

**THE STATUS OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
RECRUITING EFFORTS AND PLANS FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2024**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
PERSONNEL

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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DECEMBER 6, 2023
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**THE STATUS OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
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FISCAL YEAR 2024**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023

UNITED STATES SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3 p.m., in room 222, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Elizabeth Warren (Chairwoman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Subcommittee Members Present: Senators Warren, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, Duckworth, King, Scott, Sullivan, and Budd.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

Senator WARREN. This hearing will come to order. Please be seated. I am pleased to welcome you all to today's hearing to receive testimony on the military's recruiting challenges. The United States has the strongest and most capable military in the world because of the people who volunteer to serve in its ranks.

To maintain that advantage, we must continue to attract the best and the brightest America has to offer. This is the second hearing in 2023 alone that this Committee has held on the military's recruiting challenges.

During our hearing last March, we heard from the Under Secretaries of each of the military services. Today's subcommittee hearing includes the directors of recruiting from each of the military services to learn more about the challenges they face to attract the people we need to keep America safe.

We are holding today's hearing at Senator Scott's request, but make no mistake, there is strong bipartisan concern that the military services continue to struggle to meet their recruiting goals. This year, the Marine Corps and the Space Force, the two services with the lowest recruitment goals, were the only services that met their recruiting targets.

If we were assigning grades, those two services got an A, while the Air Force earned a B+, The Army got a B-, and the Navy a C+, and I think that's grade inflation. This track record would be worrisome on its own, but it is even more troubling because it appears to be part of a long term trend that shows that for years now the military has failed to connect with young people that we need to keep this country safe.

The military is in a war for talent in a period of low unemployment. If we want a strong, vibrant military, and if we want to attract the best and the brightest, then we need to acknowledge the importance of making certain that all young people are welcomed and that those who serve in the military, all of those who serve in the military, will be treated with dignity and respect.

Diversity matters and protection for those who serve matters. In February, this committee heard testimony from Dr. Bonnie Lynn, who served as a Senior Advisor for the Department of Defense in both the Obama and Trump administrations. She explained that cutting programs that support our military, including violence prevention programs “would definitely hurt us.”

We also heard from all of the services that programs to address racism and sexual assault are not a barrier to recruitment and retention. In fact, it is when those programs fail that young people question whether the military really will have their backs.

Servicemembers and their families give up a lot to serve their country, including enduring constant moves and uncertainty. How we treat those who volunteer to serve has a direct impact on our ability to attract the next generation.

In too many cases, servicemembers have felt ignored or taken advantage of when they have come forward to report problems. All three of my brothers served in the military, so I know firsthand both the benefits and the sacrifices of everyone who serves.

In today's hearing, I look forward to hearing our witnesses' perspective on both recruiting and rebuilding public confidence in the military. First, I want to hear their perspective on red tape and the recruiting process.

Second, public polling continues to show public confidence in the military is on the decline, and I want to hear our witnesses' perspective on how we can demonstrate to young people that the military is an institution worthy of their trust. Then third, I want to hear more about military housing.

Several years ago, this Committee held hearings on shortfalls in military housing, including families being forced to live with mold, collapsed roofs, or exposed electrical wires. We changed the laws, putting in place a number of reforms to address these shortfalls. But here we are, several years later, and these reforms are still not fully implemented.

In fact, families continue to report they feel like they are being silenced. Meanwhile, the GAO details military barracks also have problems with sewage overflow, mold and mildew, and broken windows and locks.

I have run out of patience with military leaders who come before this Committee and promise that they will prioritize living conditions for servicemembers but somehow never managed to deliver.

One last note. I do not wish to make this a focus of this hearing, but I want to make it clear that it was a grave mistake for one Senator to hold our military promotion system hostage over his personal disagreement with the Department of Defense policy.

We need our commanders in the Pacific to deter China and our service vice chiefs to lead the military. I am relieved that he has released most of his holds, but he is weakening military readiness and undermining both recruiting and retention.

The Senate should not go home for the holidays until we confirm the remaining nominees. Now, this year marks the 50th year of the All-Volunteer Force, so I look forward to hearing from our witnesses how the military can continue to adapt and evolve to keep us all safe. To our witnesses, welcome. Thank you for appearing.

As I mentioned earlier, we are just going to have the one panel today composed of military service directors of recruiting. Brigadier General Christopher Amrhein, the Commander of the Air Force Recruiting Service, Major General William J. Bowers, the Commanding general for the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, Major General Johnny Davis, the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, and Rear Admiral Alexis T. Walker, the Commander of Navy Recruiting Command.

I will now turn to Ranking Member Scott for his comments to open this hearing.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR RICK SCOTT

Senator SCOTT. Thanks. First, I want to thank the chairwoman for holding this hearing. I appreciate her focus on the quality of our military and trying to solve this problem with regard to recruiting. Before I get into this with regard to the nominees, I hope that—virtually it is resolved, except for, I guess, the four stars.

I hope that what will happen is we will go through this process quickly, and I know some people have some concerns and let's go through them. Let's do cloture. Let's get a vote on them, and so, we can get these done as quickly as possible.

I agree with you, if we can get it done before we go off on holidays, we should go.

Senator WARREN. Good.

Senator SCOTT. I think it is right—

Senator WARREN. That is bipartisan. We just want to get this done. Our military deserves it.

Senator SCOTT. Yes. Just to give you guys perspective, this is my first time actually to be a ranking, and the reason I am doing this is because we have agreed we are going to work on these issues together.

Because there is not an issue in the military that I can find as a partisan issue. I served in the military. I never thought it was a partisan job. I—you know, whoever the person was, that is who I worked for, so. As I said in our first subcommittee hearing here, I believe ending the military recruiting crisis should be our top priority.

I don't know how we can expect to have a military if we can't solve this recruiting issue. I hope to use this hearing to better understand the scale of the problem and learn what our senior recruiting leadership is doing to improve the situation.

I am a business guy. What you did is you find out what was the best thing working someplace and you—whether it was at your competitor, whether you or somebody you worked with, you took the best ideas and you implemented them, whatever you were doing. In fiscal year 2023, we know that three of our four largest military services failed to achieve their recruiting goals, as we talked about, by large margins.

The Active Duty military force missed their goal by 15 percent. That's 27,000 servicemembers. If you include Reserve forces, the shortage increases to nearly 40,000 troops, and if you look at what we have done now over the years, over the last few decades, our Reserve force, our National Guards are almost Active Duty now.

So, they are really important. For context, this amounts to more troops than we currently have stationed in Germany or on the Korean Peninsula. The Army and Navy are in the worst position.

Active Army is 30,000 soldiers smaller than it was just 2 years ago. Navy is 12,000 fewer sailors today than it had last year. The only reason these numbers are not worse is because the services are doing everything they possibly can to retain, and they are doing a good job if you retain currently serving military personnel, but as we all know, that is not sustainable.

These changes to the size of our military were not the result of a deliberate reduction in force plan. It is completely recruiting. Our smaller military is causing serious readiness concerns. To avoid creating a hollow force, the Army is beginning to implement force structure reductions that will affect the Army's ability to respond to the full spectrum of armed conflict.

The world is not getting safer right now, as we all know. The Secretary of the Army has admitted that these force structure decisions are at least in part caused by a recruiting crisis. The shortage of sailors is making it harder for the Navy to adequately man our ships. We are 9,000 sea duty positions short.

Ships routinely train for deployment with less than 100 percent of the manning that they need. Ships without enough sailors are less effective and increase the danger to our own ships, as well as those around them.

I don't know what it is like now, but when I was in, you actually didn't just work an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. job. You are already working long hours. I mean, when I was there, the only time we were actually off, you either head off 7 to 12 at night, or 12 to 5 in the morning. You were on the rest of the time.

So, if you now have—if you have fewer people, I don't know how you are going to solve that problem. If that is not a risk to readiness, I don't know what it is, giving. We have got lots of dangers in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, I think it is imperative that the Department of Defense (DOD) figures this out.

Some senior leaders seem to be unwilling to acknowledge the severity of the problem. A year ago, the Secretary of Defense said it is, "a priority for me." Yet in his posture statement to Congress last spring, the Secretary devoted an entire section to meeting climate crisis, which we, and let's all agree, we want take care of our climate, but he left the recruiting crisis—he didn't even acknowledge it.

So, we have got to—we have to figure this out. You guys are the key to doing this. I think the Army has to be commended for its initiatives to rapidly implement innovative ideas to attract more Americans to serve their country. Thanks for your time yesterday. The Marines continue to prove that it is not impossible to achieve recruiting goals because you have been doing it all along.

I am a business guy, so in business, every environment is challenging. I mean, I have never had somebody say, oh, it is an easy

time to make money, easy time to recruit, easier time to do anything. But it is never—in my opinion, it is never impossible to figure this out. So, Marines have figured it out.

We all have to figure it out. So, I want to thank everybody for being here. I want to underscore that, you know, first off, I still don't get this, 8,500 servicemembers were involuntarily separated for refusing the COVID vaccine. I hope everybody is going after trying to get these wonderful men and women back in and treating them fairly, given them the proper—if they don't want to come back, making sure you give them the proper discharge orders.

If you can, they ought to come back with pay, back pay because I think it was completely unfair. So, let me talk about one of my experiences. We get to, all of us—I don't know how many of you have already done in yours, but we get a lot of people nominated for these—we get 10, each of us get 10 nominations for the Academies.

We saw our numbers. My first year—I have been up here 5 years. My first year was pretty good numbers and it started going down. So, we put a lot of effort into it this year and we had a 25 percent increase.

We did it because we went around—we went around to the schools, and we pushed our way in to tell people what the opportunities were. It is probably the nicest thing I get to do up here. We get to pick, and I wish I could pick 100 people, but these kids that want to come serve, just wonderful individuals, all across this country.

I know everybody is proud of the ones that are in their States, but I think everybody loves that opportunity to give these kids the opportunity. So, thank you for being here. I want to thank the Chairwoman again for hosting this meeting with me.

Senator WARREN. Thank you very much. Appreciate it, Senator Scott. So, if we could start with you, please, Brigadier General Amrhein. You are recognized—[technical problems].

STATEMENT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL CHRISTOPHER R. AMRHEIN, USAF, COMMANDER, AIR FORCE RECRUITING SERVICE

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Thank you. Chairwoman Warren, Ranking Member Scott, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear to discuss the recruiting efforts of the Department of the Air Force.

At the end of fiscal year 2023, our Active Duty Air Force did not make a goal for the first time in 24 years. Several factors contributed to this, a lingering lack of access during COVID, a declining propensity to serve, intense competition for talent in a surplus U.S. job market, and a lack of familiarity of the civilian population to the U.S. military.

All of these issues culminated to create a very challenging recruiting environment for all services. We have seen a steady decline in the military even being an option for our youth as they contemplate the future with propensity dropping from 13 percent 4 years ago to 10 percent now.

Only 12 percent of youth currently have a parent who served, compared to 40 percent in 1995. The DOD's Joint Advertising and

Marketing Research Service Studies Organization characterized the youth market as having transitioned from being disconnected with the military to mostly disinterested with it.

Reconnecting with our youth and breaking down unnecessary barriers to serve in our Air Force and Space Force is our priority over the next several years. This past year, we missed our enlisted recession recruiting goals by just under 11 percent for the Active Duty, 31 percent for the Reserve.

We did exceed the Space Force enlisted this session by nearly 10 percent. While the overall goals were missed, there were positive strides made throughout talent focused Air Force policy changes and robust Air Force recruiting service summer surge efforts. The Department of the Air Force immediately began evaluating ways to help our overburdened recruiting force.

Overall, the Air Force began a transformation of the accession enterprise, and our Vice Chief of Staff led a cross-functional team to conduct a comprehensive review of our policies and requirements with focus on removing unnecessary barriers and joining—in joining and developing effective incentives to attract talent.

The team synchronized Department of the Air Force, DOD accession requirements, as well as sister service requirements where possible to expand the reach for talent across the Nation. With these policy challenges expanded upon my written statement, we have changed the lives of individuals who would have otherwise been prevented from service in the Air or Space Force.

It is important to note the caliber of our recruits remains the same. We have not and will not compromise on quality. In addition to the policy change initiatives, Air Force recruiting also implemented a command wide summer surge, focused on increasing recruiter presence within the community equal to a deployed operations tempo.

These efforts built applicant leads and the delayed entry program, both of which helped us prepare for a healthy start to fiscal year 2024. There were lessons learned from the surge that are enduring and remain in place.

Most notably, a more robust training program for our first level supervisors, as well as a maximized push of recruiter presence within the community. For fiscal year 2024, we are cautiously optimistic as the gains from the summer surge and the cross-functional team policy changes were substantial and have built solid momentum.

We started with 32 percent of our Active Duty goal already identified and in the bank, compared to just 16 percent last year. That 32 percent is a little higher than what we typically try to have identified to begin each year, which brings that positive momentum.

The cross-functional team initiatives continue to bear fruit as we have produced an additional 850 recruits who have shipped already in the delayed entry program for this year. However, we are rapidly approaching the winter months, which is the most difficult time.

