terms of finding funds for you.

I mean, it is great when I go visit stations and I see, oh, yes, the crew here just renovated the station themselves. I mean, I don't think, if you go on to a Marine—I was in the Air Force—or Army base that you find that the troops are doing that kind of work. They bring in contractors. So, I mean, I love the attitude of the Coast Guard, but we have really got to do better by that.

So, housing, issues about childcare, I am really going to be interested to hear how you are hoping to meet the recruiting challenges in this very difficult environment.

According to what staff wrote here, in a survey, only 9 percent of eligible young people in America are interested in service at this point in time, although I think the Coast Guard might be able to offer something different, if we can educate the young people about the opportunities for the Coast Guard. I am going to be very interested to hear about that.

And then there is the 2020 GAO report about manpower requirements determinations, and only a small portion of the workforce has been assessed. And that is problematic, because that means that we are really not quite sure what some of the needs are in some of the disciplines and elsewhere. It could lead to overloading people, which might push them toward deciding not to re-up, or early retirement if they are eligible, and other things.

So, I am really looking forward to your testimony. And in particular, I hope you will highlight what Congress could do better to help you deal with these issues. Thank you.

[Mr. DeFazio's prepared statement follows:]

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**Prepared Statement of Hon. Peter A. DeFazio, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon, and Chair, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

Thank you, Chairman Carbajal, for calling this very important hearing. First, I want to welcome Admiral Fagan for testifying today in her first formal appearance before this subcommittee in her new role as the Commandant of the Coast Guard. I was pleased to learn that the Coast Guard workforce is your highest priority as Commandant, and I'm looking forward to the discussion today on how we can best support those talented men and women.

The Coast Guard is essential to protecting our marine environment, supporting the free flow of goods in our economy, keeping illegal drugs off our streets, and investigating maritime pollution incidents. The American people are able to set sail on a leisure boat trip, purchase goods at a shopping mall or online, and swim in clean, unpolluted coastal waters because of the noble men and women in the Coast Guard who go to work every day sacrificing for our country. It's imperative that we support these military servicemembers who courageously serve the needs of the nation.

For such a small service, the Coast Guard produces incredible results. Last year, the Coast Guard confiscated nearly 453,000 pounds of illegal drugs having an approximate wholesale value of \$7.2 billion. That's more than half of the \$13.2 billion Congress appropriated to the Service for fiscal year 2022. Yet, those same Coast Guard servicemembers have a hard time finding affordable housing and quality care for their children.

While at sea conducting icebreaking missions, maintaining aids to maritime navigation, and boarding vessels for safety compliance checks, Coasties are separated from their loved ones ashore for long stretches of time. It does not help that the Service is stuck in the 1990s with limited internet access and an inability to effectively communicate with family and friends back home. They live, work, and receive child care services in deteriorating facilities far past their service life and are expected to achieve mission goals nonetheless. They face frequent, sometimes unwelcomed, assignment relocations which can disrupt family stability, their children's educational environments, and work routines, and inflict the chaos of a household move. We can do more to support our Coasties and Congress must ensure that the Coast Guard is receiving the resources needed to support a thriving workforce.

I am concerned with the agency's ability to recruit and retain diverse candidates in this fiercely competitive labor market. Interest in military service is at an all-time low; of all young Americans eligible to serve in the military, just nine percent indicated an interest in doing so according to a Defense Department survey. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a change in workforce dynamics, altering regular work patterns and habits, and inducing demands from the labor force for more flexibility. It is against this backdrop the Coast Guard aspires to recruit 4,200 enlisted personnel by the end of this fiscal year, now just a little over two months away. I'm curious to learn more about how the Coast Guard aims to compete for talented candidates in this difficult market and ways Congress can support those efforts.

The agency is currently operating with fewer workers than it needs which impacts its ability to meet mission demands. According to a 2020 GAO report, the Coast Guard had completed Manpower Requirements Determinations—its preferred workforce assessment method—for only two percent of its workforce. I find this very disturbing as without full consideration of workforce needs, the service cannot appropriately assign its resources to complete its missions. Moreover, units operating below necessary staffing levels will stress the physical and mental capacities of available staff. This problem becomes worse anytime someone in an already understaffed unit has to take extended medical leave or paternity leave. Coasties should be able to take their well-earned leave without feeling that they're overly burdening their shipmates.

Lastly, I want to highlight that first response is a core mission of the Coast Guard. As a life-saving service, its members witness first-hand unfortunate traumatic events sure to have an impact on their mental health. In order to bolster the

resiliency of servicemembers, Congress must ensure that appropriate mental health care, and health care in general, is available and accessible for each Coastie. I look forward to learning more about how the Coast Guard intends to provide the mental health support needed for its workforce.

Thank you, Admiral Fagan, for appearing today and I look forward to your testimony.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to now welcome the witness, Admiral Linda Fagan, the 27th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard.

Thank you for being here today, and I look forward to your testimony.

Without objection, our witness' full statement will be included in the record.

Since your written testimony has been made a part of the record, the subcommittee requests that you limit your oral testimony to 5 minutes.

Admiral Fagan, you may proceed.

**TESTIMONY OF ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN, COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD**

Admiral FAGAN. Good morning, Chairman Carbajal, Ranking Member Gibbs, distinguished members of the subcommittee, and thank you for accepting my written testimony into the record.

Thank you for the opportunity to describe my vision for the Coast Guard. And I would like to thank Congress for your enduring support of the United States Coast Guard workforce.

For nearly 232 years, the Coast Guard has provided safety, security, and economic prosperity for the American people. Our workforce lives and serves in communities along the Atlantic, gulf, Pacific, and Arctic coast, on the Great Lakes, and along our inland rivers. And we are trusted to perform essential missions. Our workforce is the heartbeat of the Coast Guard, and without them we cannot execute missions.

My highest priority as Commandant is to transform our talent management system, which has not significantly changed in 75 years, to better serve our people in the 21st century. We will deploy innovative practices to recruit people from across our great Nation who are service-oriented, have a high sense of purpose, and best represent every facet of our Nation's diversity.

And like the other armed services, the Coast Guard is facing a recruiting challenge as we compete for talent in a shrinking population of young people with a propensity for military service. We will overcome that challenge by highlighting the opportunity to do meaningful work every day in service to the American public.

Once a person has joined the Coast Guard, we will retain them by providing greater career flexibility and opportunities for geographic stability, eliminating policy barriers that make it difficult for some to continue to serve. Even more importantly, we will provide them and their family access to high-quality housing, healthcare, and childcare that they deserve.

Thank you to the support of Congress, we have tripled the number of Coast Guard children enrolled in our childcare subsidy programs. That allows our workforce to arrange childcare that works

for their individual family needs, where that means care either near their workplace or near their homes.

We have invested in the physical and mental wellness of our people. To address the unique medical needs of our crews at remote units, we have deployed mobile medical readiness teams that bring doctors and technicians directly to them. Our workforce at these remote units have benefited from significant increases in medical readiness without taking time away from duty to travel to distant medical providers.

We have also increased training for our independent duty corpsmen to enable them to better recognize and respond to patients' mental health needs. We are pursuing new agreements with Navy's Medical Education and Training Campus to include Coast Guard students in the Professional Behavioral Health Technician School, further enhancing our medical staff's ability to care for our workforce's mental health needs.

We continue to focus on diversity inclusion. Our leaders will provide our entire workforce a strong sense of belonging, so every individual is valued, safe, and able to deliver their best service to the Nation. The variable and unpredictable operational challenge our units and people encounter every day demand new thinking. An inclusive workforce with diverse experiences, perspectives, and ideas is better equipped to succeed.

Taking advantage of new technologies, we will improve our personnel data systems so we can make well-informed human resource decisions. Data and a modern ready learning system will enable our field leaders to provide the right training and professional development opportunities to every individual as they progress through their careers.

I am committed to pursuing transformational change in the way we recruit, retain, and support our workforce. It is our people who execute Coast Guard missions. As Commandant, I am humbled to have the responsibility for operating and advocating for the Service. I am committed to our workforce. I look forward to working with Congress as we navigate the Coast Guard into the future.

Chairman Carbajal, Ranking Member Gibbs, distinguished Members, it is truly a privilege to appear before you today. I thank you for the opportunity, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[Admiral Fagan's prepared statement follows:]

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**Prepared Statement of Admiral Linda L. Fagan, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard**

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Carbajal, Ranking Member Gibbs, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and thank you for your enduring support of the United States Coast Guard. I am humbled and grateful for the confidence and trust of President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, and Congress.

I welcome this opportunity to share with you my vision for the Service, which is responsive to the changing world and includes three tenets: Transform our Total Workforce, Sharpen Our Competitive Edge, and Advance Our Mission Excellence.

The Coast Guard workforce is my highest priority. Without our workforce, we cannot operate or maintain our cutters, boats, and aircraft, or uphold standards for commercial vessel safety and pollution prevention. I am committed to providing our

people innovative tools, inclusive policies, trustworthy technology, modernized training, and exceptional support to meet the demands of today and tomorrow.

#### CHALLENGES

Talent management is critically important for the Coast Guard today, as it is for all organizations. Our current personnel system has not changed significantly in 75 years. People serving in the military today have different expectations for their professional lives, and we must adjust the way we recruit, train, and retain our people to continue to be an employer of choice.

The Coast Guard, like the other armed services, is facing a recruiting challenge. Today, fewer young people are qualified and interested in military service than in the past. Additionally, COVID-19 affected the Coast Guard's ability to conduct in-person recruiting, weakening historical community partnerships. Our Service is now competing for talent in a post-pandemic job market with historically low unemployment rates, where even entry-level jobs offer benefits similar to the military, including signing bonuses, referral bonuses, 401K retirement plans, and medical benefits.

In response, we must transform our personnel processes, policies, and practices to recruit and retain the Coast Guard workforce that our Nation requires. Our Ready Workforce 2030 (RW30) strategic outlook focuses on creating a system with the ability to generate the force we need, when and where we need it. The RW30 initiatives are more than aspirational; we are taking action.

#### TRANSFORM TALENT MANAGEMENT

The world's most capable and talented Coast Guard has over 57,000 active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel, supported by 21,000 Auxiliary volunteers. To grow and retain our workforce, we are transforming our talent management to create opportunities for flexible assignments, advancements, workplaces, and careers. These policy changes will enable our people to serve our Nation to their best potential.

The Coast Guard is committed to representing the best of our Nation's diverse talent, and providing an inclusive environment for all who serve. The Coast Guard's Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), published in June 2020, is a call to action for our entire workforce. It helps our people identify and mitigate biases, work together to nurture a sense of shared belonging, and continue to improve the culture of our Service. Since the release of the DIAP, the Coast Guard developed a cadre of trained Change Agents; formed the Commandant's Inclusive Leadership, Excellence, and Diversity Council (ILEAD); created a senior leader position for a Strategic Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion; and strengthened our ties to affinity groups to bring employees together and foster cohesion in the workplace.

We have enlisted the assistance of experts from outside our organization to look at the challenges faced by women and other minority groups and develop strong solutions. Acting on those recommendations, we have implemented several workforce initiatives to improve equitable outcomes for women and underrepresented minorities, including revised uniform, tattoo, and grooming standards; flexible assignment policies to better facilitate co-location of dual military families; and a revised body composition program.

Those improvements are already paying dividends for our workforce and mission execution. More women are remaining in our Service. Today there are 28% more women serving at the critically important mid-grade leadership ranks than there were in 2017. Furthermore, I am proud to share that the Coast Guard Academy class of 2026 is 43% female and 37% underrepresented minorities.

We are working to improve outcomes for all who serve. To help our enlisted workforce best plan and navigate their career paths, we recently launched an Enlisted Career Management Branch to provide personalized support as they develop their assignment, training, and education plans. Service members who can clearly see how their careers will progress to positions of greater responsibility are more engaged in their work and more likely to continue to serve. A similar team of advisors for our civilian workforce is also up and running, as we continue to imbue our civilian employees with broad and diverse skillsets to achieve mission success.