In keeping with the transformational changes needed to accomplish our recruiting mission, we stood up a strategy division and revamped that long term strategic plan for the organization within

lines of effort along elevating favorable brand relevance, driving smart operations, bolstering force and families, and transforming and expanding the total force recruiting network.

There will be continued challenges in fiscal year 2024 and beyond, which includes working medical accession processes, as well as increasing the connection with the American population for military service.

We applaud the Deputy Secretary of Defense initiatives to resource USMEPCOM at levels needed to process applicants in a timely manner. In addition to OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] level initiatives, Air Force recruiting Service has increased the manning to our medical waiver division to tackle the large increase in medical waiver requests and also just went under contract to add medical administrators to our team who can take the burden of tracking down medical paperwork, giving back critical time to each recruiter.

With regard to increasing with the American society, this challenge fuels our need for consistent capabilities to tell our story to the public through a number of avenues. In fiscal year 2023, our marketing program focused on the value of service in the Air and Space Force. With the funding, our marketing division leaned into both lead generation in the current fiscal year, but also postured for the out years.

We increased the investment levels in our existing partnerships like Drone Racing League eSports and increased the total number of partnerships that explore new ways to connect with the public, as we launched a Woman in Sports campaign in partnership with Ultimate Fighter Championship League. Through these partnerships and more than 300 events, our recruiters were able to engage with the public.

Our Air Force Chief of Staff tasked installation leadership to develop a more robust community relations that includes expanding in access, and we developed a Go Blue, Stay Blue campaign designed to give our wing commanders a toolbox to spread the message within the community.

The Stay Blue arm of the campaign is designed to communicate early and often to our airmen the value of our Reserve components and the opportunities for continued service for the Force. Close relationships with our civic partners and community members are paramount to our Air Force recruiting mission and have provided increased opportunities to connect.

In conclusion, I want to thank you once again for the opportunity to speak with you today. We are cautiously optimistic with the actions we have taken over the past year that have put us on the path to achieve our goal in fiscal year 2024 for the Air and Space Force.

While this momentum and early goal attainment proves promising, we must keep our hand on the throttle to continue to work challenge areas of medical processing, predictable resourcing, community involvement, and breaking barriers to service, all while we transform how we recruit in an era of great power competition. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Brigadier General Christopher R. Amrhein follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY BRIGADIER GENERAL CHRISTOPHER R. AMRHEIN

STATE OF AIR FORCE RECRUITING: EFFORTS TO INNOVATE AND EXPAND INTEREST

Chairwoman Warren, Ranking Member Scott, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the recruiting efforts of the Department of the Air Force.

At the end of fiscal year 2023, our Active Duty Air Force did not make goal for the first time in 24 years. Several factors contributed to this; a lingering lack of access during COVID, a declining propensity to serve, intense competition for talent in a surplus US job market and a lack of familiarity of the civilian population with the US military. All of these issues culminated to create a very challenging recruiting environment for all services. These factors are complex, with layer upon layer of cause and effect, but I would like to expand on the declining propensity to serve. We have seen a steady decline in the military even being an option for our youth as they contemplate their future with propensity dropping from 13 percent 4 years ago to 10 percent now. Only 12 percent of youth have a parent who served, compared to 40 percent in 1995. DOD's Joint Advertising and Market Research Studies organization characterized the youth market as "having transitioned from being disconnected from the military to mostly disinterested with it." Reconnecting with our youth and breaking down unnecessary barriers to serve in our Air Force and Space Force is our priority over the next several years.

FISCAL YEAR 2023

This past year, we missed our enlisted accession recruiting goals by just under 11 percent for the Active Duty and 31 percent by the Reserve. We did exceed the Space Force enlisted accession goal by nearly 10 percent.

While the overall goals were missed, there were positive strides made through talent-focused Air Force policy changes and a robust Air Force Recruiting Service summer surge effort. The Department of the Air Force immediately began evaluating ways to help our over-burdened recruiting force. The Department of the Air Force reevaluated societal norms, in certain areas, and adjusted some of our antiquated requirements to build a stronger relationship with this new generation of youth who have a much more limited understanding of opportunities, community and purpose our service provides. Overall, the Air Force began a transformation of the accession enterprise as our Vice Chief of Staff led a cross functional team to conduct a comprehensive review of our policies and requirements with a focus on removing unnecessary barriers to joining and developing effective incentives to attract talent. The team synchronized Department of the Air Force and DOD accession requirements as well as sister service requirements, where possible, to expand the reach for talent across the Nation. We have implemented a 2-year pilot program to authorize THC waivers which has already allowed us to access 181 new recruits since its implementation last spring and we expect approximately 200 additional accessions each year. We updated our Body Composition requirements to mirror the DOD requirement which brought us another 1,265 accessions with only one fitness failure at basic training. We also amended our tattoo policy to allow for small tattoos at the back of the neck and hands which brought us 176 recruits since we implemented the change last March. Additionally, we funded an Enlisted College Loan Repayment Program to attract even more talent and vector those talents to the needs of the Air Force. Since implementation this summer, 223 new recruits have qualified for this program, and we estimate 500 recruits may qualify annually. Finally, the Department of the Air Force implemented a referral program, which allows our airmen and Delayed Entry Program (DEP) members to refer contacts to our recruiters. When these contacts complete the accessions process and fully enter the Air Force or Space Force, our DEP members are eligible to enter the service up to the grade of E-3, and our currently serving members are eligible to receive a medal for a similar process. So far, we received nearly 600 referrals with almost 200 in the Delayed Entry Program. With each of these policy changes, we have changed the lives of individuals who would have otherwise been prevented from service in the Air Force or Space Force. It is important to note the caliber of our recruits remains the same; we have not and will not compromise on quality.

In addition to the policy change initiatives, Air Force recruiting also implemented a command-wide summer surge focused on increasing recruiter presence in the community. Equal to a deployed operations tempo, this provided critical in-the-field training, incentivized short-notice shipment to basic training, and refined our processes to minimize timelines to the fullest extent possible. These efforts built applicant leads and the Delayed Entry Program, both of which prepared us for a healthy start to fiscal year 2024. Air Force recruiting surged and personnel extended duty

hours for several months. Continued surge operations are not sustainable as an enduring effort as it will result in an eventual breakdown in the effectiveness, morale, and well-being of our recruiters. There were lessons learned from this surge that are enduring and remain in place, most notably, a more robust training program for our first level supervisors as well as a push to maximize recruiter presence within their communities.

FISCAL YEAR 2024

We are cautiously optimistic heading into fiscal year 2024, as the gains from the summer surge and cross functional team policy changes were substantial and built solid momentum. We started with 32 percent of our Active Duty goal already identified and banked, compared to just 16 percent last year. That 32 percent is a little higher than what we typically try to have identified to begin each year, which brings us positive momentum. For the Reserve, we are slightly behind our target, but the miss has been small enough thus far that we expect to be able to overcome the delta later in the fiscal year. The cross-functional team initiatives continue to bear fruit as we have produced an additional 850 recruits who have shipped or are in the Delayed Entry Program this fiscal year. However, we are rapidly approaching the most difficult recruiting months of the year, February through May.

In keeping with the transformational changes needed to accomplish our recruiting mission, we stood up a Strategy Division and revamped a long-term strategic plan for the organization. Our lines of effort within this strategy are to:

- Elevate favorable brand relevance for the Air Force and build brand awareness for the Space Force
- Drive smart operations
- Bolster force & families
- Transform & Expand the Total Force Recruiting network

There will be continued challenges as we move through fiscal year 2024 and beyond however the most disruptive in the recent past has undoubtedly been the Health Information Exchange and implementation of Military Health System (MHS) GENESIS. The Health Information Exchange associated with MHS-GENESIS continues to bring challenges by uncovering more initial potential disqualifying conditions requiring extended and substantial records requests, and subsequently more records to review. To illustrate this issue, in fiscal year 2021, 81 percent of all Air Force applicants going to MEPS were qualified on their initial processing visit. In fiscal year 2022 (the start of MHS-GENESIS and HIE), this initial qualification rate dropped to 69 percent and ended fiscal year 2023 with a 58 percent initial qualification rate. This led to an increase of nearly 20 percent more waiver requests in fiscal year 2023 than in the previous 2 years. Our accession waiver rates, to the retention standards, remain high at nearly 70 percent, and we estimate that we lost more than 5,000 recruits who walked away from this cumbersome process without even pursuing a waiver due to the delays. Additionally, we have not seen a difference in our medical removal rates at basic training with the implementation of MHS-GENESIS. We applaud the Deputy Secretary of Defense's initiative to resource USMEPCOM at the levels needed to process applicants in a timely manner. In addition to OSD-level initiatives, Air Force Recruiting Service has increased manning in our Medical Waiver Division to tackle the large increase in waiver requests and we also just went under contract to add medical administrators to our team who can take the burden of tracking down medical paperwork away from our recruiters. This will give three to 4 hours a week back to each recruiter to engage with their communities and potential applicants.

We believe our biggest challenge going into 2024 is connecting with an American society that, as I mentioned earlier, has had a steady decline in the knowledge and propensity to serve in our military. This challenge fuels our need for consistent capabilities to tell our story to the public through a number of avenues. We are using the funding Congress provided for our marketing program in fiscal year 2023 to highlight the value of serving in our Air Force and Space Force. With the funding, our marketing division leaned into both lead generation in the current fiscal year and postured for future year recruiting success. The funds paid for a website, customer relations management system updates, and built an e-Recruiter program. This virtual interfacing program produced compelling accession rates, which gives our field recruiters additional bandwidth for more high-impact activities such as community engagements and to work more complex applications. We increased the investment levels in our existing partnerships, organizations like Drone Racing League and eSports, and increased the total number of partnerships that explore new ways to connect with the public. Through these partnerships, we added more than 300 events for our recruiters to engage with the public. These efforts led to

a 16 percent increase in new contacts, and a 9.5 percent increase in leads in the first 6 months alone.

Additionally, these funds helped us launch a “Women in Sports” campaign with the aim of establishing the Air Force as a champion for female athletics at all levels. It started with ads during the FIFA Women’s World Cup and continues through partnership with organizations like the Supergirl Gamer Pro Series, Sorensen Motorsports, Women’s Sports Foundation, and Play Like a Girl. Perhaps most importantly, the funds allowed us to set conditions for future year recruiting through large-scale media purchases, targeting prospects and their influencers alike. These campaigns are airing now and will continue into April 2024.

Air Force Recruiting Service also executes marketing for our Total Force partners. The marketing initiatives implemented by the Air National Guard (ANG) in fiscal year 2023 aided in increased brand awareness among the target audience by 8 percent. The marketing funding allotted to the ANG enabled ground-breaking partnerships in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), Major and Minor League Baseball and select college athletic markets. Combined with other digital campaigns such as “Serve Your Way” and “My Home Base,” ANG marketing garnered more than 1.3 billion impressions. Signage at major UFC and MLB events will be viewed on video clips for years to come, resulting in an immeasurable positive awareness over the long term.

The Air Force Chief of Staff tasked installation leadership to develop a more robust community relations outreach effort that includes expanding access to their bases. Over past twenty-plus years, the communities around our installations have lost an awareness of the military mission and people who are so vital to their community. We developed a “Go Blue/Stay Blue” campaign designed to give our Wing Commanders a toolbox of resources to spread the message of serving in the Air Force and Space Force when they communicate with their local communities. In addition, the Stay Blue arm of the campaign is designed to communicate early and often to our airmen on the value of our Reserve components and the opportunities to continue to serve in our Air Force, even after they complete their Active Duty commitments. Close relationships with our civic partners and community members are paramount to our AF recruiting mission by providing a familiarity of our mission and influencing our target demographic to consider serving in the Air Force or Space Force. We are currently partnering with the Air and Space Force Association as well as Secretary of the Air Force’s civic leaders and local civic leader programs to expand our messaging of the Air Force and Space Force culture and what it means to serve.

Air Force Recruiting’s Detachment 1 operates in the pre-accessions space to inform, influence, and inspire youth through awareness. Our Det 1 recruiters focus on youth with an interest in aviation and hosts events which educate and illuminate a pathway from a notional dream to reality. In fiscal year 2023, they hosted more than 600 aviation-themed events reaching more than one hundred thousand youth. Det 1’s notable partnerships include the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals, Women in Aviation International, the Dee Howard Foundation and Space Camp. A few of Det 1’s programs include their Aviation Inspiration Mentorship, what we call “AIM.” These AIM mentors are diverse airmen in the flying community who interact with underserved youth and tell their story of being an Airman. Det 1 also works with our flying wings to help them become “AIM Wings,” allowing them to conduct Inspiration Flights for youth and their influencers. Det 1, in partnership with university flight schools, hosts multiple AIM High Flight Academy events each year helping young men and women experience the thrill of flight for the first time and culminating with the opportunity to solo.

CONCLUSION

I want to thank you once again for the opportunity to speak with you today. We are cautiously optimistic that the actions we have taken over the last year have put us on the path to achieve our fiscal year 2024 accession goals for the Air Force and Space Force. While this momentum and early goal attainment proves promising, we must keep our hand on the throttle and continue to work the challenge areas of medical processing, predictable resourcing, community involvement, breaking barriers to service—all while we transform how we recruit in an era of great power competition.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, General Amrhein. General Bowers.

**STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM J. BOWERS, USMC,
COMMANDING GENERAL, MARINE CORPS RECRUITING COM-
MAND**

Major General BOWERS. Chairwoman Warren, Ranking Member Scott, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is a privilege to appear before you to provide you an update on your Marine Corps' recruiting efforts. Your Marine Corps exists to fight and win our Nation's battles.

Our performance in recruiting speaks for us. Our combat heritage is embedded within Marine Corps Recruiting Command's DNA, and we share the same fierce competitive spirit to win no matter the challenge. Over the past generations, the Marine Corps has made institutional investments into recruiting to ensure that we are resourced with the very best commanders and the very best marine recruiters to accomplish this demanding mission.

This has been and will continue to be our greatest source of strength as we face what some have called the most challenging recruiting environment since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force. Marine recruiters will continue to meet the expectations of our Nation by holding true to our warriors' ethos and our core values of honor, courage, and commitment. We compete for the best people in every zip code in our Nation.

Our marine recruiters actively attract and inspire those young men and women of character to take up the challenge of earning the title, marine. We welcome all qualified and motivated applicants to take up the challenge of earning the title marine, but we refuse to lower standards.

We understand that to meet the high, almost mystical expectations the American people have of their Marine Corps, that we must invest in attracting and inspiring the very best people our Nation has to offer to become marines. Despite our success in fiscal year 2023, the Marine Corps continues to face the same challenges as the other services.

These are historic lows in qualification rates, low propensity to serve, labor market challenges, and a fragmented media landscape. These have all had a compounding effect on the recruiting environment. To combat these, Marine Corps Recruiting Command will do what marines have always done, innovate, adapt, and win.

As such, we are focused on my top four priorities of quality training, improve manning, securing resources, and adapting our structure, and we are moving at speed to make these organizational changes.

With your continued support, we will continue to, one, reinforce and expand the trust of the American people. Two, positively shape the future of the Marine Corps, and three, enable our marines and their families to be happy and successful. I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you for the opportunity. Semper fidelis.

[The prepared statement of Major General William J. Bowers follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM J. BOWERS

INTRODUCTION

Chair Warren, Ranking Member Scott, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is a privilege to appear before you today to provide an overview of your Marine Corps' recruiting efforts. We continue to be fortunate to serve in a Marine Corps comprised of tough, smart, elite, and ethical warriors who have volunteered to serve their country as the world's premiere crisis response force—your United States Marine Corps. Our screened, selected, and well-trained recruiters cover every zip code of America, and in the hallways of our High Schools. We are in a constant search to attract and inspire the most talented individuals within our Nation who can live up to the high standards that your Marine Corps demands. We refuse to lower our standards, because ultimately, we understand the price of long-term success in both peace and war.

We are making mission, sustaining our high standards, and, in fact, increasing quality.

Your marines achieved their fiscal year 2023 mission despite significant headwinds. Our success can largely be attributed to the individual marine recruiter, and their unrelenting drive to accomplish the mission—we select our best to find the next generation of marines. Marine Corps Recruiting Command's focus on training, manning, structure, and resources have served to enable and reinforce their success. Today, I hope to provide a deeper understanding of the recruiting environment and its challenges.

HISTORY OF MARINE CORPS RECRUITING

As we celebrated the 50-year anniversary of the All-Volunteer Force, or more accurately the All-Recruited Force, the United States Marine Corps continues to evolve and prepare to meet the requirements of its Nation. Marine Corps Recruiting has evolved for mission success over the past 50 years and continues to adapt to ensure mission accomplishment.

To fully understand Marine Corps Recruiting, you must first realize that it was born on the battlefield. When General Wilson was appointed as the 26th Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1975, we were facing enormous challenges both internally and externally—including the critical requirements of recruiting, recruit training, and discipline. Led by General Wilson and his Manpower Chief, Lieutenant General Robert Barrow, the marines attacked the bureaucratic status-quo in a "quality war" with the same gusto that they took to the enemy on the battlefields of World War II and Korea, and implemented rapid change to recruiting. Recruiting commanders would now report directly to the Commanding Generals of the recruit depots, three out of four marines would have high school diplomas, and they would aggressively remove marines from the ranks those who demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to meet the standards of the Marine Corps. Under General Wilson's leadership, marines developed and installed "systematic recruiting" across the recruiting force to standardize actions and results, which marine recruiters still practice to this day.

With continued emphasis on systematic recruiting and quality within Marine Corps Recruiting, the demographic challenges of the 1990's were still another hill that needed to be taken. An overall decrease in the population between 18 and 22 years old, coupled with declining education and propensity rates proved challenging for Marine Corps Recruiting. The 30th Commandant, General Carl Mundy, recognized the need to improve the organizational approach to recruiting; Recruit Depot Commanders, the Personnel Procurement Director, and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Reserve Affairs reported in a variety of lines regarding recruiting matters. This dilution of command was the antithesis to the unity the Marine Corps strives to achieve. General Mundy would facilitate a "one Corps' approach to recruiting" through the creation of Marine Corps Recruiting Command; which he would say is "the only regiment in the Corps that is in constant contact with its objective 30 days a month, without let up." The 31st Commandant, General Charles Krulak, would reinforce recruiting success through competitive screening and selection of Recruiting Station Commanders (Majors in command of our Recruiting Stations), and incentivize the successful accomplishment of a recruiting tour with choice follow-on assignments.

In the years since, marines have always risen to the recruiting mission each year through strict adherence to systematic recruiting, upholding high standards, and an unrelenting dedication to mission accomplishment. The Marine Corps continues to put our best marines onto recruiting duty to emphasize the intangibles of service in the Corps; our comradery, teamwork, ethos, and core values. Holding true to

these intangible benefits of being a United States Marine, the individual marine has and always will be our greatest weapon against a changing recruiting environment.

In summary: We continue to achieve success by:

- Assigning our best to recruiting, and rewarding them for success;
- Structuring our Recruiting Command directly underneath the Commandant;
- Applying a Systematic Approach to recruiting; and
- Keeping our standards high.

THE RECRUITING ENVIRONMENT

Despite our success in fiscal year 2023, the Marine Corps continues to face the same enlisted recruiting challenges as the other services. Historic lows in qualification rates, propensity to serve, public perception of the military, labor market challenges, a fragmented advertising environment, and policy changes with second- and third-order effects have all compounded to make this the most challenging recruiting environment since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force.

Numerically, our recruiters are simply at a disadvantage. Generation “Z” is not only over five million people smaller than the previous “Millennial” generation, but we also continue to see a decline in Qualified Military Available (QMA) populations within the same group. The most recent statistics show that only 23 percent of current 17 to 24 year olds are qualified for military service without a waiver (down from 29 percent in 2013). We have also observed a reduction in male propensity to serve, down from 23 percent in 2001, to 10 percent based on 2022 data.

Our Commandant remains committed to providing adequate resources and the highest quality marines to make the accession mission while sustaining quality standards, but bottom-line, our recruiters must work harder while prospecting out of a smaller, less qualified, and less-propensed population. We continue to work with the Department of Defense on policies and resourcing of our United States Military Entrance Processing Command (USMEPCOM) to achieve the goals within the Military Health System GENESIS and the Health Information Exchange.

The headwinds ahead of us are strong. We began fiscal year 2024 with a historically low start pool of 22.5 percent, when our average is normally above 50 percent. Our pool is where our recruiters prepare candidates for the rigors of recruit training. This reduced start pool means our marine recruiters must focus on a finding individuals to ship in the near-term, thus reducing their time to physically and mentally prepare them for the rigors of recruit training and the transformation process from civilian to marine.

MARINE CORPS RECRUITING EFFORTS

Marine Corps Recruiting Command continues to address the challenges of recruiting head on. We remain laser focused on my priorities of training, manning, resources, and structure.

Training. Over the last year, we have reinvigorated pre-COVID training that lapsed over the past years. As part of our Systematic Approach to Recruiting, we updated multiple training courses and increased emphasis within the high school and community college programs, which represent the lifeblood and bedrock of recruiting success. We fundamentally believe that a well-trained recruiting force breeds confidence, which ultimately leads to victory.

Support for our Recruiting Force. We have further incentivized the career enhancing benefits of recruiting duty—and, despite the rigorous nature of the assignment, we have dramatically increased the number of volunteers seeking this challenging assignment. Additionally, we have been able to retain some of our most well-trained and dedicated recruiters through short term voluntary extensions, while sustaining the scheduled new joins to the force, thus increasing our overall number. We continue to reward those who undertake the challenge of recruiting. The Corps recognizes recruiting as a challenging and career enhancing assignment.

Advertising and IT Support. We have resourced near-term increases to our advertising / modernization budgets, executed a technical refresh to our IT system and computers, and are coordinating budgetary increases for facility improvements and upgrades with OSD.

Results and Quality. The quality of your enlisted marines remains exceptionally high. The Department of Defense (DOD) requires 90 percent of enlistees to have a high school diploma or equivalent (Education Tier 1), and 60 percent of enlistees to score in the Mental Groups I-III (mental aptitude). In fiscal year 2023, the Marine Corps achieved 99 percent for Education Tier 1 and over 65 percent for Mental Group I-III—with no Mental Group IV.

Recruiting is one of our Commandant’s top priorities and Recruiting Command is getting the Corps’ full support. We aim to achieve mission success in fiscal year

2024 through shared trust, accountability to one another, and a fierce competitive desire to win.

WAYS TO IMPROVE RECRUITING

Aggressive Resourcing. For future recruiting success, we must continue to adequately fund recruiting operations and advertising. Our Marine Corps advertising program is vital to building awareness among high-quality, diverse populations that are increasingly disconnected from military service. A strong advertising program enables our recruiting command to attract and recruit the highest quality accession cohorts. Advertising funds repay many times over, as they produce lower first-term attrition, higher quality marines, and increased readiness. However, an increasingly fragmented media environment and media inflation rates approaching 20 percent in many cases have made maintaining success significantly more difficult.

Modernization of our Advertising Tools. We thank Congress for provisions in the fiscal year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act that enable the DOD to develop a 3-year pilot program for the collection of Prospective Recruit Information (PRI). We are working with the DOD and our advertising agency to test and pilot a platform that capitalizes on this authority granted by the Congress and enables the ability to segment and reach prospects. These efforts could help identify prospective recruits, tailor marketing efforts, and better measure return on investment, while putting the Department on a level-playing field with the rest of the labor market who routinely use this capability.

Access to High Schools. We also thank Congress for its continued support of legislation that provides recruiters access to high schools and student directory lists. This access remains critical to recruiting quality applicants. Without it, our marine recruiters would lose the most efficient and productive means of conveying the opportunities military service provides to young Americans. Maintaining access to high schools and student directories remains a top priority for ensuring continued success.

National Call to Service. In order to ensure recruiting success, we need your help. We need to continue to fund recruiting advertising and facilities, appropriately support Military Entrance Processing Stations, ensure school access, and bolster a whole-of-government national dialog on military and public service. Our veterans serve ably in industries, commercial sectors, and government across our Nation, bringing enhanced leadership and an exceptional work ethos back to their communities. We must converge at the highest levels to inform young men and women, and their parents and influencers, about the value of honorable service in uniform.

CONCLUSION

The United States Marine Corps' highest priority and objective remains the recruitment, development, and retention of elite warriors in the highest State of combat readiness to support and defend our great Nation, now and into the future. We currently find ourselves in the most challenging recruiting environment since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force. We cannot wish this away, but must instead innovate, adapt, and take deliberate action across the Joint Force to win. Within Marine Corps Recruiting, we will continue to ensure our team of professionals is well-trained, well-led, manned, resourced, and structured to recruit the next generation of marines. We know that if we don't "Make Marines," our Nation will not have a Marine Corps—and that is not acceptable. We will continue to recruit the very best of our Nation to ensure the future health and success of your Marine Corps. Semper Fidelis!

Senator WARREN. Thank you. Admiral Walker.

STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL ALEXIS T. WALKER, USN, COMMANDER, NAVY RECRUITING COMMAND

Rear Admiral WALKER. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Warren, Ranking Member Scott, and distinguished Members of the Personnel Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the United States Navy's recruiting efforts.

Our nationwide team of dedicated Navy recruiters is focused on attracting the highest quality candidates to sustain America's maritime strength worldwide. While the Navy did not meet its recruit-

ment goal for fiscal year 2023, we continuously adapted our processes to reduce an initially forecasted gap by 50 percent.

As we begin fiscal year 2024, we are again faced with a challenging environment and continue to scrub our processes to remove inefficiency, add recruiters, and expand the pool of qualified and interested candidates.

Some of our most important initiatives for fiscal year 2024 include a dramatic increase in the number of recruiters in the field, the establishment of a national recruiting operations center, and a new marketing campaign to reach the adult influencers in young people's lives. We will also expand our future Sailor Prep course at Recruit Training Command to broaden the talent pool through physical fitness and academic enhancement ahead of recruit training.