Our diverse workforce is the heartbeat of our Service, and we must ensure they are valued, respected, and rewarded for their hard work. Our people and their diverse talents, skills, and interests facilitate success across all missions.

#### HUMAN RESOURCE ANALYTICS AND MODERNIZED TRAINING SYSTEMS

A robust and flexible talent management system requires improved human resource analytics. In today's data-driven world, the Coast Guard requires better personnel data to support decisions at all levels. We are working to deploy well-gov-

erned systems and processes that integrate data to enable senior leaders to make well-informed strategic human resources decisions.

We will soon stand up the Office of Data and Analytics (OD&A) to provide secure and timely data integration to leverage data's full potential as a strategic asset. We are deploying platforms to enable easier access to data, including the new Coast Guard Official Military Personnel File, which will contain health records and pay documents for all Coast Guard military personnel. This work will provide us a better understanding of our workforce, and allow us to better plan for the future, efficiently deploy resources, and optimize mission management.

Coast Guard mission excellence depends on a technically skilled workforce and experienced leadership. Our system of performance-based training is effective, but to maintain our competitive edge, the Coast Guard must modernize our training delivery to be more agile. Rapid changes in technology and new mission demands require even experienced operators to receive regular skill upgrades. We are deploying training programs tailored to the skills, experience, and needs of each individual to enable our workforce to rapidly reskill and keep pace with a fast-changing operational landscape.

We have already revised initial technical training for our enlisted workforce to offer each student a customized curriculum based on skills and experience they already have. We also implemented a mentoring program that utilizes state of the art software to match mentors and mentees, providing our entire workforce the ability to connect with more experienced people who may guide their development. Strong mentoring relationships contribute to mission excellence and improved retention.

A better-informed talent management system with efficient training will provide our workforce exactly what they need to accomplish their missions in a changing world.

#### PROVIDE WORLD CLASS MEMBER SUPPORT

As one of the six Armed Forces of the United States, the Nation's lead maritime enforcement agency, and a maritime safety regulatory agency, our dedicated Coast Guard workforce is on the front lines every day protecting our Nation's maritime domain from constantly evolving threats. We must provide housing, healthcare, and childcare to ensure they can focus fully their demanding missions.

The Coast Guard has enhanced our workforce's quality of life through improved support programs. We have modified assignment policies to better facilitate the collocation of dual military families, expanded our parental leave policy, and created a program to enable Coast Guard Reservists to backfill for active duty members on prenatal, maternity, convalescent, and primary caregiver leave. All of these programs make service easier for those who want to serve the Nation, but also serve their families.

We continue to improve healthcare service and access to care for our workforce and their families. We are currently expanding access to telehealth services, online appointment scheduling, and electronic health records, and improving access to key health services such as dental care, physical therapy, and behavioral health services.

We are prioritizing family support by expanding access to childcare options, expanding professional development opportunities to include free LinkedIn subscriptions and assistance to spouses desiring to participate in fellowships with civilian employers. We offer expanded Work-Life services to our families and our global network of ombudsmen—who serve as the critical communications link between commands and families—as part of our robust support system for families. The Coast Guard is grateful that since 2019, Congress has provided additional funding for our childcare subsidy program, expanding the program to more of our workforce, and providing targeted financial relief to those living in high-cost childcare areas. This support allows the Coast Guard's active duty workforce to overcome the challenge of balancing military service and their family life. I want to emphasize my commitment to the entirety of 'Team Coast Guard.' Our families are essential to mission success.

Programs that help our workforce pursue off duty education are more important than ever before. We recently increased the amount of tuition assistance available to uniformed members, and we are looking for ways to expand educational benefits to our civilian employees for the first time in 10 years. Reflecting the increased permeability of modern careers, the Coast Guard's Credentialing Opportunities Online (CG COOL) program helps our workforce earn professional credentials based on their Coast Guard experience. As members prepare to transition, they can now spend their last six months training with a civilian business while remaining on active duty. The Skillbridge program's on-the-job training and internships often lead

to full-time positions, and help our members translate their military skills to success in the civilian workforce. The ability to translate Coast Guard experience to the civilian workforce makes service more attractive to potential recruits.

The Service remains steadfast in providing and expanding key support, advocacy, and recovery services for victims of military sexual trauma and incidents of hate or harassment. We recently expanded access to Sexual Assault Prevention Response and Recovery (SAPRR) services to family members and former employees. Furthermore, the Coast Guard's Special Victims Counsel program provides legal representation to eligible individuals to help victims understand their rights and options through the military justice process. The Coast Guard is reforming its approach to prosecuting sexual assault, domestic violence, and related crimes under the Uniform Code of Military Justice in accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2022. Finally, the Service's Anti-Hate and Harassment Incident (AHHI) policy includes a process for investigations and helps commands to promote an environment free of bullying and harassment through transparency and accountability.

#### CONCLUSION

As we look to the future, we unite around a cohesive purpose: to lead our workforce to contribute to their greatest potential, and therefore achieve mission excellence in the service of this great Nation. The key support we provide to our people allows them to remain dedicated to their primary duties to protect the Homeland from all corners of the world, save those in peril, enhance our economic prosperity, protect our national resources, enhance resilience to severe weather, and strengthen the international rules-based order.

I look forward to working with Congress to establish ways for the Coast Guard to be more adaptive, connected, and supportive. With the continued support of the Administration and Congress, your Coast Guard will continue to live up to our motto—*Semper Paratus*—Always Ready.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Admiral Fagan. We will now move on to Member questions. Each Member will be recognized for 5 minutes, and I will start by recognizing Chairman DeFazio.

Mr. DEFazio. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Admiral. The issue of retention, do you have a clear idea of what you are going to do to help improve retention?

I mean, are you going to have longer rotations, or otherwise better accommodate people, and particularly people who might have children, in terms of where they are stationed?

Do you have enough flexibility with the force to do those sorts of things, or are you looking at those sorts of things?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. We are looking at any and all policies that we use right now with regard to how we manage the workforce.

I would highlight—and I will talk to some of the recruiting challenges. Retention is not a particular challenge for the organization right now. Once people are brought into the organization, we are able to retain them. But I am committed to making it easier for those who are serving to continue to serve. And so, any rigid assignment policy, move policies that makes that challenging for families to thrive and for our members to serve is part of the work that we have stepped off into as an organization. And I have a sense of urgency around this.

I do not believe we have got any authorities impediment to that. This is policy that we need to get after and update for our workforce.

Mr. DEFazio. So, retention isn't—at this point you don't think—you are managing to retain people?

Admiral FAGAN. We have—we are continuing to retain people at the historic high rates that we have retained people. And so, at this point I am not concerned about retention.

Mr. DEFAZIO. OK.

Admiral FAGAN. But I am very focused on recruiting.

Mr. DEFAZIO. All right. That is great.

Now, on the recruiting side, obviously, it is a huge challenge. What sort of innovative things are you looking at, or what kinds of outreach?

I mean, your goal was 4,200 this year, I think. How close are you to that?

Admiral FAGAN. So, we have surged resources into the recruiting mission space. We have hired an additional 15 recruiters.

We have reassigned people who were previously qualified as recruiters into a surge staff around recruiting. We have stood up an integrated team with a one-star in charge of it to bring the total capability of the organization to bear as we look at recruiting.

We are about 1,100 short, overall, in the nonrate workforce right now. And we are absolutely focused on bringing the recruiter capability to the people who have a mind to serve. And we are—again, a sense of urgency. We need to—we are working hard to improve those numbers now.

Mr. DEFAZIO. OK. And then how about the issues with childcare?

I mean, I know, nationwide, childcare is a problem now. I would assume that the Coast Guard is experiencing similar issues in terms of finding qualified childcare providers.

Admiral FAGAN. So, we really appreciate the support of Congress with regard to the childcare subsidies to allow increased flexibilities for our families. And so, whether it is subsidies, childcare centers, or other opportunities to provide flexibility and access for our families—and we continue to look for ways to ensure that Coast Guard members are able to access quality childcare that is affordable, so that they can focus on the mission that we ask of them.

Mr. DEFAZIO. OK. And then how about off-base housing stipends, or whatever—allowances, I guess we call them. How are we doing there?

I mean, even places like Coos Bay, Oregon, now, rents have run up extraordinarily. So, I mean, for those who choose to or have to live off base, how are we doing there?

Admiral FAGAN. So, we utilize the same system that the other military services use for determining BAH, basic allowance for housing.

There has been a significant, sort of, shift or disruption in the housing market in the United States writ large. And our servicemembers are certainly feeling that as they move to new duty stations. So, we continue to engage with DoD, and look forward to the opportunity of working with you and Congress on ways to reduce that lag time and ensure that our military families are able to access affordable, quality housing.

We do operate some of our own Coast Guard housing. We have got 2,600 housing units around the country, and seeking a sort of diverse access to housing, and whether it is the BAH rates or our own housing units, we again are working to remove that as a chal-

lenge for our families. But it has been a challenging transfer season.

Mr. DEFAZIO. OK. Thank you.

Thank you, Chair. My time has expired.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Chairman DeFazio. I will now recognize Mr. Gibbs.

Mr. GIBBS. Thank you, Chairman.

Talking about recruitment, retention, and everything, what requirements did the Coast Guard place on its members in regard to the COVID-19 vaccine?

Admiral FAGAN. So, the COVID-19 vaccine is a requirement for Coast Guard members. It is a general lawful order that has been—

Mr. GIBBS [interrupting]. OK. How many members were discharged because they did not receive the vaccine?

Admiral FAGAN. We have involuntarily discharged 107 members for failing to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Mr. GIBBS. OK. We have seen that the vaccine—and Dr. Fauci has concurred with this—that it didn't protect overly well from infection, but it does protect quite well against severe disease leading to hospitalization and death. Since this data has come to light, is the Coast Guard considering lifting the vaccine requirement, or is that over your head from the administration to do that?

Admiral FAGAN. I do not have the authority to lift the vaccine requirement.

Mr. GIBBS. OK.

Admiral FAGAN. Should that change, we welcome the opportunity to welcome back members that are in compliance with whatever the medical requirement is.

Mr. GIBBS. Has the vaccine requirement been an issue for recruitment? Has that come up much?

Admiral FAGAN. It is not an issue for recruitment.

Mr. GIBBS. OK. So, you haven't seen anything different, demographics from different States in the recruitment numbers?

Admiral FAGAN. No. And as we continue to recruit, all the recruits at Cape May are vaccinated. This is true for our other accession point, the Coast Guard Academy, as we onboarded that class recently. But everyone is vaccinated.

Mr. GIBBS. Good. On the southern border, have Coast Guard personnel been pulled from their normal duties to be placed at the southern border activities?

Admiral FAGAN. We have had Coast Guard personnel provided to the southwest border to support the efforts there. It has either been medical personnel to help with medical needs and processing, and then the other primary area that we are supporting at the southwest border is with our marine safety and security teams, the MSSTs, and as a riverine force to help provide additional presence on some of the waterways that are associated with—

Mr. GIBBS [interrupting]. So, it has been quite a few of the health professionals, medical, that have been deployed, you just said?

Admiral FAGAN. We have had our corpsmen deployed at the southwest border, yes.

Mr. GIBBS. Is that impacting your other activities from your regular duties? How has that impacted that?

Admiral FAGAN. So, it has had an impact on the corpsmen. We continue around our medical providers. We are, beyond the corpsmen, looking at ways to increase the capacity of medical providers, diversify that medical staff.

And then we are working to understand what our requirements are with regard particularly to the corpsmen, as the demand for their services, either at the southwest border or with our forward-deployed cutters, continues to increase. And we look forward to sharing that——

Mr. GIBBS [interrupting]. I am just curious. On the medical personnel, what percentage would you think have been pulled off to the border?

Admiral FAGAN. I can give you the exact numbers, sir. I don't have them offhand.

Mr. GIBBS. OK. We had the 2008 modernization structural changes that were made. Congress required the Coast Guard to produce a manpower requirements plan, and the plan was submitted in April 2018. It touted a force planning construct based on manpower requirements determinations.

According to the GAO, the Coast Guard had only made such determinations for about 6 percent of the 158 unit types by 2019. At that time, only 2 percent of the determinations were current. According to the GAO, the Service has completed an additional 26 determinations as of February this year.