In partnership with Congress, the Navy's monetary incentives have enabled us to influence the placement of shippers and remain competitive within the civilian market. Within marketing and advertising, our Forts by the Sea campaign allows us to reach every zip code to access previously undiscovered talent.

Today, our advertising remains nearly 100 percent digital, resulting in a 30 percent increase in national leads and taking the message to where our future sailors are operating, which is online.

Despite the recent and future challenges, our Navy team stands ready to take advantage of the opportunity to share positive military service experiences with future recruits and their influencers. We are grateful for this Committee's continued support and ask that each member consider personally engaging with their constituents and the media in a national call to service.

Your public support for military recruiting will make a positive difference. We remain committed to working with Congress to recruit, develop, and retain a ready and lethal force. On behalf of the men and women of the United States Navy and their families, thank you for your sustained commitment and unwavering support.

I stand ready to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Walker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY REAR ADMIRAL (LOWER HALF) ALEXIS T. WALKER

INTRODUCTION

Chairwoman Warren, Ranking Member Scott, and distinguished Members of the Personnel Subcommittee thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Navy's most important strategic asset—our people. The health, lethality, and capability of America's Navy are critical; the linchpin remains access to high-quality and motivated future sailors to meet the current and future mission of your United States Navy. With a competitive labor market, a shrinking pool of eligible candidates, and a low propensity to serve, recruiting future sailors has become increasingly difficult. Despite the challenges, our nationwide team of dedicated recruiters remains focused on attracting the best quality candidates from every zip code to sustain America's maritime strength worldwide, and our Navy continues to develop and implement innovative initiatives to build our force.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 NAVY RECRUITING PERFORMANCE

The U.S. Navy's fiscal year 2023 recruitment goals were 37,700 for Active Duty enlisted sailors and 8,390 for Reserve enlisted sailors. As of Sept. 30, 2023, the Navy recruited 30,236 (80.2 percent) Active Duty sailors and 6,342 (75.5 percent) Reserve sailors. The U.S. Navy's fiscal year 2023 recruitment goals were 2,532 for Active Duty officers and 1,940 for Reserve officers. As of Sept. 30, 2023, the Navy recruited 2,080 (82.1 percent) Active Duty officers and 1,167 (60.2 percent) Reserve officers.

Despite a challenging and competitive environment, our talented recruiters made tremendous efforts in fiscal year 2023. These efforts resulted in 6,000 more contracted future sailors than the previous year, and helped us close the gap on our forecasted miss by 40 percent. We are pleased with the quality of recruits who joined the Navy, and these future sailors share our core values of honor, courage, and commitment.

STATUS OF MEETING NAVY RECRUITING GOALS

Initiatives that began in fiscal year 2023 have carried into fiscal year 2024 as the Navy builds more pathways of opportunity for all qualified individuals who choose to serve. The complexity of our current environment forced us to think creatively and challenge assumptions. Outreach and engagement opportunities continue to increase awareness about the Navy, its people, and its mission, while Navy recruiters and sailors across the Fleet continue to connect with qualified future sailors who desire to join the Navy and are motivated to serve in defense of our Nation.

The Navy entered fiscal year 2024 in a similar posture to fiscal year 2023, with approximately 12 percent Delayed Entry Program (DEP) and a recruiting goal of 40,600 for Active Duty enlisted sailors and 7,619 for Reserve enlisted sailors. The Navy's fiscal year 2024 recruiting goals for officers are 2,807 for Active Duty and 1,785 for Reserve officers. As of November 20th, the Navy recruited 9,044 Active Duty enlisted sailors, 870 Reserve enlisted sailors, 520 Active Duty officers and 133 Reserve officers.

FACTORS IMPACTING RECRUITING EFFORTS

The unemployment rate has remained near historic lows through 2022 and 2023. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows unemployment at 3.9 percent in October 2023. Persistent labor shortages in some industries and an aging population are likely to continue to contribute to a relatively tight labor market. Therefore, we do not anticipate much relief regarding recruiting challenges.

Like fiscal year 2022, the fiscal year 2023 recruiting environment was one of the toughest in recent history. The propensity to serve remains low. According to a Department of Defense Youth Poll from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies (JAMRS), the propensity to serve among youth in our primary target demographic (16 to 21 years old) has been declining since the fall of 2018, decreasing from 13 percent in fall 2018 to 9 percent in fall 2022. The decline from summer 2022 to fall 2022 was primarily driven by a decrease in male youth propensity from 17 percent to 10 percent in fall 2022. Additionally, the proportion of youth who reported never having considered serving in the military increased from 49 percent to 54 percent between summer 2022 and fall 2022, consistent with recent historic highs for this metric.

Of note, of the 33 million personnel in the 17 to 24-year old population, 16.5 million are considered high academic quality, meaning that they have As or Bs, with an estimated 50 or higher on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) and only 4.6 million (14 percent) are considered high academic quality and eligible for service, which means that these individuals have no disqualifying medical or legal issue. Finally, 300,000 have a propensity to serve (1 percent of the total population). Aggregate military propensity is lower today than it has been since 2007. Additionally, the latest from JAMRS "State of the Market" study (released October 2023), shows the proportion of youth (ages 16 to 24) with a parent who has served in the military decreased from 40 percent in 1995 to 12 percent in 2022. Furthermore, the 2022 College Market Study (released September 2023) shows that a plurality of college market youth perceive that the benefits of college outweigh the costs despite the financial burden of attending college.

INITIATIVES IN NAVY RECRUITING

Navy recruiting is a priority for senior leadership and is an all-hands effort throughout the Service. Last month, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) released a message to the Fleet, specifically for command leadership, regarding the continued war for talent. She charged every command in the Navy with finding, coaching, and mentoring at least one quality recruit candidate this fiscal year. Additionally, the Secretary of the Navy sent more than 2,000 letters to high school principals to encourage recruiter collaboration and promote a positive view of military service.

Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) continues to emphasize updating recruitment policies and expanding the eligible population by opening the aperture of qualified individuals without lowering standards. By carefully evaluating individual circumstances and granting waivers where appropriate, we have been able to tap into a broader talent pool, including individuals who may have previously been disquali-

fied due to minor infractions or medical conditions. This flexibility has also helped increase our recruiting attainment and allowed us to consider candidates with unique skills and experiences that greatly benefit the Navy. The expanded policies, waivers, new initiatives, and pilot programs have been instrumental in increasing our pool of eligible candidates.

Policy and Waiver Initiatives:

- *Category IV:* Allows for up to 20 percent of total accessions who attain an Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score of 10–30 but have qualifying line scores to join the Navy Delayed Entry Program (DEP).
- *Positive Drug and Alcohol Tests (PosDATs):* Expanded PosDAT waiver authority by changing the wait window for retesting from 90 days down to 60 days for marijuana and THC. Applicants were only allowed to retest on the 91st day after failing the DAT/receiving a PosDAT; however, they can now retest on the 61st day after receiving the PosDAT.
- *Tattoos:* Allows applicants to enter and serve in the Navy with tattoos on the body including the neck and ears, regardless of location or size (on a case-by-case basis), except the head, face, and scalp.
- *Age:* Increased age for Active and Reserve accessions, who must now report to Recruit Training Command prior to their 42d birthday (an increase from 39).
- *Single Parent Policy:* Allows for waivers for dependency status for Active and Reserve enlistment of unmarried individuals with custody of dependents under the age of 18.
- *Tier II:* Authorized the contracting and accessing of Tier II applicants with an AFQT score of 31 or above. Tier II applicants are non-high school graduates with a GED and previously were only accessed with a 50 or greater AFQT.

Recruiting Initiatives:

- *Recruiting Operations Center (ROC):* Launched at the beginning of this fiscal year, the ROC oversees daily visualization and management of recruiting operations across the recruiting enterprise. The ROC was established to elevate barriers and efficiently reallocate resources to points and times of need through daily visualization and management of production that results in increased Net Contracts Attained (NCA).
- *Every Sailor a Recruiter (ESaR):* A program for currently serving sailors to share their experience and provide leads of interested applicants to Navy recruiting.
- *Navy Recruiting Reserve Command (NRRC):* Established to focus specific recruiting efforts on the prior service mission.
- *Increased Marketing and Advertising (M&A):* Increased budget to improve positive public perception of Navy service in the long term.
- *Increased Recruiter Manning:* Enables the Navy to have a greater reach and engagement with the youth population across the recruiting Nation.
- *Enlistment Bonus:* Leveraged to attract high-quality recruits to fill high demand rates. Future sailors can earn up to \$140,000 in incentives (by completing requirements for critical jobs in the Navy).

In addition to the policy levers and initiatives, the Navy's monetary incentives have enabled us to influence the placement of shippers and remain in contention with other Services and the civilian market. Current bonuses offered to candidates include:

Up to \$140,000 in combined enlistment incentives:

- \$75,000 Enlistment Bonus Ceiling—Expanded opportunities for future sailors to reach or get close to the ceiling
- \$65,000 Loan Repayment Program
- Currently offering \$35,000/\$25,000/\$10,000 for Active component (AC) Future Sailors (FS)
- \$25,000 for select Training and Administration of Reserve (TAR) FS.

RECRUITING MODERNIZATION

The Navy continues to employ the Forged by the Sea digital M&A campaign with success in reaching all demographics. In fiscal year 2023, NRC communicated this value proposition via its latest advertising campaigns, including “Never,” the newest iteration of the Forged by the Sea campaign. With just 2 percent of eligible prospects indicating their motivation to serve, the remaining 98 percent say “never” to

a Navy career before exploring the possibilities. This iteration addresses propensity directly by highlighting all the things sailors never thought they would do or achieve if they had not joined the Navy. It shows the breadth and depth of opportunities in the Navy while speaking directly to our target audience's common reservations about the Navy. The campaign captures authentic, relevant, and compelling content featuring real sailors while emphasizing inclusion and diversity.

We use specific targeting and content strategies to appeal to a diversity of demographics and demonstrate what a Navy career can do for them. For example, the "Make Your Name" video series, which highlights empowering stories of female sailors and a YouTube masthead takeover during Women's History Month, reached nearly half of all women aged 18 to 24 in the United States.

A focused budget has immediately impacted recruiting efforts by generating interest and online activity via digital advertisements. Additionally, Navy leveraged additional M&A resources to purchase media that speaks to our target audience and talks to the influencers who can provide added value by reinforcing potential candidates' career decisions. Specific examples include:

- They executed 30-second broadcast TV commercial during the Super Bowl in 16 major markets throughout the U.S., when viewers were expected to watch and talk about ads.
- Streaming platforms: Hulu, YouTube TV, and Sling, to include ads during peak viewing times, such as March Madness.

In fiscal year 2023, we continued cultivating relationships and connections with professional organizations whose members share an aligned interest with the Navy. Additionally, the Navy ensures we are listening to feedback, identifying blind spots in our outreach initiatives, and continuing to penetrate markets that may have gone untapped in the past. The Navy also strives to serve multicultural students and communities through programs like Promotional Days, Junior Officer Diversity Outreach, and "Divine Nine" Ambassador Program, leveraging the Navy's built-in community of Active Duty fraternity and sorority members.

ACCESSIONS SUPPLY CHAIN

The persistent recruiting challenges make exploring creative solutions to reduce attrition in Navy accession training more important. In response, the Naval Service Training Command (NSTC) domain created initiatives to give recruits more training opportunities while broadening the Navy's talent pool. An expanded Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) waiver policy, the use of alternate cardio during physical fitness tests, receptive acclimation at Recruit Training Command (RTC), and the newly created Future Sailor Preparatory Course (FSPC) (Physical and Academic) have demonstrated positive results in production of enlisted accessions to the Fleet.

Expanded THC Waiver Policy The expanded THC waiver policy significantly diminished the number of THC positive attrites while meeting changing societal norms. Previously, only recruits who admitted use of THC could receive a waiver for a positive drug test. In contrast, recruits who tested positive but failed to admit did not receive a waiver and were separated. The expanded THC waiver process includes recruits who test positive for THC, admit to such usage, and then obtain a waiver prior to graduation once they go through a rigorous medical dependency screening process. Recruits only attrite due to a positive THC test if they are medically deemed to be dependent. As a result, only 31 recruits attrited in fiscal year 2023, compared to 450 in fiscal year 2022.

Alternate Cardio The utilization of alternate cardio at RTC, which aligned policy with Fleet cardio options, minimized Physical Readiness Test (PRT) failures at RTC, yielding more sailors to the Fleet. Historically, recruits were required to complete the 1.5 mile run modality for the cardio portion of their official Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA). Recruits who failed the PRT entered a remedial fitness program and would retake the PRT, including the 1.5 mile run. In fiscal year 2022, 302 recruits attrited due to PRT failures. Under the new policy, recruits who fail their initial attempt of the run portion of the PRT can now utilize the bike for their second attempt and receive three additional opportunities to meet PRT standards before graduation. As a result, in fiscal year 2023, only one recruit attrited due to PRT failure.

Receptive Acclimation at RTC Attrition due to psychological reasons was the leading cause of attrition in fiscal year 2023. RTC is looking at methods to further reduce this type of attrition at the early stages of training. A redesign of training during Processing Days (P-Days) aims to increase teamwork and cultural acclimation. Instead of the shock and awe approach, recruits experience a steady increase in training intensity throughout their 10-week training. In this process, the stress level

is tailored to the specific training phase, establishing a setting where recruits can thrive. RTC emphasizes physical safety, opportunities, and skills to excel, associating setbacks with long-term growth. Early analysis has demonstrated that the approach has positively impacted early attrition.

Future Sailor Prep Course One of the most notable new programs implemented at RTC is the FSPC. Modeled off the Army's Future Soldier Prep Course program, FSPC was created to broaden the recruitment talent pool of future sailors through fitness and academic remediation. FSPC provides more recruits opportunities to serve and become eligible for an expanded number of ratings.

Recruits in the fitness track endure an initial 3-week fitness and nutrition curriculum to meet Navy body fat standards. After the initial 3 weeks, FSPC-Physical Fitness Skills Development (FSPC-FSD) recruits have up to 90 days on a 3-week rolling basis to meet RTC standards. As of 20 November, 370 recruits have been enrolled in FSPC-Fitness, and 280 have graduated from RTC.

The academic track is in its pre-pilot Beta phase, with a pilot set to start in January 2024. Recruits participating in the FSPC-Academic Beta go through a 3-week Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) tutoring curriculum. The early stages of the Beta testing (103 students enrolled; 58 completed the program) shown promising results with recruits increasing their ASVAB score by an average of 10 points, allowing for expanded job opportunities in critically needed rates to reduce gaps at sea.

CONCLUSION

Attracting quality future sailors is the key to maintaining our advantage at sea. Despite the recent and future challenges, your Navy team stands ready to take advantage of the opportunity to share positive military service experiences with future recruits and those who influence them. We are grateful for this committee's partnership in helping to address these challenges. We remain committed to working with the Congress to recruit, develop and retain a ready and lethal force. On behalf of the men and women of the United States Navy and their families, thank you for your sustained commitment and unwavering support.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Admiral Walker. Mr. Davis.

STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL JOHNNY K. DAVIS, USA, COMMANDING GENERAL, UNITED STATES ARMY RECRUITING COMMAND

Major General DAVIS. Thank you, Chairwoman Warren, Ranking Member Scott, and fellow distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss Army recruiting efforts. I am honored to be here today to represent Army leadership and U.S. Army Recruiting Command.

We are competing in one of the toughest recruiting landscapes I have seen in over 33 years of service. This recruiting crisis certainly did not appear overnight and cannot be repaired overnight, but our superstar recruiters work hard every single day to recruit the best and brightest volunteers who can deploy, fight, and win in a multi-domain environment worldwide, and I think about them constantly.

This fiscal year, our recruiting team, with support of the entire Army, is working to achieve a mission of 55,000 regular Army sessions, plus a delayed entry pool of 5,000 plus, to 14,600 Army Reserve accessions. As our recruiters manage current operations, we are continuously evaluating areas where we need to improve to overcome challenges presented by this current recruiting crisis.

We are grateful to have the entire Army support, from Army senior leaders to our most junior soldiers, in our efforts to transform recruiting operations, as well as build relationships with today's generations and share the benefits of military service. The Army is an organization that teaches valuable skills and provides exceptional benefits.

I want our Nation's youth to know the Army is a career accelerator, and I need them to lead us into the future. The personal benefits to service extend far beyond cash bonuses, health care, and housing allowances.

The recruiting crisis we are experiencing today is a very complex problem with many variables, awareness, declining eligibility, medical, academic, physical, competitive job market. So, there is no one and done solution that will fix it. That is why we must transform the Army recruiting enterprise.

The Secretary of the Army recently announced a comprehensive transformation to our recruiting enterprise, which will relook how we prospect, transform our workforce, establish an experimentation capability, improve capability for data analytics, and restructure our organization.

This will be one of the biggest efforts in the command's history and will be implemented in a phased approach. Right now, the most important factor is ensuring we keep this year's mission in the forefront. Our efforts are geared toward attracting young talent and reintroducing the Army to the American public.

We need your help to be successful in this effort. We will not lower our standards. We will not sacrifice quality for the sake of quantity. Army initiatives over the past year have shown real promise, such as the Future Soldier Prep course, transformational, 14,000 graduates, 95 percent success rate, both physical and academic.

This would not be possible without support of Army senior leaders and Congress. We are still in the first quarter of the fiscal year and too early to estimate where we will finish in 10 months, but I will say we are seeing momentum, and we will continue to build upon it. We will get this right because like my wife and I, we have skin in the game. We have two daughters that joined.

One joined the United States Army. The other joined the Marine Corps. Your continued support helps us gain the necessary tools to attract and retain the soldiers that serve our great Nation. It is always an honor to come together with our sister services.

We are grateful to this Committee for their continued support. I look forward to your questions. Thank you, ma'am.

[The prepared statement of Major General Johnny Davis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY MAJOR GENERAL JOHNNY DAVIS

Chairwoman Warren, Ranking Member Scott, and fellow distinguished Members of the Subcommittee on Personnel, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss Army recruiting efforts. I am honored to represent the Army leadership, the military and civilian professionals, and the courageous men and women in uniform who serve our great Nation.

The U.S. Army has come a long way in the last year. Our Army is the greatest Army in the world, but to maintain a competitive edge over our adversaries, we must ensure that our Army has the people with the right skills and talents to accomplish our mission. To that end and based on guidance from the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army, we have begun a transformation of the Army's recruiting enterprise. We continue to follow the Secretary of the Army's directive to strategically adapt the way we recruit and retain our Nation's best talent to sustain the All-Volunteer force. While in a volume fight, we are undergoing a historical transformation. We are building relationships with a new generation whose understanding and perception of what the military's role in society is different than previous generations.

We generated positive momentum from fiscal year 2023 initiatives including the Future Soldier Preparatory Course, Soldier Referral Program, and our refreshed advertising campaign: “Be All You Can Be.” Our efforts center around one focus: reintroducing the Army to the American public and inspiring a renewed call to service to rebuild trust among influencers and more importantly our youth. To ensure the Army has the soldiers necessary to meet the National Defense Strategy today and tomorrow, we have five recruiting enterprise transformation focus areas: Transforming how the Army Prospects, Transforming the Army’s Recruiting Workforce, Creating an Experimentation Capability, Enhancing the Evidence Base for Recruiting Policy, and Aligning Leadership and Structure. Transformation activities will be executed across a span of several years in three phases: accomplish the fiscal year 2024 Mission, near-term, and long-term transformation initiatives. Transformation will consist of a wholesale change in who, how, and with whom the Army recruits.

In line with the guidance from our Army senior leaders, I have established the following fiscal year 2024 priorities for U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC).

- 1) Accomplish the Army’s fiscal year 2024 recruiting mission.
- 2) Transform the Army Recruiting Enterprise.
- 3) As part of the Transformation, Realign Recruiting Enterprise Structure.

ACCOMPLISH THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 MISSION

As the Commander of USAREC, my number one priority is to accomplish the Army’s fiscal year 2024 recruiting mission. The competition for talent is fierce, and we must leverage the momentum we built in fiscal year 2023 as we continue building in fiscal year 2024. Recruiting will continue to focus on People, Mission, Training, Facilities, and Transformation. We are in a volume fight every day to accomplish our goal of 55,000 accessions and to place 5,000 contracts in our delayed-entry pool. Fiscal year 2024 will be challenging as we enter the fiscal year with a Delayed Entry Pool that is 8.4 percent of our accession mission, well below the target of 25 to 35 percent. It’s not just volume. It’s the right volume. It’s talent and precision to address the present global challenges with talented men and women to command our modernized systems capable of overmatch in a multi-domain environment worldwide.

To accomplish our fiscal year 2024 mission, there are three lines of efforts: building a positive command climate, taking care of our people, and making history! The key is Driving Positive Change—we cannot be comfortable with the same industrial process of the past. We must adapt the way we recruit, structure the force, solicit workforce feedback, train the force, incentivize enlistments, provide behavioral health support, reduce out-of-pocket costs on the recruiting force (parking fees and tolls), and foster innovative initiatives.

In our geographically dispersed organization, our recruiters operate throughout the world, representing the Army and enlisting future soldiers. Military representation in communities throughout the country is vital, but it means our soldiers and their families are separated from the resources provided on military bases (military healthcare facilities, housing, childcare, etc.). Living in areas without a military presence can present challenges for recruiters and their families, and living in high cost of living area presents additional financial burdens. Our goal is to provide every recruiter the same level of support our soldiers receive on a military installation.

The Army continues to improve how we select, incentivize, and train our recruiters as well as introduce new technologies that give us the competitive edge on the war for talent. Recruiting Command has already started a new Recruiter Selection Initiative that will better incentivize and select recruiters based on the following criteria: a Personality and Motivation Test, an Attentional & Interpersonal Style Inventory, and a Medical Screening.

Fiscal year 2024 mission achievement will set the conditions for a successful enterprise transformation. The Army is cognizant that transformation activities need to be thoughtfully calculated and executed to ensure implementation does not have any negative impact on the fiscal year 2024 recruiting mission.

ARMY RECRUITING ENTERPRISE TRANSFORMATION

Transform How the Army Prospects

We need to evaluate new methods, skills, messaging, tools/technology, and research to appeal to a broader swath of young Americans with the talents and skills the Army needs. We must take advantage of social media, text, and digital marketing tools to enhance our lead generation and conversion rates. We will work with industry and influencers to capitalize on technology and vehicles to drive awareness of and interest in the U.S. Army and the benefits of service. Initial areas we will

address are impacts of our GoArmy website, advertising, and virtual recruiting operations.

Today's youth are far more likely to pursue education beyond high school. Currently, high school seniors and recent graduates account for more than 50 percent of our annual contracts. However, they only represent 15 to 20 percent of the labor market. We will transform our prospecting to expand into a greater representation of the labor market and enter the larger prospect pool. In addition to the high school market, we will target those with more than a high school diploma, this includes a college degree, some college, or a technical certification. By fiscal year 2028, it is our goal for one third of new recruits to have more than a high school diploma.

We are growing our analytical capability to incentivize and position our recruiting force, tailor marketing based on segmentation, and place our recruiters in the right place with the right training, products, and tools. Our quarterly Industry Engagement Program allows us to identify new tools to improve operations across the enterprise.

As we transform how the Army prospects for talent, we will continue to innovate and leverage data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning (ML) to quickly identify the right talent and provide tailored messaging to potential talent. We are expanding our presence on both social media and digital job boards to communicate the Army's Employee Value Proposition (EVP). Expanding our market is critical to accomplishing the mission today and in the future.

Transform the Army's Recruiting Workforce

To recruit the best, it takes the best. Recruiting is no easy task, especially given the competitive job market. Selecting the right talent is the first critical task to create a professional workforce that can convey the Army's value proposition and benefits of service. The talents required of our recruiters in the modern labor market are very specific—we need to find the soldiers in our ranks who have those skills.

We are incentivizing volunteering to serve in the USAREC. Not only does our target market need a value proposition but so does our recruiting force. The Army is introducing multiple initiatives to increase volunteer rates and make the assignment more career enhancing. Some of the incentives include:

- \$5 thousand incentive for any volunteer who completes the recruiting assessment program and Army Recruiting Course until February 2024
- Accelerated promotion for high-performing recruiters (250 meritorious promotions per fiscal year, up to Sergeant First Class)
- Promote Department of the Army Select Recruiters (DASRs) one grade who produce 24 accessions ("shippers") in a fiscal year
- Make company command positions multi-branch/branch immaterial to expand command opportunities to more officers.

In the long term, we will examine transitioning from a borrowed and generalist recruiting workforce (DASRs) to a permanent and specialized talent acquisition workforce. Currently, enlisted personnel are selected from across the Army to complete a 3-year tour of recruiting duty as a DASR, during which they have the option to become a fulltime recruiter (79R) or return to their previous Military Occupational Specialty upon completion of their recruiting tour. As part of our efforts to transform the workforce, we are undertaking a detailed review of how both our current and future recruiting force are identified and sourced to ensure we leverage the widest pool of talented soldiers.

Our recruiting workforce is a valued participant in a larger Human Resources community of practice. Specific tasks include developing the process to select, train, educate, employ, and manage an enlisted talent acquisition specialist MOS (42T/Recruiter) and talent acquisition warrant officer (420T). We will also conduct research into the development of a more specialized officer workforce.

Initial areas of focus could also include modifying Army policy and practices to garner efficiencies and establishing partnerships with industry/associations/higher education organizations to establish best practices in career development, management, and curriculum. Our strategic focus is to enhance the culture, attract and retain top talent, and make USAREC an organization to which every soldier and civilian wants to belong.

Create Experimentation Capability

We will create an experimentation capability within USAREC to build a culture of innovation, generate evidence-based insights, and scale successes. We cannot expect the same success when relying on the same techniques and technology that bred success 10, 20, 30 plus years ago.