What is the status of the force planning construct?

Admiral FAGAN. So, in preparing for coming today, I asked a number of questions of the organization in regard to where are we with force planning, manpower requirement assessments. And, frankly, I did not find the answer satisfying. We have work to do there.

In the fiscal year 2023 UPL you will see there is \$5 million that we have asked for in support. I don't believe we are adequately resourced now to do the critical work to understand our workforce requirements, and would welcome the opportunity to work with the committee so we have got the right structure in place to illuminate those workforce needs.

Mr. GIBBS. Yes, and I think also the reports to Congress, you were supposed to have a report to Congress earlier, and then you said it would be December of this year. What is the status of submitting that manpower requirements plan to Congress?

Admiral FAGAN. Yes, we continue to work to be responsive to that reporting requirement. And again, the process has not proven to be particularly satisfying or responsive to myself, and I know to the committee. And we look forward to continuing to work to be responsive in that regard.

Mr. GIBBS. OK, because I think that Congress asked for it, they should get that.

I will yield back. I am out of time now. Thank you.

Thank you.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Gibbs. I will now recognize myself.

During my tour of the United States Coast Guard Station Golden Gate, I learned about the incredible bravery Coasties stationed there demonstrate as they perform rescue missions all around the bay area, including rescues of individuals who jump from the Golden Gate Bridge in an attempt to take their lives. These Coasties respond to such calls with great compassion and urgency, treating every call as a rescue and not a recovery, the latter of which is unfortunately the most common outcome.

I listened as these Coasties spoke to the emotional and mental toll these missions take on them. Thankfully, because of the intensity of the rescue missions, the Coast Guard recently assigned a dedicated mental health specialist to Station Golden Gate.

The Coast Guard currently only has 20 mental health specialists. Understanding the importance of mental health and wellness in the world of first responders, how can the Coast Guard build out a similar program at its other locations where the mission has an acute impact on the mental health of its workforce?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you, Chairman. Obviously, mental health is a growing and increasing concern across the force, across society. Specific to Station Golden Gate, that independent duty corpsman does go and attend. It is a Navy school that helps provide them the training in mental healthcare.

I am pleased to tell you that we are very close to finalizing an agreement with the Navy that will provide access to that school for an additional 13 corpsmen a year. And so, we are working to increase access to that training, so that we can field it across the Coast Guard in a way that is responsive to the mental health needs of our workforce.

And we are investing in hiring mental health professionals, as well. This is a growing need, and we are moving to be supportive of our workforce in that regard. Thank you.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. In the Coast Guard, the life of a cutterman can be difficult. They can feel incredibly distant and isolated from their loved ones, while out at sea. Being able to connect via video calls like FaceTime or Zoom with family and friends can be a huge morale booster and lead to improved productivity.

Furthermore, having access to reliable internet so that a member can take an online course or attend to personal affairs can improve retention in the Service, overall, but especially in the afloat community.

With these concerns in mind, what, if any, technological improvements are being incorporated in the buildout of the new surface fleet—specifically, the National Security Cutters and Offshore Patrol Cutters—that will improve connectivity on these vessels while underway?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you, Chairman. We have made great progress as an organization with regard to connectivity, particularly bandwidth access. Starting initially, just a critical need to communicate with the ships at sea, as more applications and systems go online, initial focus was absolutely on the operational necessity around increasing connectivity and bandwidth, training, and other systems online.

So, we continue to move to improve connection speeds, connection bandwidth in further geographic areas, as well. So, it is an oper-

ational readiness issue, and as you correctly highlighted, is a quality-of-life issue for our members. And we remain committed to improving that experience, so that the folks that go to sea have an enjoyable experience and are able to continue to communicate with their families.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. In a recent visit to Base Kodiak, Alaska, I learned about several challenges facing Coasties living there. For example, the Coast Guard will pay for the cost associated with shipping one vehicle when servicemembers are transferred. But it is often necessary for a family to have two vehicles. And in Kodiak, there are no car dealerships.

Further, I have come to learn that, even when a cost of living allowance is allotted to these servicemembers, their household budgets are insufficient to meet the high energy, internet, and childcare costs.

What is the Coast Guard doing to assist struggling Coasties and their families living in Alaska?

And how can Congress support your efforts?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. We follow the joint travel requirements for vehicle shipping overseas. And we will continue to look for opportunities to work with you to ensure that our members are able to seamlessly transfer to remote locations like Alaska. And we will welcome opportunities to continue to ensure that we have got the entitlements and benefits appropriate to our families, so they don't have to worry about indebtedness after we ask them to move. Thank you.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you.

We will now move on, and I recognize Representative Weber.

[Pause.]

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Weber?

We will move on to Representative Malliotakis.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Good morning. Thank you very much, Admiral. Congratulations on your success. And we are so happy to have a female leading the Coast Guard. And I just wanted to talk to you briefly about the cost of living as it pertains to New York, in particular.

My district is home for Coast Guard Sector New York.

[Technical malfunction.]

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Sorry, I think I lost—my district is home to Coast Guard Sector New York. And as such, obviously, they are experiencing issues with retention due to cost of living.

So, you did talk briefly in general about the cost of living issues throughout the country. I wanted to know what your thoughts were in particular as it relates to New York City.

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. I am very familiar with the location there on Staten Island and the men and women serving at Sector New York. I was a former captain of the port and know from that time that housing, the need for first-month/last-month rent and security deposits also stresses families beyond just the overall cost of housing. And we welcome the opportunity to look for ways to ease any of those additional requirements that may be imposed locally.

But cost of living and affordable housing is certainly acute for our workforce in large metropolitan areas and remote locations. We

continue to look for ways to ease that burden on families. Thank you.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. And additionally, we have a housing project that is expected for Staten Island. I am sure you are aware also that some of the housing was destroyed in a fire. That funding has been allocated a couple of years ago, actually. We were able to get some supplemental housing funding to make these repairs and modernization to—also, again, for retention, to make sure the Coast Guard's Coasties live in the environment that they should, have the quality of life that they deserve.

Admiral Schultz, at the last hearing, was unable to provide me with a timeline of when they thought construction would begin. I am hoping that you can do so today or, at minimum, make a commitment that you can get that answer and timeline to my office, so I can communicate that with those that I represent.

Admiral FAGAN. Yes, thank you. And no, I am happy to provide an update. Obviously, we are funded for phase 1 of—that project was fully funded in 2021, and we will break ground in 2024 for phase 1 of that project.

Phase 2 also continues, and it was funded in fiscal year 2022, and we are continuing to work with Congress to ensure that we have got funding for phase 3, and that we recapitalize those critical housing units there on Staten Island.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Well, I am happy to help you to advocate for that funding. I was happy to work this last year to deliver for the phase 2. If there is anything we can do to move that timeline up, because 2024 is obviously quite some time. This was 2 years ago that this occurred, so, we are talking about a 4-year wait period for our Coast Guard to get those housing repairs done. So, I look forward to speaking with you at another time, and I hope we can work together to try to move that timeline up.

Thank you for your service.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. I will now recognize Representative Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thank you, Chair.

Commandant, welcome to the committee, and I wanted to ask a question first about the relationship between retention and recruiting.

You mentioned that retention is still at record highs, or—I forgot the term you used, but still, a RAND Corporation study found that, over time, among the grades, especially among representation of racial ethnic minority groups, falls over time. And I am wondering what the relationship between trying to keep those retention numbers up can ease recruiting on the front end.

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. So, firstly, the good news story. We just onboarded the class of 2026 at the Coast Guard Academy. It is the most diverse class that we have onboarded as an organization. It was nearly 43 percent women and 38 percent underrepresented minority males.

The challenge now is, as those group of young officers come forward, ensuring that we have eliminated barriers for them to continue to serve, so that we retain particularly women and underrepresented minority males at similar retention rates to their majority male counterparts.

I mean, we have been working on this for some time now, starting with Admiral Schultz and before him. And so, some of the changes that we made 5 years ago as a result of the URM study from RAND and the women's retention study, changes that were implemented have—again, over the last 5 years, a 28-percent increase in retention, particularly women at the E-6/E-7 level.

At the O-4 level it is 375 additional women that we have retained as a result of some of that policy change, and we are going to continue to look at opportunities to improve those retention numbers and ensure that the diversity we bring in upfront is still with us as we approach a 20-year plan.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Does that help ease at all the recruiting challenge that you have?

Admiral FAGAN. So, the recruiting challenge, this is just—this is the, basic—and it is primarily—it is an enlisted recruiting issue.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Right, right, yes.

Admiral FAGAN. About 75 to 80 percent of the force is enlisted. And so, bringing in a nonrate into Cape May so that we can then onward—get them into A school, get them their technical and proficiency and qualifications—they are related, but separate at this point. It is really just the competition for talent right now. And recruiting is a person-to-person intensive activity. And we have surged resources to start to address that.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Yes, thanks. I want to move to housing and the BAH, the basic housing allowance, understanding that there is a centralized process in the services for that.

What flexibility does the Coast Guard have to adjust basic housing allowance to accommodate housing increases, especially, as we have noted, all of our areas, including the Pacific Northwest, have seen housing costs, both for single family homes as well as multi-family apartment rents, increase unlike we have seen probably in the last 30 years?

Admiral FAGAN. Yes, I would welcome the opportunity to work with the committee and Congress on finding ways to, again, eliminate the lag in the system that we have got right now and increase flexibility to ensure that we are meeting needs of families.

When you look across just the housing sector writ large in the country, it has been a particularly challenging, challenging time. It is challenging to find homes to rent. It is expensive to find homes to buy. It is particularly acute in some of the remote and coastal communities where we live and work. And we would welcome the opportunity to work with you to improve—eliminate that lag time and improve our support to families.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. Thanks. Just to go a little local, I do want to recognize the great folks in Bellingham, the collocation at the Naval Station Everett of some of your Coast Guard assets. Good folks out in Port Angeles, not my district.

But then heading farther south, down to Seattle, the Port of Seattle recently approved the lease for, I think, a 6-year temporary lease for pier 46 to give the Coast Guard time to do its recapitalization there, where you are located, including the, I presume, basin dredging. But I think it is a 6-year lease.

I just want to, kind of, make sure we put the oar in the water on this committee as we look at that longer term project that you

have. And, kind of, the obvious question is, I hope 6 years is plenty of time for that recap to occur. Do you see any problems with that?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. We are—obviously, we have announced Polar Security Cutters will be homeported in Seattle. We have work to do to ensure that we have got the depth of water and facilities and pier space there. This is a longer term investment and need, and we would welcome the opportunity to provide a more detailed brief to you and your staff on what our needs will be in Seattle as we move forward with the Polar Security Cutters.

Mr. LARSEN OF WASHINGTON. That is great. I have talked to folks locally, and we can do that. I just want to be sure that we are tracking this over time, so that the timing of the lease matches the timing of the ability for you to get your work done, both in the water and pier-side, as well as for the buildings that need to get rebuilt and built.

Thanks, I yield back.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Larsen. Next I would like to recognize Mr. Weber—I don't know if he has come back.

[Pause.]

Mr. CARBAJAL. We will move on to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN OF MARYLAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank you for holding this hearing today. I also want to associate myself with your opening comments, Mr. Chairman.

And I would add that we also support our Coasties and their families when we protect them against threats, both external and internal, to the Service.

Admiral Fagan, let me say congratulations on your appointment to serve as Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. You have had a stellar, impeccable, admirable career in uniform. And I have complete confidence that you will provide the leadership that the Coast Guard needs at this moment.

One of my priorities on both this committee and on the House Armed Services Committee has been rooting out extremism in our military. I firmly believe that we have to ensure that our military has the appropriate tools and authorities to do just that.

Last year, I asked Commandant Schultz about extremism in the Coast Guard during the budget hearing, and he committed to accountability from the Coast Guard, but didn't give a definitive answer when it came to membership in a domestic extremist organization being cause for removal from the Coast Guard. And some things have changed, certainly at the DoD, regarding that.

My question for you is, Commandant Fagan, is it your understanding that membership in a domestic extremist organization should be cause for removal from the Coast Guard?