Our experimentation element will initially be focused on expanding the prospect market. The Secretary of the Army has directed Army recruiting to devote addi-

tional effort to recruiting in the broader labor market. To reach these markets, one tool we will utilize is online job boards. With the experimentation capability, we will be able to test the effectiveness and efficiencies of new techniques, beginning with our prospecting operations. This operational element will comprise recruiters who will continue to recruit while testing new technologies and methods. We will account for potential risks to normal production caused by experimentation—recruiters performing ‘off mission’ may be missioned for fewer than their peers due to assumption of innovation-related risk.

The intent is for an ‘off mission’ talent / team who can test and prototype novel but unproven techniques, programs, methods, markets, technologies and incentives. The team can and will question the status quo while trying new innovative ideas without the fear of failure. They will embrace change that can be implemented by our ‘on mission’ recruiting force to improve success. This agile team will operate autonomously and will minimize impact on our recruiters who are focused on driving and delivering volume fight for fiscal year 2024 mission. One might say, this experimentation team can “fail fast and fail forward.”

Enhance the Evidence Base for Recruiting Policy

Historically, the Army has reacted to recruiting challenges by implementing policies uniformly. This has largely precluded our ability to learn the precise effects of our policies. This initiative aims to solve this problem. It is critical to create an evidence-based learning and informed decision capability that will allow leadership to assess effectiveness of our accession efforts, including strategy, target markets, initiatives, and overall productivity using quantitative and qualitative data.

Army Senior Leaders have directed an evidence-based learning capability in Headquarters, Department of the Army to determine policy effectiveness. The goal is to establish in-house analytics capabilities to better see ourselves. Utilization of Operations Research and Systems Analysts (ORSAs), economists, data scientists, and think tanks will ensure accessions policies are implemented in a way that the Army can learn what does or does not work. Innovation efforts must be synchronized with enterprise learning, and we must have the ability to implement best practices.

Align Leadership and Structure

Our objective is to formulate an organization that achieves greater efficiencies and synergies to optimize our marketing and recruiting outcomes. The new recruiting structure will allow us to realize enhanced productivity and success. In addition, I want to ensure our leaders’ focus is on prioritizing people and organizational fusion over process and structure, cultivating trust and respect. In the end, we must integrate and link our strategy, goals, and execution to deliver consistent outcomes.

The recruiting mission is vital to the Army’s mission readiness and is a top priority for Army Senior Leaders. To ensure strength in communication and support between the Army Recruiting Enterprise and Army Senior Leaders, USAREC will be aligned as a Direct Reporting Unit to the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army.

To align all Army accessions equities, U.S. Army Cadet Command and the Army Enterprise Marketing Office will be realigned under USAREC. This will enable a better synchronization of efforts to support Army recruiting for both enlisted and officers.

CLOSING

50 Years of the All-Volunteer Force

Men and Women from all states and territories have joined our military out of conviction, not compulsion. The members of our All-Volunteer Force are motivated by patriotism, pride, and principle—by the desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves, and by their love for our exceptional Nation.

Over the past 50 years, our Army has recruited and retained patriotic and talented personnel from all walks of life. Those who have chosen to serve, enhance their skills, develop resiliency, and grow into leaders in their communities. They hone their skills as soldiers, but also as doctors, mechanics, teachers, data scientists, pilots, cyber warriors, astronauts, and Olympic athletes in our ranks. There are over 150 occupational specialties that provide opportunity to BE ALL YOU CAN BE! I encourage our youth to consider the Army and serve something greater than themselves. We also need your help—Members of Congress and your State and district staffs are among the influencers who can help us connect with young people in your communities, and share with them the value of service. No organization can bring out the best in people like the U.S. Army can. The strength of the Army is

its people. I am proud of the commitment and proudly salute each American who selflessly raises their hand to serve our country and defend democracy.

Senator WARREN. Thank you very much. Appreciate it, General Davis. So, I will do the first round of questions and I will get started. When potential recruits apply to the military, they have to pass through several screens to actually enlist, including a medical screening to make sure that they are healthy enough to serve.

Last year, the Department of Defense launched a new electronic health record system named MHS Genesis that is now used in the screening process. The screen is supposed to identify conditions that disqualify people from serving completely.

But the MHS Genesis system appears also to be flagging applicants with manageable or long healed injuries, triggering the requirement for the recruit to obtain a medical waiver before they can actually join the military.

One otherwise healthy applicant had to wait an extra 2 months to enlist while she proved that a childhood wrist sprain was not a disqualifying medical condition, and this is not a one off problem.

Data from the military services shows that in fiscal year 2022, one out of every six recruits needed medical waivers, the highest proportion any time in the last 10 years. Now, obviously, we want a screening process that catches disqualifying medical conditions. But do each of you agree that it is a problem if our process is creating unnecessary barriers to enrollment? Can I just have a yes from everybody on that?

Well, good, a thumbs up. I have got that from General Bowers. Everybody is good on this. Okay. I think this is where I want to start this conversation, because recruiters have told the press that this process is making their job a lot harder, and the data seem to back that up.

The Navy saw an average time between an applicant's final interview until their first recorded contact nearly double. Army Recruiting Command found that wading through these waivers could add up to 70 days or longer to the application process.

The Department of Defense Inspector General verified these delays. Look, it is a problem if it is taking healthy applicants longer to get through a bureaucratic screening process, but it is an even bigger problem if all of that red tape is causing some healthy applicants to drop out of the recruitment process altogether.

The Department of Defense Inspector General also recommended that each of the services track medically disqualified applicants to ensure that they are notified if there are options to pursue a medical waiver and to better understand the reasons why they may choose not to request a waiver.

Each of your commands agreed with this recommendation, but it is not in place for most of the systems. So, my question is when will that happen? How about we will go backward this time? General Davis, you want to start?

Major General DAVIS. Thanks, ma'am. The current Army senior leaders are very aware of this and are currently working on it. I don't have the exact date, but they are absolutely working on it.

Senator WARREN. That is not my question, are you working on it. My question is, can you give us an estimate on when we can expect that this will be done?

I mean, I hope you notice the irony that I am asking for questions about delays and what I am getting back are delays in answers. Got anything for me, General Davis? Okay. Admiral Walker, how about you?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Ma'am, thank you for the question. I do not have a specific date on when this will be implemented. We continue to look at inefficiencies in our process to try to wring out those inefficiencies so that we can bring more people into the Navy.

Senator WARREN. You don't have to go find this inefficiency. This one is big, and they are flashing lights all around it. I just want to know when you are going to get us see information, just the information so we can start fixing it.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, ma'am. I will take that back, ma'am.

Senator WARREN. Okay. Gerald Bowers, I think you have a better answer.

Major General BOWERS. Yes, ma'am. So, we actively track our waiver process. All of our marines are trained how to submit a waiver, how to inform an applicant to go through the waiver process.

More broadly, to your question on MHS Genesis and the accompanying health information exchange, the Deputy Secretary of Defense has recently stood up a task force to look at the challenges of implementation.

We are all very encouraged by this. We look forward to this task force being completed in February 2024, and we look forward to the results because we need to see action in the field.

Senator WARREN. Okay. So, you have shown us it can be done. You have gotten this part done, right? You are telling me the marines have?

Major General BOWERS. Yes, ma'am. We aggressively track waivers. Have a waivers section in our operations section, Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Yes, ma'am.

Senator WARREN. Okay. All right, and General Amrhein.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Ma'am, thank you for the opportunity. As far as the process to inform everyone that is initially medically disqualified from MEPS, our recruiters inform them of the opportunity for a waiver so that there is a formalized process to get through and into our waivers division within the Air Force, off of the DOD standard.

The formal IT system, I think you are—from the IG report, we will have in place by January 2021 with specificity on why someone—

Senator WARREN. January 2024—

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. 2024. Thank you, ma'am, for the correction. With specificity on why a member specifically disengage from the recruiting process. Having that said, our Surgeon General within recruiting service keep—has kept a track of those that left the service or left the process during the medical accessions process writ large.

From that, we were able to track the numbers of people that essentially walked away from the process. We don't know exactly at what point they walked away, but we know they did not complete through a full disqualification process, which only the Surgeon General within the Air Force can authorize.

Senator WARREN. Okay. Look, I appreciate that it takes time to set this up, but we cannot afford to lose people who have already demonstrated a willingness to serve. These are the people who say, I want to do this, especially if the only barrier is something that would be quickly dismissed by a medical review.

Senator Blumenthal and I sent a letter to DOD about these concerns and the impact on recruiting. We requested answers by October, but DOD claims they can't get answers to our questions for months because they are waiting on information from each of the four of you.

So, to each of our four witnesses, do you commit to working with DOD to get us these answers by the end of the year? General Amrhein.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Yes, ma'am. Absolutely.

Senator WARREN. All right. I like that. General Bowers.

Major General BOWERS. Yes, ma'am. Absolutely.

Senator WARREN. All right. Good. Good. Admiral Walker.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, ma'am. Absolutely.

Senator WARREN. All right, and General Davis.

Major General DAVIS. Yes, ma'am.

Senator WARREN. Okay. We are going to hold you to this. There is a real disconnect between the perspective of recruiters on the ground, seeing how this electronic health record system is undermining their efforts to meet our recruiting goals, and DOD's willingness to fix this problem.

So, if we are going to fix this problem, we need to make sure we are all rowing in the same direction. That was a Navy allusion. All right. Thank you. Senator Scott, up to you.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you, Chairwoman. First off, thanks, everybody, for your willingness to serve. Thank you for the sacrifice you have given and your families.

You know, when I joined at 18, when I joined the Navy. I, if I think back, I think the President was—but I never thought about that. I never thought about the politics of being in the service. I went in because I wanted to serve, and there is a perception now that the military has become political.

It is, you know, for whoever is the Commander-in-Chief. The Reagan Institute survey found, say—they say that the public's confidence in the military is dropping. Yes, fortunately, it is not the level of Congress or the media, but slower than it has been.

So, they say the rate—they say that the primary influencers like military parents or relatives, teachers, coaches are less likely to encourage young people to go into the military because of, the military has become political.

So, can each of you talk about, do you believe that is true? Is that what you are hearing? What if it is, you know, how are you dealing with it? Do you want to start, General Davis.

Major General DAVIS. Yes. Thank you, sir. If I can add, and I have talked to many applicants, families, influencers across the Nation, and I will tell you, one of the major things that comes up is really awareness.

I think this awareness is very critical as this population—so I will provide two examples. You know, first, we have in certain high schools during COVID without recruiters, so that's an entire, you

know, two really, you know, coming of age generations without information to really understand the power of service.

The other population of influencers, and I use always my own example. When I grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, my grandfather was a World War II vet. I spent a lot of time with him. But many of the homeowners on the North side of Milwaukee were also World War II or Korea war vets.

Now, they were the ones that really answered my questions as a young 10 or 11 year old whenever I had an idea of service because they all spoke of it whenever they came together and I was always intrigued and had many, many questions. That is not the same today as in terms of that population.

So, I mean, I have served, and I have moved all over the world with my family and we have been sometimes the only Army family in a neighborhood off post. So, I think this is—awareness is a key category. Again, sir, that is one of the things that really come up.

Senator SCOTT. So, that makes sense. What do you think of this polarization? You know, there is this perception now that the military is a political part of whoever is in the White House. So, are you not hearing that? So, you think this is—

Major General DAVIS. That is—and sir, I have talked to many families. I am not hearing that certainly at the level that it is what is—

Senator SCOTT. Have you seen that report that they—

Major General DAVIS. Negative, sir.

Senator SCOTT. Yes, okay, and you just don't—it doesn't make sense to you? Okay. Admiral.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Sir, thank you. Likewise, we are not seeing that in the young women and men that we are recruiting. Through our marketing and advertising, we want to show the ability for every American to be successful and those are the stories that we share through authentic experiences and relating with the American public that we serve.

As you have mentioned, 40 years ago, if you had 10 dinner tables, 4 in 10 of those dinner tables would have had a parent, a teacher who served. Today, it is roughly 1 in 10. So, we are trying to fill that narrative space about the positivity and benefits of service that isn't happening around the dinner table.

Senator SCOTT. General.

Major General BOWERS. Senator, thank you for the question. We aggressively compete for the best talent in every gender and demographic group in the country, period.

We do this by projecting our ethos and core values of honor, courage, commitment. We find that young men and women of character who want to be part of something bigger than themselves are responding to that call.

Senator SCOTT. So, you are not hearing from your potential recruits that the military has become political?

Major General BOWERS. Senator, we are not hearing that. That is not a part of the recruiting pitch. That is not part of who we are.

Senator SCOTT. That is how—you are not getting ask, so.

Major General BOWERS. Senator, no.

Senator SCOTT. Okay. General.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Senator, like my joint colleagues here, I think the story is very similar. That does not resonate with the issues that are on the minds of the recruits from a recruiting force.

I think General Davis captured it as well as the others, I think this is about awareness and telling our story, and making sure that, you know, that that divide that Admiral Walker brought out about how many have that common understanding of military service is very, very important.

That is on me to be able to do to ensure that our recruiters, every airman and guardian in our Air and Space Forces are charged to be recruiters and tell that story. Within that story, we are an apolitical entity by nature.

Senator SCOTT. So, you are not hearing it either?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. No, sir.

Senator SCOTT. Good. Thanks.

Senator WARREN. All right. Thank you. Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Madam Chair, and to the witnesses, thank you for your service. Just to level set here, General, I think you indicated that the Air Force did not meet its recruiting guidelines for the first time in 23 years. Is that correct?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. That is correct, sir. Since 1999.

Senator Kaine. General Bowers, you indicated the marines did meet their recruiting guidelines, correct?

Major General BOWERS. Yes, Senator.

Senator Kaine. Admiral Walker, for how many years has the Navy not met its recruiting guidelines?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Fiscal year 2022 was the—our first time, fiscal year 2023, excuse me, was the first time we hadn't made it.

Senator Kaine. Okay, and then General Davis, how about for the Army?

Major General DAVIS. Last 2022 and 2023.

Senator Kaine. Okay. So, relatively recent phenomenon. Marines haven't experienced it yet, but you are wary, and you are not complacent. I thought it was interesting, the Air Force recent phenomenon. Space Force doing okay. General Bowers, you used a word we don't hear in the committee room a lot, mystical.

We don't hear that in a lot of testimony. But I do think there may be a bit of a mystique about both the marines and Space Force that can help, so we might think about, is there a way to replicate that more broadly? I will admit some bias as the father of a marine, but I do think that sort of mystique as an issue.

We had testimony at a hearing earlier this year before the full committee where the Army presented results of a survey about this propensity to serve question. I thought it was interesting because what we heard, and I think that this could be generalized potentially to other service branches beyond the Army, is the top reason that people expressed an unwillingness was a belief that they would fall behind their colleagues.

So, I am going through high school. I have some talent. I have colleagues who are thinking about going to college. There is a belief among those, and it may be those who don't have military members in their families, but the stories that they are hearing or maybe the stories that they are not hearing, lead them to conclude that if they

serve in the military, yes, they can be some—part of something greater than themselves.

That is a plus, and they are not overly worried about their physical safety. That was not one of the top issues. But they worry that if they serve in the military, they are going to fall behind so that at 4 years or 8, or 20, or 30, when they leave, those who didn't serve in the military will have moved ahead of them in terms of opportunities.

I think that is a really key issue. So, talk about how you are trying to solve that issue to convince young people that service in the military, in addition to having patriotic benefits, is something that with tuition assistance and the leadership training you get, as well as the technical training, you are not falling behind anybody.

In fact, you are getting the ability to trampoline to higher and higher levels of success. Talk about how you make that pitch to young people.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Thank you for the question. I believe that individuals join the Navy for one of three reasons, to get away from something, to get to something, or to change something about themselves, all with the idea of becoming a better version of themselves.

To a young woman or man who would say, I am delaying. I would say, absolutely not. If you are coming out of high school, as you mentioned, we will train you in a skill set and give you that experience there.

If you are already in service or in industry and not ready to commit full time, you can join us as part of the Reserves. You mentioned tuition assistance and a robust GI bill that will enable you to further your education as well.

So, all of these—you build leadership skills, you build teamwork skills, enable you to either develop or continue with the career path and a lifestyle. So, I would tell them that the Navy offers every opportunity to be successful, however they define it.

Major General DAVIS. Sir, thanks. The fall behind, the leaving the family, deploying, I have seen that, sir. You know, I also thought about the same things, about the—you know, as an 18 year old in Wisconsin.

But what I have learned and what I share is, I first of all share my Army story that this is certainly a life accelerator. We are, you know, acting on this with our future, just current generation. I use that example as the Future Soldier Prep Course, those that would not otherwise qualify.

We have said, no, they are fully qualified, Let's bring them in and invest in them. The success of that, as I have—and I would offer everyone to take the opportunity to visit, is transformational because those young men and women that are now—we are investing in, they see the acceleration in their careers and their lives and now are going on to basic combat training and serving in leadership positions. That confidence continues to go.

Senator KAINE. My time is almost expiring—[technical problems]. We are facing similar recruiting challenges in the military industrial base. Hiring people in to be shipbuilders, sub-builders, etcetera.

The Navy has stood up a training facility in Danville, Virginia to train the submarine base of the future that is really interesting, and my staff and I have been visiting and watching it in action. One of the speakers at a recent graduation was there training to be a shipbuilder and had been referred there by a recruiter.

Some of the people who may not meet all of your qualifications, and please keep your standards high, they still want to serve the country. Just because they may not meet the qualification to come into one of the service branches, there are other ways they can serve the defense mission of this country.

In this instance, this individual had been told, hey, here is a program where you can train to be a shipbuilder. You can train to build subs, and the person was doing it with a real patriotic sense of duty and service to the country, even though they weren't going to be wearing the U.S. uniform.

So, I hope we might combine the recruiting challenges both for our Active Duty and Reservist, and our industrial base. Maybe share best practices and even refer back and forth, because all aspects of this spectrum of defense right now need some help in the workforce side in a tight labor market, and I think we can help each other out. With that, I will yield back, Madam Chair.

Senator WARREN. Thank you. Senator Budd.

Senator BUDD. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks for hosting this to my colleague from Virginia, Danville, Virginia. Virginia is awfully close to North Carolina, so perhaps we could learn what you are learning up there. Absolutely.

So, the services, most of the services are facing the most difficult recruiting environment since the inception of an All-Volunteer Force. As we heard in the opening statements, Air Force, Navy, Army all failed to reach their recruiting goals this year. General Bowers, congratulations. Appreciate your work.

To address the recruiting crisis, I believe we must focus on increasing the number of Americans eligible to serve and to seek ways to increase the propensity to serve. So, I would like to ask each of you, if you would, to talk about—and it is a four part question, if you will. Talk about one, the ways that the service is working to expand the pool of eligible applicants.

Second, without lowering standards, and I think in some opening statements you all mention about not lowering standards. Three, increasing propensity to serve.

Four, what can't the services do that you all need help from us on? If we begin with Air Force and work our way across. Just brief answers, if you would. I have got a couple of other questions.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Okay, sir. Thank you. From a ways to expand the pool, again, we have used our rebuilt strategic plan to really get after this, sir. Some of this is in marketing, being able to get into places and spaces we have not explored before.

Some of the partnerships that are discussed, all with identifying the aim to identify talent. Additionally, we have developed an e-recruiter program that actually has the ability to take what we call national leads and continue to work them through the process. So, that gets us into spaces that we may have not been able to work before and gives us capacity within the line recruiter force to

maybe work some of the more direct or lengthy session pieces on that.

So, our e-recruiter works a lot where the medical process or other is what we call a simple screen. That is into opportunity that then gives bandwidth for our recruiters to be out and about and in spaces that are not. Additionally, we do have a detachment within the headquarters.

It is called Detachment One, and its aim is to bolster aviation opportunities in underrepresented areas for those that have never had the opportunity maybe to fly or even see an airplane, or what it does, as well as marry that up with our wings.

We have several wings that fall under that or inspire wings to do that in that capacity. So those are a few of the ways across the spectrum of what we aim to do that expand to be able to have opportunities for folks of quality to come into our force.

Senator BUDD. Thank you.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Yes, sir.

Senator BUDD. General Bowers.

Major General BOWERS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BUDD. Well done on hitting your goals.

Major General BOWERS. Thank you, Senator. In the Marine Corps, we like to replace propensed with inspired. So, to say only 9 percent of the youth are propensed, that means there is 91 percent waiting to be inspired.

By our best marines, with our best commanders, projecting our ethos and core values the chance to be part of something larger than themselves, to truly make history, we find that it is working, attracting and inspiring the right young men and women of character to become marines.

Major General BOWERS. Thank you. Admiral Walker.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Expanding the pool, we have established, in mirroring what the Army did with their Future Soldier Prep Course, the Navy has instituted a Future Sailor Prep Course, both physical and academic, to allow as many people who are eligible and capable and meet our standards to join the Navy. We are adamant about not lowering our standards.

We want people to meet them. In terms of increasing the population, our marketing and advertising campaign, we are able to communicate to our target demographic to share the full experience of what it means to be a sailor so that we can dispel any of the myths about service that concern them, and for help needed, a national call to service.

When I say that I mean a conversation from public leaders about the benefits of service and how those—how sailors can use their service to further their lives. Those are the things that would help.

Senator BUDD. Thank you. General Davis, I want to ask you, in addition to that, in the limited time that I have, in your written testimony, you highlight the Army's recruiting enterprise transformation plan.

So, what benefits does the Army anticipate achieving from these new reforms, and when does the Army expect these to be finalized?

Major General DAVIS. Thank you, Senator, for that question. Some of these will occur right away, Senator. So example, how we

prospect may—the techniques that we train our recruiters on how to do this may change quickly.

Because I believe some of the techniques by which we are using, or our recruiters are connecting with the current generation, is really unchanged from when they contacted me in high school.

So, that is one area—that some of the things that we may change very quickly. In terms of the workforce, that is another area, Senator, that may take a little bit longer because now we have got to look at each, how we train, how we select, and what is the particular knowledge, skills, and behaviors we want from future recruiters.

That is different than from what it is right now. So, all of these are being looked at right now from our operational planning teams. They are briefing—I mean, the briefs are going directly to the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff for the Army for approval.

But these are actively ongoing, in addition to, hey, what can we do right now to, hey, do we need to expand, you know, Future Soldier Prep Course? What additional structure do we need to act on a particular initiative?

Senator BUDD. General, as this rolls out, will you commit to keeping us informed about developments on this?

Major General DAVIS. Yes, Senator.

Senator BUDD. Thank you. I yield back.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Senator Budd. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you all for coming to testify. I know that you all are facing major challenges because private sector is very busy trying to entice people to join up with them, and so, you know, you are facing a lot of those kinds of challenges.

I have to assume that you are wanting to attract people from all backgrounds, all racial backgrounds, et cetera, et cetera. I am wondering whether, as we have an awareness of some realities such as the barracks that are uninhabitable and there are these quality of life issues, I am wondering in your recruitment efforts, do your potential recruits ask about things like, where do I get to live?

You know, what is the quality of life conditions? So, do you get those kinds of questions, and are those barriers to people signing up with you all? Any of you. No? It is not a problem?

Major General DAVIS. Yes. So, the questions we get for many of our applicants, two things, hey, do I have an opportunity to select duty—station of choice. That is a big one, and so, that is really connected with the current population.

In terms of quality of life, we tell our—you know, we train our recruiters share your story because quality of life is a huge decision factor in terms of service to the country. Barracks, you know, it has not come up, but from parents that I speak with, ma'am, yes, it does come up. Hey, I want to make sure quality of life is in place.

I will tell you all, this is a priority for the Secretary and the Chief of Staff of the Army. We are just—they just spoke about that earlier today.

Senator HIRONO. I mean, really when—let's say that you are successful in recruiting and then they show up at their barracks and it is really bad condition, mold, etcetera.

So, we do need to improve those elements of service. That is why there is a program, pilot program to give military secretaries greater authority to replace substandard barracks and standardize barrier requirements.

So, that is something that some—that I have certainly pushed for. Now, you mentioned, you agree that diversity is important. You need to attract all kinds of people. I know that, for example, and this is for General Bowers, there was a report that there were only five African American marine fighter pilots, which is not even 1 percent of the marine fighter force.

General Bowers, the results of an independent study regarding the lack of diversity in pilots concluded the Marine Corps cannot overcome generations of discrimination and mistrust merely by removing barriers to participation in top tier jobs, such as fighter pilots.

Instead, it must establish new pathways to reach and recruit African Americans and entrust the role of, “chief diversity officer” to the commandant himself. General Bowers, what is the Marine Corps doing to address these concerns?

Major General BOWERS. Yes, Senator. Thank you for the question. As noted, the Marine Corps is aggressively competing for the best talent in every gender and demographic group in the country.

For our officer recruiting mission for fiscal year 2023 just concluded, we had the highest diversity percentage we have ever had. So, it is working. Our message is resonating with young men and women of character out there. We will continue to aggressively compete in every—for every market.

I think the issue becomes also one of retention and how we retain our best marines, which is a priority of our commandant.

Senator HIRONO. Well, that is another issue. So, can we look forward to having more than five African American fighter pilots at some point?

Major General BOWERS. Yes, ma’am.

Senator HIRONO. How long do you think that would take?

Major General BOWERS. Ma’am, I am not the Deputy Commandant for marine aviation. I know that we are assessing African American officers. They are doing well. I can take that one for the record and get back to you, ma’am.

Senator HIRONO. We want them to succeed. I am not talking about fast tracking, but some of these things have to be done in an intentional way. I would like it to be noted that we pay attention to the kind of opportunities that are created for our people. There is just one more thing, ma’am.

Oh, well, is it okay—I just want to. You are going to stop me? If you don’t mind, there was a time where single parents could not join without requiring them to resign custody of their children.

I believe that that is something that is being changed. Is that limitation being changed in terms of your recruiting?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, ma’am. One of the initiatives that we put in place in fiscal year 2023 is a single parent waiver that allows a single parent to have up to two dependents under the age of 18, but no younger than one, and join our Navy and continue to serve.