And if not, what would you consider to be cause for removal from the Coast Guard for someone who manifests an affiliation with an extremist organization?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. Extremism and hate behavior has no place in the Coast Guard. It is inconsistent with our core values and does not contribute to the kind of culture that we pride ourselves in, as an organization.

I am committed to eliminating extremism and hate behavior in the organization. Where we have had reports of that, we fully in-

investigate that activity and behavior using our Coast Guard investigative services. We have also recently updated some of our hate speech and activities behavior.

I remain committed to, where we have found substantiated evidence of hate activity and extremism, that we will ensure full accountability for those members.

I don't have specific numbers right now with regard to how many investigations we have done, but I have confidence in our system to ensure that activity that is inconsistent with our core values will not be tolerated within the organization.

Mr. BROWN OF MARYLAND. Thank you. Let me follow up. Does your confidence extend to the quality of counterdomestic extremism training that is currently required of your enlisted and officer personnel each year?

Admiral FAGAN. So, we have moved to require that training, and that also helps to ensure that, again, we are appropriately investigating and following through with those reports. And I remain committed to ensuring that that training is current, and that those who are required to access it are, so that we are fairly and transparently conducting investigations into, again, activity that is inconsistent with our core values.

Mr. BROWN OF MARYLAND. Thank you. Because some would say that we are spending too much time on counterextremism training in our services, and I couldn't disagree more with that opinion.

I have a statement. I was going to ask another question. I know I will run out of time. Perhaps you can follow up with a written response. A 2020 DHS inspector general report identified 16 allegations of race-based harassment involving cadets at the Coast Guard Academy. At the time, the IG found that Academy officials were aware of the incidents and had sufficient information to investigate and address the incidents, but failed to take action. So, if you could, respond to the committee in writing what is the Coast Guard doing to address racism at the Academy and foster an environment of inclusiveness.

My last 25 seconds, Mr. Chairman, it is sort of a personal, shameless request, Commandant Fagan. I wish I were there in person. Even if I were, I couldn't presume what our interaction would be like. This is my last year in Congress. I would hope to have earned a challenge coin from you. So, I hope that over the next few weeks we will find a time to get together, and maybe you will consider my service in Congress worthy enough where I can receive one of your challenge coins. And I actually make that request on a 30-year veteran of the Coast Guard, a good friend who I served with in the Army, and then finished her career in the Coast Guard. So, hopefully I can do her that favor.

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you, Congressman. I welcome the opportunity to find you and give you a challenge coin and thank you for your service.

Mr. BROWN OF MARYLAND. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Brown. Just a reminder. To get that service coin, you have got to be in person.

[Laughter.]

Mr. CARBAJAL. So, I'm hoping you'll come to the next hearing.

Mr. BROWN OF MARYLAND. Mr. Chairman, I will meet with the Commandant wherever, whenever.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. Next I will recognize Mr. Weber.

Mr. WEBER OF TEXAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Mr. Brown, I will invite you to come to the gulf coast of Texas to Galveston, because I am going to invite the Commandant down there, and we want you to both come there and spend lots of money.

So, anyway, Commandant, or Admiral, good to see you. And we appreciate you being there. A couple of questions I have for you.

I think, with your exchange between Representative Gibbs, you said there were 105 involuntary discharges. Was that the number because of the refusal to take the vaccine?

Admiral FAGAN. It was 107 involuntary separations.

Mr. WEBER OF TEXAS. 107? OK. Have you been able to track the number of COVID infections, or those who contracted COVID in the Coast Guard during the same time period?

Admiral FAGAN. We have kept track of the number of COVID-positive infections, particularly early on in the pandemic. We were particularly focused on ensuring that we continued to have a ready force and meet our operational requirements, particularly as it pertained to large ships and other missions in our waterways.

I don't have the number offhand of what our current infection rate may be, but we continue to focus on ensuring that we have got a ready workforce, and that we are able to operate the Coast Guard for the American public.

Mr. WEBER OF TEXAS. If you don't mind, I would like to get that number from you at some point going forward, just as a comparative analysis.

In other words, how many did we let go, and how many actually in the guard contracted the actual virus? It would be interesting to know.

And then I do actually want to tell you about my Congressional District 14, which is the Texas gulf coast, starting at Louisiana's border and moving on down. We have got those first four counties that are Jefferson County, a tiny part of Chambers County, we have got all of Galveston County, and then the southern half of Brazoria County. We have got, actually, six ports——

[Technical malfunction.]

Mr. CARBAJAL. You froze, Mr. Weber.

Mr. WEBER OF TEXAS. I froze, my——

Mr. CARBAJAL [interrupting]. Yes, you are back.

Mr. WEBER OF TEXAS. OK. So, I don't know how much you heard, Mr. Chairman or Admiral Fagan, but——

Mr. CARBAJAL [interrupting]. If you could repeat it, that would be great.

Mr. WEBER OF TEXAS. OK.

Mr. CARBAJAL. We will give you an extra 30 seconds there.

Mr. WEBER OF TEXAS. Thank you. We have got six ports, more than any other Member of Congress, and we have got several Coast Guard facilities. And I would like to get you to come down to the district and maybe tour some of those.

My last living uncle, he is 90 years old, was a Coastie for either 2 or 4 years around the Korean War time. So, we love our Coasties, of course. We have facilities.

And maybe I should ask you, Admiral, where are you stationed?

Admiral FAGAN. So, I am currently stationed in Washington, DC, but I have done a tour of duty in New Orleans, I have been to Mobile, and I would certainly welcome the opportunity to visit some of our great units in Texas with you at a future opportunity.

Mr. WEBER OF TEXAS. Sure. Well, let's do that. I just want to say welcome. We are glad you are there. I appreciate your service, just like we appreciate my uncle's service, and appreciate all the Coasties' service.

And so, sometime maybe we can reach out to the office, and we can get you down into the district. We can get you some of the best seafood in the country, and we would love you to tour those facilities.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you very much, Mr. Weber. Next I will go to Representative Auchincloss.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Thank you, Chair.

Congratulations, Admiral, on your historic appointment.

Coast Guard mission excellence depends on a technically skilled workforce and experienced leadership, and those foundational characteristics are cultivated long before commissioning. In my first term, I focused much of my time on improving support and resources for student mental health, including the health of constituents and midshipmen at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

I have had the privilege to work with families at the Merchant Marine Academy in Massachusetts. Unfortunately, some of that work was to ensure that their children's careers would not be delayed because of the 2021 Sea Year pause following disturbing reports of abuse suffered by these student mariners. I appreciate that the Academy has worked to ensure that students affected by the pause won't have their graduation rates delayed while simultaneously enacting policies to protect current and future mariners.

What outreach is the Coast Guard doing to cultivate interest in merchant marine academies?

Admiral FAGAN. We obviously have a role in merchant mariner credentialing and licensing, and we work collaboratively with the other merchant service academies, whether they are State run or the Federal Academy at Kings Point, and remain committed to that team to ensure that we have got the right capacity to field mariners as a Nation. And we have got very rich and ongoing conversations with each of those maritime academies to ensure that that is occurring.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. These midshipmen graduate with a U.S. Coast Guard license. What are you doing to recruit talent and retain these midshipmen after they graduate?

Admiral FAGAN. So, again, our role is in credentialing those mariners. Each year, particularly from Kings Point, we will directly commission some of the Kings Point graduates into the Coast Guard, and just continue to collaborate and work with that Academy to ensure that the professional standards required for a license are met.

And again, just a great partnership that we have got with Kings Point, from an academic perspective.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Admiral, I also want to give you some time to comment on more broadly what—and I know you gave this some details in your opening statement, but what you are doing to recruit from a talent pool that has been diminished by the physical readiness of American youth and also by a tight labor market, which has historically always been challenging for military and Coast Guard recruitment.

In case you didn't get to some of the details you wanted to get to in your opening remarks, I want to give you the floor for these final 2 minutes.

Admiral FAGAN. No, thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to talk about our recruiting efforts.

As I have shared, the good news story is, it is not a retention issue. And so, we have increased our resourcing—additional recruiters, 15. We have taken folks that were previously qualified as recruiters and redirected them into the recruiting work, which is—I have got a sense of urgency around now. We need to begin to draw that talent pool in. We are fielding mobile applications and looking for every opportunity to speed the process from initial contact to actual arrival at Cape May as we work through the medical and physical readiness standpoint.

We find once people understand who we are, and they have a propensity to serve, they are very enthusiastic about the opportunity to join and stay in the Service. We are using all aspects of the organization to get after the recruiting challenge.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Understood. And I will close by saying I am a strong supporter of the Coast Guard. I have been regretful that I have not been able to support to date the U.S. Coast Guard authorization because of the amendment to it that impedes offshore wind development along the eastern seaboard and, indeed, throughout the United States. President Biden has an audacious, ambitious goal to hit 30 gigawatts of clean energy by 2030 from offshore wind. An amendment was added to the U.S. Coast Guard authorization that would derail those efforts, impede economic development and job creation and clean energy in my district, along with countless of other districts throughout the eastern seaboard. And I have just—I have had to fight against that shortsighted attempt to thwart clean energy development. But in no way should it be construed as opposition to the Coast Guard itself, of which I remain a strong supporter.

And I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Auchincloss. I will now recognize Representative Van Drew.

Dr. VAN DREW. Good morning, and thank you to the Coast Guard Commandant, Linda Fagan, for being here today, and for the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.

Before we go on, I have some remarks that I hadn't planned on saying, but just hearing the discussion that just ensued a couple of minutes ago: There are concerns about the wind turbines. There are concerns about the Coast Guard, and how it is going to be able to work in and around them. There are concerns with the ocean

floor, and what it is going to do to the environment. There are concerns with tourism, and how it is going to affect tourism itself. There are a great number of concerns about, you know, there is only going to be a certain number of years that these turbines are actually going to last, and then what is going to happen after that? There are concerns with the amount of money that these turbines are going to cost the taxpayers when they pay their utility bills.

This is a difficult issue, and it is a challenging issue. I think we assume too much when we assume that we should just go forward full speed ahead, and that this is a perfect answer. It is not. And there are certainly some issues that are very grave and very serious. The fishermen, large commercial fishermen in the area that bring in huge amounts of money and jobs and entrepreneurial endeavor, are very concerned about it, as well.

So, I just wanted to point that out because it is a real big deal, and not everybody is on the same page with this issue, which makes life fun for you, I guess.

Admiral Fagan, congratulations for your historic confirmation as Commandant. You have worked assignments across the world and in every part of the Coast Guard over your 37 years of service. It is hard to believe. You don't look it. Your confirmation is well deserved, and I can tell you have hit the ground running, and that we are proud of you.

Today's hearing is about enhancing personnel resources to support a stronger, more resilient Coast Guard. As a Representative of the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, I am deeply sympathetic to the personnel challenges facing the Coast Guard.

Foremost, I think it is important that the Coast Guard maintain a clear and a focused posture on its maritime safety and national security responsibilities. Adventures in social activism have set other armed services back in recruitment, and I hope the Coast Guard avoids such pitfalls. They are not necessary or beneficial.

To improve personnel recruitment and retention, we must support Coast Guard servicemembers from beginning to end, starting with the recruitment and training continuing through service, and even in retirement. We must support our servicemembers every step of the way.

I worked closely with the Coast Guard leadership to secure \$55 million in funding for phase 1, as you know, of the Training Center Cape May barracks recapitalization. This project will expand capacity and improve training quality at the Coast Guard's premier training facility, which is in Cape May. Our work at the training center is the foundation for the next generation of Coast Guard members.

Modernizing Training Center Cape May is a critical pillar of improving recruitment and retention in the Coast Guard at the front end. But we must do more to support the Coasties throughout all of their service. Congress must find solutions to the housing, healthcare, and family support challenges that face the Coast Guard. I hope to work with the Coast Guard to improve quality of life in all those areas.

Today my line of questioning will focus on housing affordability. The Coast Guard operates in coastal communities with a relatively higher cost of living. The Coast Guard does provide a cost of living

adjustment benefit, which is a taxable supplement allowance designed to offset higher prices in the highest cost location. This program is currently available to 6,000 servicemembers across the United States.

I have consistently heard from my Coasties stationed in my district that they struggle to find housing fully covered by their allowance. As you know, Cape May is a very expensive area. Some servicemembers live over an hour away from their station, due to a lack of affordable housing options. It seems that the current cost of living assistance program is possibly not meeting the needs of Coast Guard servicemembers.

Can you share any plans that you might have that the Coast Guard is working on to address the affordable housing within the Service?

What action might this committee take to address these growing concerns?

And again, because I know I am not going to have any time left, I am done speaking, and I yield back. But I am so proud of all of you. I am proud of the work you do. I am proud of what you represent. I am proud of the way that you handle yourselves.

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Representative Van Drew, you are out of time. I am going to let Admiral Fagan answer your question briefly. But if she wants to provide a more extensive response, I am going to ask her to do that in writing.

But you might want to shorten that preamble before your questions in the future, Mr. Van Drew.

With that, Admiral Fagan.

Dr. VAN DREW. I would have. I didn't know we were going to have that a little bit there, so, I am sorry.

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. And to be brief, I welcome the opportunity to work with you on the issue of housing and housing affordability. And while it is acute in Cape May, New Jersey, we are experiencing challenges around the country.

And I would just like to say thank you, we appreciate your enduring support, the enduring support of this committee. Cape May is the birthplace of the enlisted workforce, and we are excited to see the opportunity to begin updating and modernizing the buildings there at that training facility. So, thank you.

Dr. VAN DREW. Thank you.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Commandant. That concludes our hearing for today.

I would like to thank our witness for her testimony.

I ask unanimous consent that the record of today's hearing remain open until such time as our witness has provided answers to any questions that may be submitted to her in writing.

I also ask unanimous consent that the record remain open for 15 days for additional comment and information submitted by Members or the witness to be included in the record of today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:06 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

## SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

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**Prepared Statement of Hon. Sam Graves, a Representative in Congress  
from the State of Missouri, and Ranking Member, Committee on Trans-  
portation and Infrastructure**

Thank you, Chair Carbajal, and thank you to our witness, Admiral Fagan, for being here today.

Welcome to your first hearing before the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.

The Coast Guard completed a structural modernization in 2008 with the creation of a Deputy Commandant for Operations and a Deputy Commandant for Mission Support, as well as the movement to sectors and bases.

However, the enterprise-wide workforce planning necessary to truly complete a Service-wide modernization is, at best, in its infancy.

I look forward to hearing from the Commandant how she intends to close the long-term, persistent gap in making the required 'manpower requirements determinations' and keeping those determinations current.

Again, Commandant Fagan, welcome.

Thank you, Chair Carbajal. I yield back.



## APPENDIX

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QUESTIONS FROM HON. PETER A. DEFazio ON BEHALF OF HON. JOHN GARAMENDI TO  
ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN, COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD

*Question 1.* In December 2020, Congress enacted Mr. Garamendi's amendment to the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act as section 9503 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116–283) affirming that the application of the Constitution, laws, and civil and political jurisdiction of the United States to the Outer Continental Shelf also applies to non-mineral energy resources and exploring for, developing, producing, transporting, or transmitting such resources. Congress always intended U.S. law to apply to any form of exploration, development, production, transportation, and transmission of energy resources under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act of 1953. On January 25, 2021, President Biden's first executive order (no.14005) after assuming office directed federal agencies to maximize the use of American mariners, American-built ships, and U.S.-flagged vessels under the Jones Act. Less than 90 days later (March 25, 2021) U.S. Customs and Border Protection issued a revised headquarters ruling letter (HQ H317289) contradicting Mr. Garamendi's amendment and the President's policy, allowing foreign vessels to construct energy projects on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Commandant, I am deeply concerned that federal regulators like the Coast Guard have not yet updated your regulations and industry guidance to reflect the change Congress made to the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act when Mr. Garamendi's amendment was signed into law on January 1, 2021. What, if anything, are you doing to fully implement this change in the law?

*ANSWER.* The U.S. Coast Guard recognizes that Congress amended the jurisdictional provisions of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) to include non-mineral energy resource installations on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). Most Coast Guard authorities under OCSLA require implementing regulations. Current Coast Guard regulations related to "OCS Activities" (33 CFR Subchapter N) define that term as specific to the exploration, development, or production of "the minerals of the Outer Continental Shelf," and do not currently apply to non-mineral energy resources activities such as wind energy. The Coast Guard is continuing our review of Section 9503, and exploring potential options to implement the change in OCSLA. Any updates to these regulations will be announced on the Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions website, on the web at: <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaMain>

*Question 2.* The U.S. must have a robust maritime infrastructure. Not only is this a national security imperative but it provides good jobs to American workers. One of the pillars of the US maritime industry is the Jones Act. But for the Jones Act to have the desired effect, ensuring that there is American shipbuilding and crewing, it must be enforced. The Coast Guard plays a preeminent role in this enforcement.

What are you doing to ensure that the Jones Act is being enforced? How do you ensure that vessels have OCS Exemption Letters in compliance with the Jones Act? How are you using advances in data processing and analytics to support this enforcement?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard does not make final determinations as to whether a voyage or type of activity is in compliance with the Jones Act nor assess or adjudicate civil penalties for violations. The Coast Guard does, however, act in a support role and collaborates with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the lead Jones Act determination and enforcement agency, when assistance is requested.

In accordance with 46 U.S.C. § 12102, a vessel may engage in a trade only if the vessel has been issued a certificate of documentation (COD) with an endorsement for that trade. The Coast Guard makes determinations as to whether certain vessels are entitled to engage in a specified trade, such as a coastwise trade endorsement.

Under 46 C.F.R. Part 67, the National Vessel Documentation Center will issue eligible vessels a Certificate of Documentation (COD) after reviewing submitted documentation to determine eligibility for the requested COD endorsement(s). It is common practice for the Coast Guard to verify a vessel has the proper endorsement on the COD when conducting statutory inspections, examinations, and boardings.

OCS Exemption Letters are not required by the Jones Act. The Coast Guard enforces the manning requirements found in 43 U.S.C. § 1356 which require vessels to engaged in OCS activities be manned or crewed by citizens of the United States or aliens lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence, unless an exception ((§§ 1356(b) and (c)) applies. In some cases, an exemption may be granted upon demonstration to the Coast Guard of the unavailability to U.S. citizens. In other cases, the Coast Guard may, upon request, acknowledge that a foreign-flagged, foreign majority owned or controlled vessel is excepted from the manning requirements of 43 U.S.C. § 1356, commonly referred to as a Letter of Non-applicability (LOA), in accordance with 43 U.S.C. § 1356(c)(2). The LOA explicitly states that it does not authorize the vessel owner or operator to engage in Jones Act activity (i.e., coastwise trade).

The U.S. Coast Guard Data Strategy, 2021–2026, provides a strategic approach and guiding principles to maximize the value of data for all operations and mission support activities. Additionally, the Coast Guard’s Office of Data and Analytics supports enterprise analytic efforts across all data domains. At this time, the Coast Guard is not actively using advanced data processing and analytics to enforce alleged or potential Jones Act violations at sea. The Coast Guard has authority to support the enforcement of the Jones Act by using data transmitted from Automatic Identification Systems transponders (which are carried on board a vessel when it is operating in U.S. jurisdictional waters). This information could subsequently be provided to the lead agency upon request.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. SALUD O. CARBAJAL TO ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN,  
COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD

*Question 1.* In a recent study, GAO found that 28% of Coast Guard housing assets are past their service life. What are the Coast Guard’s plans to recapitalize its old and dilapidated housing units?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard owns approximately 2,600 active family housing units, with an average age of 47 years. The Service employs a nationwide housing strategy to prioritize investments based on the greatest need. In particular, areas that are remote or seasonal with limited availability of suitable community based housing. Currently the Service is making housing investments in Kodiak, AK; Fort Wadsworth, NY; Portage, MI; and Novato, CA. The Coast Guard Housing Fund is used to maintain housing units and add new capacity when appropriate. The Housing Fund, which receives proceeds from real property divestiture, can be quickly applied to the most urgent needs. Large recapitalization project needs are submitted through the Procurement, Construction, and Improvement Process for planning and budgeting.

*Question 2.a.* In February 2021, GAO reported that military families said they considered housing when choosing schools for their children. How does the Coast Guard assist families with housing decisions?

*ANSWER.* Coast Guard policy requires members in receipt of permanent change of station orders to contact the Coast Guard housing office at their new duty station to ensure they are aware of all housing options, including Coast Guard owned, Coast Guard leased, and the availability of community based housing. This early communication is critical to ensuring housing is available in time for member’s arrival and provides each member with as much information the service can provide to assist in personnel housing decisions. The majority of Coast Guard members reside in community based rental housing relying primarily on the private sector to meet the housing needs of our members. To assist in locating suitable housing, the Coast Guard manages a robust housing referral program in concert with U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). The Service also cost shares access to the HOMES.mil system which is a sanctioned referral database screened by military housing professionals. In locations where the private sector cannot accommodate Coast Guard housing requirements, generally remote and seasonal areas, the Coast Guard owns or leases housing for our members and their dependents.

*Question 2.b.* When applicable, how does the Coast Guard work with the other services to facilitate Coast Guard families in obtaining housing on DOD installations?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard works closely with the other Armed Services to ensure Coast Guard members have access to DoD housing. The Coast Guard and DoD enter into reimbursable interagency agreements to provide Coast Guard and DoD Service Members housing where needed and inventory permits. These agreements apply to both Coast Guard and DoD owned housing facilities. Coast Guard personnel also have access to privatized DoD housing. There are approximately 1,700 Coast Guard Members residing in DoD privatized housing across the country, including Alaska and Hawaii.

*Question 3.* As I'm sure you're aware, poor leadership can be a strong deterrent for reenlistment or continuation of military personnel. In some cases, it is cited as the most influential factor in a member's decision to separate from service. Poor leaders create a toxic command climate by failing to treat their people with dignity and respect, stifling open, honest communication, fostering an environment of fear and intimidation, and putting their personal interests ahead of taking care of their people. How is the Coast Guard addressing the issue of poor leadership? More specifically, what trainings, programs or protocols is the Coast Guard instituting to correct the behavior of bad leaders and stamp them out, and how are you ensuring that policy changes trickle down to leaders for more effective and consistent implementation of those policies?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard is addressing poor leadership through the development of a robust Leadership Development Continuum for both officers and enlisted members. In the summer of 2022, the Office of Leadership (CG-128) updated the Coast Guard's Leadership Development Framework that categorizes Leadership Competencies into areas of focus at each level of seniority, providing a clear training path of what the workforce should expect throughout their careers. Competencies in the Foundational "Leading Self" category are made available at accession points. Built upon that foundation, each of the four progressing leadership pillars represent the group of competencies each member will focus on during their career progression. Upon reaching the most senior-level pillar, Coast Guard members will be trained on and expected to have developed mastery in all 28 Leadership Competencies. The Coast Guard further requires "360" leadership assessment in our mid-grade and upper level leadership courses to ensure continued assessment and reinforcement of these policies. All military leaders are evaluated on leadership on at least an annual basis.

*Question 4.* All of the military branches except the Coast Guard offer student loan repayment assistance for qualifying education loans; the Air Force, Navy, and Army will pay up to \$65,000 and the Marine Corp. covers up to \$30,000 in assistance. How effective of a recruiting tool do you believe this type of incentive would be to aid the Coast Guard with recruiting and retaining servicemembers?

*ANSWER.* While this particular incentive is not currently offered for our enlisted members, the Coast Guard Recruiting Command (CGRC) is confident it would be an attractive offering to support recruiting efforts. As the percentage of high school students entering college continues to rise, the ability to provide funding for student loans to new recruits would be beneficial. The Coast Guard would need to seek additional resources in order to launch this initiative.

*Question 5.a.* I am pleased that the Service updated its policies last year on military transgender service such as making it easier for a transgender servicemember to submit a gender transition request. What other steps has the Coast Guard taken to embrace not only transgender servicemembers, but all others in the LGBTQ+ community, and tamp down on harassment and discriminatory practices aimed at making these servicemembers feel ostracized?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard does not tolerate harassment or discriminatory practices. Policy protections include prohibiting behaviors that target transgender service members and the LGBTQ+ community.

The Commandant annually issues policy statements to outline the expectations for the total workforce and these expectations are posted at all Coast Guard units. The Commandant's Equal Opportunity (EO) Policy Statement affirms the Coast Guard's support of equal opportunity, equal access, and a work environment free from unlawful discrimination, hate, and harassment. The Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy Statement avows a workplace free of discrimination and harassment, including gender bias. In addition, the policy outlines prohibitions on discrimination, harassment, bullying, and hazing.

The U.S. Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual, COMDTINST M5350.4E, sets forth policy and guidance for military EO and civilian Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs.

The Coast Guard employs standards outlined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, specifically Management Directive 110, to address discrimination and harassment complaints. The Coast Guard uses an EO process for military members, consistent with 29 CFR 1614, which mirrors the federal sector EEO complaint process that applies to civilian members. These structured processes enable the Service to maintain a model EEO program that ensures protection and equality based on multiple protected bases, including sex (i.e., gender identity, sexual orientation).

The Coast Guard's Anti-Harassment and Hate Incident (AHHI) policy and procedures, in effect since 2010, aim to combat prohibited harassment, including sexual orientation and gender-based harassment, and charges unit commanders to investigate and address any reported or observed harassing behaviors promptly.

The AHHI policy defines prohibited harassment as including, but not limited to, unwelcome verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment based on a protected status. Gender-based harassment is a form of prohibited harassment.

The Coast Guard has determined that the most effective way to curtail harassing behavior is to treat it as misconduct, even if it does not rise to the level of harassment actionable under civil rights laws and regulations. The Coast Guard maintains that even a single utterance of an ethnic, racial, sexual, or gender-based epithet that offends an employee is inappropriate and must be stopped.

To promote inclusion across the total workforce throughout the year, the Coast Guard highlights personnel of all backgrounds including LGBTQ+ service members on its internal and external communications channels. During the month of June in particular, Coast Guard units held Pride Month recognition events around the country. These events were also highlighted on Coast Guard internal and external communications channels.

*Question 5.b.* For transgender members who go underway, what is the Coast Guard's policy on the use of washroom facilities and sleeping quarters?

*ANSWER.* In accordance with the Coast Guard's Military Transgender Service Policy, COMDTINST M1000.13B, all members will use those berthing, bathroom, and shower facilities associated with the member's gender marker entered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) while on Coast Guard or DoD property, or in a Coast Guard or DoD leased space. Members must be considered and treated in accordance with the gender recorded in DEERS in all respects, unless the member has an approved exception to policy (ETP) granted by Commander. Members may request ETPs from any gender-based Coast Guard policy. The ETPs must have supporting justification, as well as assessment by the commanding officer/officer in charge, to include a specific implementation plan.

*Question 6.* In 2020 the Coast Guard released its Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for 2019–2023. As we are now more than halfway through this four-year action plan, can you advise where the Coast Guard is in carrying out the steps outlined in that plan? Are there any resources the Coast Guard is lacking that would help it fulfill the remaining action items from the Plan?

*ANSWER.* In June 2020, the Coast guard released its 2019–2023 Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. It consisted of three lines of effort (LOEs): 1) Development of D&I Acumen; 2) Strengthen Leadership and D&I Awareness and Accountability; and 3) Build and Maintain an Inclusive Workforce. Approximately 15 action steps were embedded within the LOE's. The status of each action is listed below. Furthermore, Coast Guard personnel validated that some actions are continuous in nature which is also indicated below. The Coast Guard is committed to continuously reviewing its policies and programs in pursuit of a more inclusive Coast Guard.

#### *LOE 1—Development of D&I Acumen*

*Action 1.1—*Complete the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) program level CG Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmark Audit, Assessment and Strategy to move the Coast Guard from a reactive organization to a progressive organization in D&I. (100 percent complete)

*Action 1.2—*Conduct a series of facilitated dialogues to build a common understanding of the Coast Guard Core Values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty, as seen through the eyes of the total workforce at all levels. (100 percent complete)

*Action 1.3—*Develop the Diversity and Inclusion Education and Awareness Program to equip participants with the coaching competencies to navigate sensitive situations involving all dimensions of diversity. (100 percent complete)

*Action 1.4—*Complete the Holistic Study & Analysis of Recruiting & Retention of Underrepresented Minorities. (100 percent complete)

*LOE 2—Strengthen Leadership D&I Awareness and Accountability*

*Action 2.1*—Enhance the Coast Guard’s Inclusive Leader Environment Index to assess organizational climate factors, inclusivity trends using data from the Organizational Assessment Survey and the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. (100 percent complete)

*Action 2.2*—Review the Leadership, Excellence and Diversity Council construct and assess the functionality. Implement changes to support this Action plan. (100 percent complete)

*Action 2.3*—Develop a “dashboard” of metrics to be reviewed annually with Senior Leadership as a component of the Personnel Readiness Briefs to the Commandant. (100 percent complete)

*Action 2.4*—Create a competency code for D&I. This OSMS-type code will adopt the Apprentice, Journeyman, and Expert model. Each progression requires a certain amount of professional engagements/training/continuing education to progress. (90 percent complete)

*Action 2.5*—Consistent dialogue of D&I concepts shall be a standard during speaking engagements, unit events, town halls and all-hands gatherings for leaders across the Coast Guard. (Continuous)

*LOE 3—Build and Maintain an Inclusive Total Workforce*

*Action 3.1*—Develop a comprehensive Outreach Plan to actively recruit a diverse workforce. (Continuous)

*Action 3.2*—Develop policies and procedures for the support of affinity groups. (100 percent complete)

*Action 3.3*—Execute a Coast Guard wide learning initiative at the unit level to discuss the importance of respect and inclusion in the Coast Guard Mission. (75 percent complete)

*Action 3.4*—Identify the root causes of recurring historical and/or institutional racial inequities and barriers to diversity and inclusion, and develop recommendations to improve the Coast Guard’s ability to better reflect the racial/ethnic/gender make-up of the United States. (Continuous)

*Action 3.5*—Develop a Coast Guard Mentoring Program framework to emphasize and focus on inclusive leadership for the total workforce. (100 percent complete)

*Action 3.6*—Conduct a holistic review of Leadership Development Center courses, Training Center Cape May and Coast Guard Academy training and education curricula to ensure D&I requirements are delivered and appropriately achieved in the training environment. (55 percent complete)

The Coast Guard’s Office of D&I is staffed with six civilian personnel (1 GS–15, 1 GS–14, 4 GS–13s) and six active-duty members (3 O5s, 1 LT, 1 CWO, and 1 E7). The growing requirements associated with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility at the national, department and component level, are quickly rendering the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as under-resourced. The Coast Guard will continue to support this effort through requesting for additional permanent resources through resource proposals.

*Question 7.* The Coast Guard’s CSPI program (College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative) is a great accession source for diverse candidates. In its report, “Improving the Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Among U.S. Coast Guard Active-Duty Members,” RAND recommends leveraging CSPI accessioned officers as a recruitment tool for strategic and targeted engagement with minority serving institutions. How was this recommendation received by the Coast Guard and are there steps being taken to build out this initiative as a source for recruiting underrepresented minorities?

*ANSWER.* The CGRC often deploys College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) ambassadors alongside Recruiters at outreach events. Specifically, CGRC involves CSPI alumni when engaging with their respective minority serving institutions (MSI) and allows them to support networking events and relationship-building within the MSI faculty, staff, and administration. For the upcoming academic year, CGRC has a CSPI outreach calendar that leverages a myriad of activities, such as Homecoming events, on many MSI campuses to enable ambassadors to connect with current students and share information on Coast Guard job opportunities.

*Question 8.* The Coast Guard removed identifying demographical information from its performance evaluation process for officers and enlisted personnel years ago. The intent was to preclude hidden biases from seeping into the promotion selection process by promotion boards while evaluating members, but it doesn’t account for any inherent biases held by the member’s rating chain who write and approve the performance evaluation. Are there any statistics available to illustrate how the removal

of demographical information has improved promotion rates for underrepresented minorities groups after it was implemented?

*ANSWER.* No statistics are available to illustrate how the removal of demographic information may have affected promotion and advancement rates. Coast Guard enlisted members did not compete for advancement through a paneled process prior to the removal of the demographic data fields from Enlisted Evaluation Reports in November 2018. While Coast Guard officers compete for promotion through paneled processes, the Coast Guard's Personnel Service Center is not aware of a time of when an officer's demographic information was a standard data field associated with the Officer Evaluation Report.

*Question 9.* How does the Coast Guard ensure that its senior leaders are trained on and publicizing Coast Guard child care programs available to families, so that families can take advantage of them?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard has 19 Family Resource Specialists and 5 Child Development Services Specialists that work for the 13 Work Life—Regional Practices. They are responsible for Command and unit trainings which address child development services available to commands and families. The Coast Guard child care fee assistance program is also included in the military child care neighborhood program on [militarychildcare.com](http://militarychildcare.com), which was recently marketed to the families through the Headquarters Program Office and Ombudsman District meetings (includes the Ombudsman and the District Commanders). Ombudsmen are the liaison between the families and commands, and they are trained on the child care programs available to families. In addition, the child care programs are marketed on [www.mycg.uscg.mil](http://www.mycg.uscg.mil) and offered through the Coast Guard Employee Assistance Program branded as CGSUPRT ([www.CGSUPRT.com](http://www.CGSUPRT.com)).

*Question 10.* How does the Coast Guard facilitate its families connecting with DOD school liaisons, where they are available, to assist the families in choosing the appropriate educational options for their children?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard has 19 Family Resource Specialists (FRS) dispersed across the country that provide support to families choosing education options for their children. The FRS refers the family to the school liaison, or contacts the school liaison for the family, when there is a DoD school liaison in the area or state where the family resides. Additionally, the Coast Guard trains unit Ombudsmen on available resources for families which includes information on the local DoD school liaison. Coast Guard families are included and supported by the Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children. The Coast Guard has a representative on DoD's Military Department Headquarters School Liaison Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission working group to stay abreast of education transition policies and elevate issues encountered by Coast Guard families to the Commission.

*Question 11.* How have the Coast Guard's missions evolved to meet 21st century threats and challenges, such as cybersecurity, climate change, and growing maritime trade?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard continually reviews new and emerging threats and identifies opportunities to enhance the way we provide maritime safety and security, protect resources, and respond to crises. Specifically, the Service seeks opportunities to coordinate and consolidate new and existing cybersecurity initiatives across mission areas. The Coast Guard recently published the 2021 Cyber Strategic Outlook (CSO), which charts the path to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving cyber domain. Key to the CSO are three LOE's: (1) Defend and Operate the Enterprise Mission Platform, (2) Protect the Marine Transportation System (MTS), and (3) Operate In and Through Cyberspace. The Coast Guard continues to operationalize MTS cyber risk management from the headquarters program level to the port level, including the incorporation of cybersecurity into the Service's prevention and response framework. Coast Guard Cyber Command's Maritime Cyber Readiness Branch, Cyber Protection Teams, and Cyber Mission Teams support the Coast Guard's mission by offering cybersecurity services to the Coast Guard and, by extension, the MTS, to prevent and respond to cyber threats. Further, the Coast Guard embedded civilian MTS Cyber Specialists at its districts and sectors to enhance cyber literacy of our units and liaise between the Coast Guard and industry partners.

Climate change places increased demands on Coast Guard mission execution. The lengthened boating season, climate-driven events, rising water levels, and the opening of the Arctic present evolving challenges as the Service works to ensure a safe and secure MTS. The Coast Guard is developing a strategic framework to strengthen climate resilience by embracing opportunities for action related to climate resil-

ience and actively incorporating climate change into new and revised policies, strategies, plans, and initiatives.

Our Nation's economic success hinges on our ability to maximize our waterways while preserving natural resources and maintaining safety and security. As demand for maritime commerce expands, our fundamental approach to these new threats and challenges remains the same. The Coast Guard will continue to strive to reduce casualties and improve service. Where able, we will pursue improvements to service delivery while also ensuring that we have sufficient data, analysis, technical capability, and capacity to keep pace with the growing demand.

Recognized as the U.S. maritime service with the most relatable mission profile to many nations' maritime forces, we work with domestic and international partners to promote maritime governance and the international rule of law. The Coast Guard works to enable likeminded partners to counter malign actors and activities, enable commerce, and elevate safety and environmental stewardship. The Service maintains many long established relationships and cooperates on a variety of maritime economic and national security challenges across the globe.

*Question 11.a.* How do these new threats and challenges affect other Coast Guard missions and how has the service identified the budgetary and workforce needs associated with these changes?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard continuously evaluates and balances mission priorities against risk. Across the Service, personnel and asset needs, are constantly evaluated to account for changing and/or increased missions demands.

*Question 11.b.* Does the Coast Guard have the data necessary to assess its workforce needs for evolving missions like these?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard has completed Manpower Requirements Analyses (MRA) and Manpower Requirements Determinations (MRD) for 31 percent of units and utilizes established staffing standards for another 33 percent. The continued completion of these studies is critical to ensuring the Coast Guard has the workforce it needs to meet these evolving missions. As the Coast Guard evolves to meet emerging threats and challenges, we are rapidly accelerating the development of new capabilities to collect, integrate, and analyze that data necessary to inform decision-making for workforce transformation.

*Question 12.* Aside from the marine inspector field, in what other ratings or specialties is the Coast Guard experiencing a critical shortage and what are you doing to address this concern?

*ANSWER.* The active duty enlisted workforce is experiencing critical shortages in the following ratings: Aviation Survival Technician (87 percent strength), Boat-swain's Mate (94 percent strength), Culinary Specialist (93 percent strength), Electronics Technician (95 percent strength), and Gunner's Mate (96 percent strength). The Coast Guard is addressing these critical shortages through monetary interventions (enlistment bonuses, critical skills training bonuses, retention bonuses) and non-monetary interventions (direct-to-A-school, Extended Active Duty contracts). These incentives are used by the Coast Guard to retain, recruit, and train service members in any ratings identified as critical.

The active duty commissioned officer workforce is experiencing critical shortages in the following officer specialties: Cyber, Legal, and Rotary-wing Aviators. The Coast Guard is addressing these critical shortages through non-monetary interventions (assignment preference and airframe transitions in exchange for obligated service for aviators) and monetary interventions (retention bonuses and incentive pay), which allow the Coast Guard to recruit, train, and retain service members in these critical specialties.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. SAM GRAVES TO ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN, COMMANDANT,  
U.S. COAST GUARD

*Question 1.* Admiral Fagan, one of the biggest ways we can support our service members and also aid in recruiting this younger generation is through ensuring that they have the tools and most innovative technology available. I recently became aware of exciting new litter basket stabilization tech which can drastically change the way the Coast Guard conducts search and rescue operations. Can you describe your commitment to getting new technology into the hands of our service members and how you plan to partner with our nation's small business innovators to help ensure new technology solutions, like the litter basket stabilization technology, are available to our nation's Coast Guard?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard is committed to ensuring our members have the tools they need to effectively complete Service missions. Through analysis of our mission requirements and current capabilities, the Coast Guard identifies new technologies

or capabilities that could boost mission effectiveness and following the appropriate acquisition policy and budgetary process, we acquire and field the new technology or equipment. The Coast Guard's Research and Development Center and Blue Technology Center of Expertise are also important partners in vendor outreach to identify and test emerging technologies to support the Service. The Coast Guard also has an Office of Small Business and Industry Liaison Program with the mission to maximize and expand small business inclusion, industry engagement, and business opportunities within Coast Guard's Contracting Enterprise.

*Question 2. Mission Requirements Determinations:* In 2008, the Coast Guard completed structural changes at the leadership and field levels as part of the Service's modernization, but has not undertaken Manpower Requirements Assessments, or made the Manpower Requirement Determinations based on those analyses to assure that the workforce is adequate and aligned with the updated structure.

In 2018, a decade after the modernization's structural changes were made, Congress required the Coast Guard to produce a Manpower Requirements Plan. That plan was submitted in April 2018 and the plan touted a Force Planning Construct based on Manpower Requirements Determinations. According to GAO, the Coast Guard had only made such determinations for 6% of the 158-unit types by 2019, and at that time, only 2% of such Determinations were current, i.e., having been made within the prior 5 years. According to GAO, the Service has completed an additional 26 determinations as of February 2022.

*Question 2.a. What is the status of the Force Planning Construct?*

*ANSWER.* The original Force Planning Construct (FPC) working group conducted a manpower estimation of the total workforce to meet the "Commandant's Strategic Intent 2015-2019," including steady state operations, major contingency operations, and heightened maritime security requirements. While the FPC process was insightful, the Service determined existing manpower requirements processes were better suited to meet the Coast Guard's needs.

*Question 2.a.i. Is the Force Planning Construct still the Coast Guard's proposed method for managing Service manpower needs?*

*Question 2.a.ii. If so, when will it be sufficiently populated with data to be useful?*

*ANSWER to 2.a.i. & 2.a.ii.* No. While the FPC process was insightful, the Coast Guard has determined existing manpower calculation processes such as Manpower Requirements Determinations and Analyses are better suited to meet the Service's needs.

*Question 2.b. What progress has the Coast Guard made since 2020 toward making manpower requirements determinations and keeping those determinations current?*

*ANSWER.* From 2020 through 2022, the Coast Guard completed 26 full or partial MRDs on Coast Guard units. The majority of the units never had any type of manpower study or model completed and were not a part of another staffing model.

*Question 2.b.i. At present, what percentage of the Coast Guard's 158-unit types have Manpower Requirements Determinations been made?*

*ANSWER.* As of August 2022, the Coast Guard has completed full or partial unit MRDs on 15 percent of Coast Guard units (126 units) and a full or partial MRA for an additional 16 percent (143 units) of the Service.

*Question 2.b.ii. What percentage of those Determinations or redeterminations have been made within the last 5 years?*

*ANSWER.* Within the last five years, 495 out of 882 units have had some sort of study or revalidation (Sector Staffing Model, Station Staffing Model, MRA, or MRD). Of those, 106 have been MRDs or Partial-unit MRDs.

*Question 2.c. What are the contributing factors that explain the Coast Guard's limited progress in assessing its workforce needs? What changes are being made to address workforce needs going forward?*

*ANSWER.* An under resourced Manpower Determination Branch combined with high active duty turnover in the Division (100 percent active duty turnover in 2022) limits throughput of studies and MRD production. Additionally, the recent high amount of acquisition programs that require manpower estimates reduces the ability to conduct legacy unit studies.

In 2021, the Coast Guard published its first ever MRD Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) Guide. The MRD TTP Guide is used to instruct new analysts, as well as standardize phases of analysis, algorithms used in analysis, and the required deliverables in the analysis process. By publishing the MRD TTP Guide, the Coast Guard has enabled program offices and contractors outside of the MRD enterprise to conduct manpower analyses while employing the standards used by trained

analysts. This effort helps ensure quality standards are met and increases efficiency in the MRD process.

*Question 2.d.* Since it has made limited progress in assessing workforce needs, how does the Coast Guard use the limited information it currently possesses to allocate personnel and resources?

*ANSWER.* While the Coast Guard has only completed MRA's and MRD's for a portion of the workforce (31 percent of units), the Service utilizes established staffing standards for another 33 percent of units. The Coast Guard also recently established an Office of Data and Analytics which is charged with making data more accessible across the Service to empower data-driven decision-making. It is anticipated that this information will be utilized in future workforce planning decisions for allocation of personnel and resources.

*Question 3. Staffing Models:* In addition to the manpower requirements process which bases its conclusions on mission needs requirements, the Coast Guard also uses the Sector Staffing Model, and the Activity-Based Staffing Model used for small boat stations. These two staffing models rely on historic activity levels rather than mission needs requirements.

*Question 3.a.* For units that have been assessed using both the historic activity-based staffing models and the mission needs-based manpower requirements model, has the Coast Guard compared the outcomes for similar units?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard prioritizes the use of MRA and MRD efforts on units with no previous model or study. Accordingly, most workforces with staffing models have not been studied using MRA or MRD processes. If a workforce (or part of a workforce) has an MRD completed, it is integrated into the staffing model.

*Question 3.a.i.* If so, have the outcomes from using the different models produced significantly different results?

*Question 3.a.ii.* If not, does the Coast Guard intend to conduct such comparisons?

*ANSWER to 3.a.i. & 3.a.ii.* Outcomes of the few comparisons completed yielded a difference of under 10 percent each.

*Question 3.b.* Are the staffing models being phased out in favor of the manpower requirements model?

*ANSWER.* After the Coast Guard completes studies on all units without any previous study or model, the Service intends to conduct the formal MRA and MRD on all units that have previously fallen under a staffing model.

*Question 4. Report to Congress:* In its February 2022 report, GAO recommended that the Coast Guard update its 2018 Manpower Requirements Plan to include time frames for how the service plans to reach its goal of completing manpower requirements analyses and determinations for all positions and units. In concurring with the recommendation, the Coast Guard stated it would submit its updated plan when it was next due to Congress, in fiscal year 2022. However, as of June 2022, the Coast Guard had not submitted the updated report and said it would not do so until December 2022.

*Question 4.a.* When does the Coast Guard now expect to submit the update Manpower Requirements Plan to Congress?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard is finalizing review of the 2022 Manpower Requirements Plan and intends to deliver the plan by the end of the calendar year.

*Question 4.b.* Why doesn't the Service plan to do so in fiscal year 2022, as required?

*ANSWER.* The review of the plan was delayed when the Coast Guard experienced 100 percent turnover of the active duty staff within the Manpower Determination Branch in the summer of 2022.

*Question 5. Request for New Positions:* Coast Guard's FY '23 budget submission included a request for about 1,200 new Operations & Sustainment positions.

*Question 5.a.* What analysis has the Coast Guard conducted to support its request for these additional personnel?

*Question 5.b.* What steps has the Coast Guard taken to ensure it has the right mix of skills for these positions?

*ANSWER to 5.a. & 5.b.* As part of the formulation of the Service's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget, Coast Guard leaders evaluated the overall need for operational personnel, ongoing recapitalization efforts, and the expanding global call for Coast Guard missions to best allocate all resources to the Nation's highest priorities. The billets requested in the Coast Guard's FY 2023 Budget submission directly support emerging operational needs, crew for new surface and aviation assets commencing operations, or personnel to facilitate on-going acquisitions for the Service's surface,

the Command, Control, Communication, Computer, Cyber, and Intelligence Service Center, shore infrastructure, and aviation programs.

*Question 6. RAND Report:* According to a RAND report from 2021, minority groups account for 32% at the O-2 level and 11% at the flag officer level, and for enlisted, 35% at the E-5 level, but only 18% at E-9.

*Question 6.a.* Have the disparities between the percentage of minority groups entering and reaching executive levels narrowed, widened, or remained relatively steady over the 5- and 10-year periods preceding the RAND report?

*ANSWER.* Over 5-years, the level of disparity between the percentage of minority-group individuals entering and reaching executive levels for officers has widened slightly and remained steady for enlisted.

Over 10-years the level of disparity between the percentage of minority-group individuals entering and reaching executive levels widened for officers and remained steady for enlisted.

*Question 6.b.* Are there similar disparities for the percentage of women entering the workforce versus those who make flag rank?

*ANSWER.* Yes.

*Question 6.b.i.* If so, has the trend with respect to women narrowed, widened, or remained relatively steady over the 5- and 10-year periods preceding the RAND report the Coast Guard?

*ANSWER.* Over 5-years the level of disparity between the percentage of women entering and reaching executive levels has remained steady for officers and narrowed slightly for enlisted.

Over 10-years the level of disparity between the percentage of women entering and reaching executive levels has remained steady for officers and widened slightly for enlisted.

The Coast Guard continues to improve representation across all ranks and paygrades. Although the Service is observing progress it is slow because of the time that it takes for personnel to advance through the promotion system after meeting minimum time in grade requirements. For example, an officer who was an O-2 in 2010 and promotes according to minimum time in grade requirements will not be flag officer promotion eligible until 2033. Similarly an E-5 level enlisted member in 2010 who advanced according to minimum time in grade requirements was not E-9 level advancement eligible until 2017.

*Question 6.c.* If the disparity between the percentage of women and minorities entering the Service and those reaching executive level leadership has remained unchanged over time, what are the structural hurdles preventing those groups from being as successful as other groups?

*ANSWER.* The RAND URM Study identified barriers to advancement and retention that include enlisted service-wide examinations, inequity in sea/operational time, input variables into the officer evaluation process, disciplinary actions, work-life balance, and poor leadership experiences.

*Question 6.c.i.* How can those barriers be lowered without lowering the ability of the Coast Guard to carry out its missions?

*ANSWER.* Additional analysis is required to fully understand the statistical relevance of the barriers identified by the 2021 RAND URM Study data. Nonetheless, the study delivered 40 recommendations for reducing barriers without eroding the Coast Guard's ability to accomplish its missions. The Coast Guard developed and implemented an action plan based on these 40 recommendations. These recommendations relate to:

- Leadership Accountability
- Data Enabled Talent Management
- Outreach and Recruiting
- Deliberate Development
- Inclusive Culture

*Question 7. Prevention Workforce:* One component of the Coast Guard's Strategic Plan (Objective 1.1.2) is to invest in and sustain the Prevention workforce.

*Question 7.a.* Please describe the Coast Guard's efforts to sustain its prevention workforce.

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard continues to pursue multiple LOE's to build capacity, modernize training, and retain talent as mission demands evolve and increase the need for more resources. Through annual appropriations, the Coast Guard continues to steadily expand its marine inspection, investigations, and waterways management workforce to meet emerging prevention activities in offshore wind, space, cybersecurity, and environmental protection. Advancements in virtual training expand

opportunities for workforce professional development and allow for continuous learning that is scalable and keeps pace with rapid technology changes outpacing the existing regulatory framework. Finally, the Coast Guard holistically re-evaluated its efforts to retain its highly skilled prevention professionals by creatively expanding monetary incentives for in-demand, difficult to fill positions, and updating policy to improve work-life balances such as increasing parental leave and expanding remote and telework opportunities.

*Question 7.b.* The Coast Guard's December 2020 Prevention Program Readiness Initiative Report FY2021–2026 stated that future workforce modeling needs to be forward leaning.

*Question 7.b.i.* Does the Coast Guard intend to use requirements-based, i.e. forward leaning workforce models, when configuring the structure of the future prevention workforce?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard Office of Workforce Forecasting and Analysis (CG-126), with support from the Research and Development Center (RDC), is constructing a modeling tool to analyze future workforce requirements.

*Question 7.b.ii.* When the Coast Guard prevention workforce is understaffed, the historic result has been ever greater reliance on the third-party non-profit organizations and private sector businesses.

*Question 7.b.ii.1.* Is the Coast Guard satisfied with that outcome? Does it pose inherent conflicts of interest when non-governmental groups undertake prevention activities?

*ANSWER.* Yes, the Coast Guard is satisfied with the overall function of third party organizations (TPO) as allowed by the Code of Federal Regulation. The use of recognized and third party organizations has been common practice in the domestic and international regulatory communities. The Coast Guard has focused resources that provide oversight on these delegated functions and processes to ensure regulatory compliance.

While some program decisions were driven by resource constraints, they also reduced the redundancies in the work carried out by the Coast Guard and Recognized Organizations (ROs).

This does not pose inherent conflicts. These ROs and TPOs are required to adhere to international instruments and national regulatory requirements. The delegated functions for each RO are captured in agreements.

*Question 7.c.* Marine inspectors: In 2012, after a one-time increase in appropriations, the number of marine inspectors at Coast Guard sectors reached a one time high of 75% of the number the Sector Staffing Model calls for in each sector. Since 2016, the number of marine inspectors at Coast Guard sectors has hovered just over 60% of the number the Sector Staffing Model calls for in each sector.

*Question 7.c.i.* How do the number of marine inspectors called for under the Sector Staffing model compare to the number that would be required under a Missions Requirements Determination?

*ANSWER.* The outcomes of an MRA produce an MRD. The marine inspection workforce has not received a formal MRA due to higher priorities in new acquisitions or workforces without staffing models. The Sector Staffing Model currently serves the marine inspection workforce as an operationally-focused alternative for a MRA.

*Question 7.c.ii.* Six of the nine industry stakeholders GAO interviewed stated that their firms have experienced delays because marine inspectors were not available in a timely manner. The Subcommittee has heard numerous complaints from industry about the lack of timely availability of marine inspectors.

*Question 7.c.ii.1.* What actions is the Coast Guard taking to increase the number of available marine inspectors?

**ANSWER.** The Coast Guard has notably increased its marine inspection workforce in recent years through strategic investments. The following table outlines the yearly increases in the Coast Guard’s marine inspection workforce since FY 2020.

FY	Workforce Type	Number of Billets Added
20 .....	Marine Inspectors .....	9
21 .....	Marine Inspectors .....	26
21 .....	Third Party Oversight Coordinators .....	19
22 .....	Marine Inspections Training Coordinators .....	21
22 .....	Marine Inspectors .....	12
23 (PRESBUD) .....	Marine Inspectors .....	14

**Question 7.c.ii.2.** Can inspectors remain actively certified to conduct marine inspection when they are serving in non-inspection billets?

**ANSWER.** Yes. Marine inspectors serving in non-inspection billets can remain actively certified if they maintain their annual certification requirements.

**Question 7.c.iii.** In January 2022, GAO recommended that the Coast Guard collect additional data on the marine inspection workforce and the maritime industry to better forecast future workforce needs. The Coast Guard concurred and “anticipates” having a preliminary analytic model complete by March 2024.

**Question 7.c.iii.1.** When it is available, will this model be used to inform Mission Requirement Analysis?

**ANSWER.** Yes. The Coast Guard’s Offices of Strategy and Human Resource Capability and Strategic Workforce Planning and Human Resource Analytics, with support from the Coast Guard’s RDC, is designing the modeling tool to analyze future workforce needs and inform the MRA.

**Question 7.c.iii.2.** When the Subcommittee asks in the FY ’25 Budget hearing, which should occur in March or April of 2024, whether the analytic model is complete and being used, will you be able to say that it is?

**ANSWER.** The Coast Guard anticipates completion of the analytical modeling tool within the last two fiscal quarters of 2024 per their established development timelines.

**Question 8. Health Clinic and Sickbay Staffing:** In February 2022, GAO found surge deployments for of health care staff had quadrupled between fiscal year 2018 and fiscal years fiscal year 2021.

**Question 8.a.** What is the cause or causes of these vastly increased surge deployments?

**Question 8.a.i.** DHS operations unrelated for base Coast Guard missions and duties such as land border immigration? COVID–19 screening at airports?

**Question 8.a.ii.** Operations related to Coast Guard missions such as hurricane response activity and illegal migration by water?

**ANSWER to 8.a.i. & 8.a.ii.** Deployment of Coast Guard health professionals has increased due to growing internal (in support of Coast Guard operations) and external (in support of U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or other department/agency operations) deployments. The demand for a global Coast Guard presence has increased, and cutters are being deployed further from home for longer periods of time. To protect the health and safety of crews, such deployments frequently require additional medical personnel. These personnel are surged from within the Service to support the highest operational need. External contingencies, including support for DHS operations and the COVID pandemic, have contributed to increased deployment requirements.

**Question 8.b.** As of February 2022, the Coast Guard had not completed a Mission Requirements Determination but agreed with GAO’s recommendation to make Manpower Requirements Determination for its health care clinic staff. The Coast Guard agreed to make the Determination by March 2022. That determination has not been made.

**Question 8.b.i.** When will the Coast Guard make its Determination with respect to health care clinic and sickbay staff?

**ANSWER.** In August, 2022, the Coast Guard completed a clinic services model and is currently moving forward with the MRD process. The MRD is expected to be completed in late 2022.

*Question 8.b.ii.* In making the healthcare clinic staff manpower requirements determination, what level of surge deployments will the manpower requirements analysis assume? 2018 levels? 2022 levels? A future projection?

*ANSWER.* The clinic staffing model considers historical deployment data from FY 2014 through 2021.

*Question 8.c.* GAO also found that Coast Guard did not have staffing standards to determine the levels and types of staff needed to meet the health care needs of the service.

*Question 8.c.i.* What is the status of development of health care staffing standards?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard is developing a staffing standard model related to healthcare, services which is expected to be complete in late 2022. Once the model is approved, the Service will utilize the model to project healthcare services need and begin to resource to those levels in future budget cycles.

*Question 8.c.ii.* How will the staffing standards inform the Manpower Requirements Analysis for clinics and sickbays?

*ANSWER.* The healthcare staffing model is being developed using standards and best practices informed by healthcare and manpower requirements analysis standards.

*Question 9. New Surface Assets:* The Coast Guard's top acquisition priority is 25 Offshore Patrol Cutters which will replace the Medium Endurance Cutters. The crew size reductions alleged in the replacement for the High Endurance Cutters to National Security Cutters (NCSs) largely did not occur and the Coast Guard is acquiring at least 11 and possibly 12 NCSs rather than 8 as planned. In addition, three new polar Security Cutters will be commissioned in the next decade.

How will the commissioning of these new assets affect the Coast Guard's workforce needs?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard expects the afloat workforce to grow by approximately 2,000 active duty personnel over the next 19 years to meet the needs of arriving assets. Providing support for the assets and Coast Guard workforce operating them is also vital to the continued success of Coast Guard missions. The Coast Guard requests personnel to ensure our crews have sufficient administration, support for medical care, family services, and work life staff.

*Question 10. Electronic Health Records:* What is the status of implementation of electronic health records for Coast Guard personnel?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard Electronic Health Record Acquisition has successfully deployed to 109 sites, or 99 percent of Coast Guard clinics and sickbays. The sole exception is the clinic at Detachment Borinquen, which remains on the Paper Health Record system until the Coast Guard completes a network upgrade on infrastructure servicing that clinic. This network upgrade is scheduled for completion by the first quarter of FY 2024.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. MIKE GALLAGHER TO ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN,  
COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD

*Question 1.* In a July 2020 Report to Congress, the USCG cites a prolonged construction schedule of nine years for a new heavy Great Lakes Icebreaker. The report also provided an accelerated 7-year timeline given Congressional direction. Would procurement law relief for the GLIB speed the vessels construction?

*ANSWER.* No. Procurement law relief for the Great Lakes Icebreaker would not reduce the construction timeline. The July 2020 Report to Congress, *Great Lakes Icebreaker Acquisition*, outlined potential Congressional actions that could accelerate the overall acquisition timeline. Over the past two years, the Coast Guard has worked to accelerate the program schedule by initiating pre-acquisition activities, including reports, documentation, and analyses required for major acquisition programs under sections 1131 and 1132 of Title 14, United States Code. As a result, exempting this Program from complying with requirements under those sections of law is unlikely to provide appreciable schedule savings as the requirements are either complete or are in process.

*Question 2.* I am thrilled that the House passed the Great Lakes Winter Commerce Act, which will accurately document the impacts of inadequate icebreaking on the Great Lakes. What is the Coast Guard's plan of action ahead of the GAO study required by that Act to alleviate and better track problems moving vital raw materials on the Great Lakes during the winter months?

*ANSWER.* The Coast Guard is assessing and developing metrics to more efficiently evaluate and record performance outputs of the domestic icebreaking fleet and its

effectiveness in accomplishing all aspects of the domestic icebreaking mission. While the current primary metric, Tier One waterway availability, does document mission performance in major thoroughfares, it does not fully inform important elements of the domestic icebreaking mission, such as the waterway traffic affected by ice in other areas or the impact of the Coast Guard's aging domestic icebreaking cutter fleet.