Senator HIRONO. So, do the rest of you allow single parents to join?

Major General BOWERS. We have a process whereby they can join, ma'am. Yes, ma'am.

Senator HIRONO. Okay.

Major General DAVIS. Same, ma'am.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. We do as well, ma'am.

Senator HIRONO. Yes. I think you also should think about cryopreservation as a way to help, especially women, but men too, in terms of family planning. It would enable, I think, more of them to contemplate joining because of that option. Thank you.

Senator SCOTT. Thanks, Senator Hirono. Senator Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen, thank you for your testimony on a really important topic. I wanted to ask all four of you very quickly, first question is, in terms of access.

I read somewhere that over 5,000 high schools don't allow recruiters on their campus. Maybe that is wrong. Maybe that is right. But what is your experience in that regard? Are there any high schools in America who are saying to you all, hey, sorry, we don't want you here?

My view is, we shouldn't allow that, right, that high school doesn't want the Navy to come recruit and whatever Federal funds that high school is begging for, they don't get a dime. Similarly with universities. I went to a university that banned ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] for over half century. Pathetic, in my view.

They are talking about leadership and then they kick off ROTC. When I went, I went to Harvard, they had a club called the Spartacus Youth Club on campus. It was a club dedicated to young communists, but they didn't allow Army, Air Force, Navy, ROTC on campus. Shows Harvard's values.

But again, under Federal law, universities are not allowed to ban ROTC on campus, or they lose Federal dollars. So, my first question to all of you is, is there anywhere you have seen problems with access, either universities or high schools, where they just tell you, hey, sorry, you are not welcome here?

Because, and maybe we take it for the record. I would like a list. I would like a list, right. Defending the Nation is everybody's job, and if we have high schools or universities who are saying, sorry, Army, you are not good enough for us, the Congress of the United States, the Senate should know.

So, just very quickly, are there—have you run into that? Are you hearing about that? Somewhere I read about 5,000 high schools, which to me seem like a lot.

Major General DAVIS. Sir, that is a—that seems like a lot. That is not what we are seeing in the Army. It is not so much that access is a problem.

What I would offer is, I think, meaningful access, wherever a young recruiter shows up to a particular school, they will say, absolutely, you are welcome, but we would like you to set up your recruiting table let's say in the cafeteria 16 on Friday.

So meaningful access we can get your help in terms of having our young recruiters share their story across all of the U.S.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay. Any other thoughts on that? Then again, I would like, if you don't mind all of you to take that for the record and maybe a little bit more of a deep dive, because it is really important. If there is a couple high schools and universities who are banning you guys, I would like to know.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Likewise, meaningful access, and what we notice is inconsistency in that access where one school will allow you to come in on a weekly basis, but another maybe only on a monthly basis. So that is the access challenge. But broadly speaking, we are not seeing any denial of access.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay. General.

Major General BOWERS. Senator, thank you for the question. What we did see in school years 2021 and 2022 where recruiters basically lost the ability to run a yearlong high school program due to the shutdowns due to COVID.

Senator SULLIVAN. Right.

Major General BOWERS. So, what we have done in the Marine Corps is an aggressive training program for our marine recruiters to run an effective high school program with periodic access. We are seeing this is working. It is really getting that muscle memory back where recruiters are frequently visiting all their high schools.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay.

Major General BOWERS. Thank you, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. General.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Senator, thank you for that. I would agree with my colleagues across the board here. COVID did put a natural hindrance, I think, in access to schools writ large.

We are not seeing systemic any schools, but I will take the point for the record to get precision back to you. But to their point, it is conditional access rather than full fettered in certain aspects.

I think that aspect is what is very critical, is to be able to do that. Like General Bowers, we have also—coming out of COVID, part of our training program was to reinforce the operations to get into the schools so we could reconnect with them.

But I think that—so you have that piece of it. But very much so, I have not seen systemic denials. Just qualified access.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Let me, Mr. Chairman, I will wrap up with just two questions. General Davis, you talked about this issue, which I think is a really big one, how the number of people who are serving has diminished so you don't have the connection that you would normally.

Are you working at all with veterans service organizations or groups like that? That is one question, and then just trying to get these under the timeline so the chairman doesn't gavel me out here.

General Bowers, I know I am a little biased here, but I do know a lot about—a little bit more than some about Marine Corps recruiting. I know that in the Marine Corps, and your bio is a good testament to this, there has been a tradition for decades to put the top marines in recruiting. It is tough duty because you have got to make your mission every month. But it also kind of helps you in terms of promotion, right.

So, at the end, it is not unusual at all to see several general officers and even Commandant of the Marine Corps who are—who had

done recruiting before. So, that is an ethos that I think has been healthy, where it brings the top military officers and enlisted marines to do recruiting.

So, do you think that is a model that is helping with regard to the numbers that the marines are meeting? I would be interested in the other services looking at that model. But General, can we start with you?

Major General DAVIS. Yes, sir. So, absolutely. I am actively engaged with the VSOs. I have traveled extensively to speak at their conferences, either VFW, you name it, Foreign Legion.

Just recently, I have sent a letter to every retiree in the United States Army through the Echoes to ask all of them for a—to really call to service to help us out there get the word out as influencers.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. So that is a good partnership.

Major General DAVIS. Yes, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. Excellent. General Bowers.

Major General BOWERS. Senator, thank you for the question. It absolutely is a factor in the Marine Corps. It absolutely helps our culture, the ethos of Marine Corps recruiting, having our best marines, our best commanders out there on recruiting duty to attract and inspire the youth of America.

Major General BOWERS. All right. Any other, General, Admiral, do you want to comment on either of those two questions?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Absolutely. We are engaged with our veteran population, and it is part of a broader effort for our war on talent and call to service by the entire fleet.

What we know from our historical data is this, is that if a recruiter walks out of his or her front door, it typically takes 10 individuals for that recruiter to garner one contract. If they walk out of that door with a referral from anyone, that ratio drops to 7 to 1.

But if they walk out the door with a referral from anyone in the Navy, Active, enlisted, or Active Duty Reserve, retired or civilian, that ratio drops to 5 to 1. So, capitalizing on folks who have experience helps the recruiting effort.

Senator SULLIVAN. Right. General, do you have any last comments on this?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Yes, sir. Thank you for that as well. We have bolstered our partnership with veterans organizations and other civic leadership organizations that are out there. Most specifically and most recently, Air and Space Forces Association, the AFA, has stood up its own recruiting task force as well, and so we partnered with them.

Many of them have served before, and so, part of this is telling our story. If somebody is there to be able to tell the story, the Air Force or Space Force story, then that is a multiplier, a force multiplier, and falls into our total force recruiting network.

We are looking to expand that with Civil Air Patrol in the near horizon and develop the TTPs, tactics, techniques, and procedures for them. We don't need them necessarily to be specific recruiters, but we need them to be able to be there, be present, be in the spaces, and inform what our Air and Space service is about.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Chair.

Senator WARREN. Thank you. Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks very much. Thanks for being here. The reason I came to this hearing was to ask the two questions that Senator Sullivan has just asked you.

[Laughter.]

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So, it just shows marines think alike. But what I would like to do is work with Senator Sullivan to submit more detailed questions on this access to educational institutions, because I have just discovered when I went to recruiters around Connecticut that in fact, the access is very diverse.

When you talk about meaningful access, a couple of recruiters have told me, well, you know, they have career days at high schools. We are not permitted to come to the career days. They say to us, okay, you can come on Tuesday morning between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., just as students are working—have you ever been in a high school at these moments when the halls are filled with students rushing to their classes?

You can have this corner over here. So, we are not denying access. We are going to give you this opportunity to be here. But not when it's career day, and they are booths, and everybody is going from one booth to another.

So, I would like to explore in greater detail with Senator Sullivan. Maybe we will write you something or do something a little bit more formal. But I think this is really an important topic because it shows, going to your—you use this nice word, a euphemism, awareness.

I just think there are a lot of parents who do not understand how good this would be for their kids as a career. You know, the skills they are going to learn, the discipline, all the stuff that you know very well. It is your selling point.

To go to something, to get away from something, or to do a better version of yourself. Much better version of themselves coming out of the military. I would also like to explore as best we can this second question of, is the military devoting its ablest to recruiting? It doesn't have to be to the exclusion of everyone else.

But you are presiding over a force. It should be a force of people. I want to make sure that we do as private industry does, and they focus on recruiting with their best people, putting their best foot forward as role models for those people who are out there trying to enlist people. We have an All-Volunteer—so, All-Volunteer Military.

So, I want to drill down on that, not necessarily here, because it is probably a question that you want to answer—well, maybe we can explore it off the record rather than in the formality of an on the record proceeding where everything is taken down. Let me come back to this question of medical waivers, and I want to second what Senator—what you have heard from Senator Warren so powerfully.

You know, the simple fact is that young people today just aren't as healthy as they were a decade ago, two decades ago. We see that in your numbers. I believe that is correct. You can say I am wrong in a couple of minutes when I give you the chance to say something.

When I enlisted, when I went to Parris Island, even then, I don't know what the proportion was, I lost count, but a major number of recruits couldn't make it through 11 weeks at Parris Island.

I don't know how many weeks it is now, and that is not a bad thing. You know, the fact that there are demands. My son, who was a Navy Seal, he went through BUD/S. He was, I think, one of—part of 10 percent that actually made it. Not a bad thing that people want to be a Navy Seal and maybe they can't make it.

So, I am wondering whether we can—we should and can modify the medical requirements in a way that gives you the chance to shape young people who are probably overweight, a lot of them. Maybe not as sharp as they should be.

Again, I, since I am out of time, unfortunately, I will have to beg the indulgence of the chairwoman for you to answer, but is that something that you think should be pursued? Admiral Walker.

[The information referred to follows:]

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. To overcome continued impacts of fitness shortfalls, the Army implemented the Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC) program in August 2022. This program includes a fitness component to help recruits who are otherwise qualified for service to meet the Army's desired accession standards for body fat composition prior to basic training. 3,893 recruits have graduated from the fitness component and moved on to basic training. This component of the FSPC has proven successful in unlocking potential within new recruits and demonstrates the continued Army investment in the youth of America without lowering accessions standards. The investment in these soldiers is resulting in a higher commitment to the Army.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Thank you. So, CNO recently signed out a personal forward message on the war for talent, and capitalizing on every sailor recruiter, because we do believe that every sailor, and that includes our civilians as well, is a recruiter.

In that initiative, we have tasked all 5,000 commands in the Navy to identify and nurture an applicant through the process to bring them into the Navy. So, we are capitalizing on the full strength and full force of the Navy to help us bring in talented individuals into service.

With regard to expanding the pool or improving performance, our Future Sailor Prep Course is we have a physical fitness one and an academic one. We stood up physical fitness in April 2023.

Our academic is in pilot right now. In full disclosure, we looked at the Army as a learning organization and said they are doing something really good there and we should do that too. On the physical fitness side, since that program has been and run, we have taken individuals who are outside of Navy physical fitness standards and through a 3-week course, enrollable up to 90 days, have brought 95 percent of them within standards so that they could class up and participate in our basic military training.

Our academic side is still in pilot right now, but we are seeing early successes where we are teaching individuals more problem solving skills and giving them the tools to improve performance so that they can move from one category of the ASVAB to a higher category, expanding the range of jobs available to them.

But both of these initiatives are helping us to expand the pool and be more accessible to young women and men who want to serve.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. In deference to my colleagues, I am going to ask that you respond in writing because two of my colleagues are here. But I really appreciate your very thoughtful and insightful testimony today. It is very, very important. Thank you.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, and thank you, Senator Blumenthal. Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for welcoming me to the committee, even though I am an interloper.

A couple of questions for the record. Thank you. I would appreciate it if you all could give me some research on the relationship between the unemployment rate and recruiting. My sense is that one of the reasons we are having problems with recruiting is that we have probably—I can't remember a lower unemployment rate. In other words, young people have so many job options today.

It would be interesting to see whether what we are seeing is some kind of structural problem or whether it is in major part a reflection of the State of the economy. So, perhaps someone at the Pentagon could look into that research. Second, I would be interested in some data on geographic diversity.

In other words, where are your recruits coming from? I am concerned, I have seen data in the past, that our All-Volunteer Army and Navy and Marines and Coast Guard are turning in, and Air Force are turning into a geographically limited body. In other words, more recruiting from the South and Southwest, or more people coming in rather than from the North and the Northeast.

So, I would be interested in that data. One of the problems—I am from Maine. One of the problems is we have lost Active Duty military bases in the Northeast almost entirely, so our young people don't ever see anybody in uniform.

We had a naval air station in Brunswick for 60 years, and kids grew up in Brunswick seeing the Navy on the street. They were their coaches and their friends and their schoolteachers, and that is something we have to sort of actively overcome.

There is a lack of exposure to the military among young people. So, those are some general observations. Senator Mike Rounds and I have a bill that I think is common sense, that if you are a dreamer, if you are a DACA recipient and you join the military and you serve for 5 years, you then have a pathway to citizenship.

I hope you agree with me that that would be a potent incentive for quality recruits. Admiral, do you think that would work for you?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Thank you. We are open to any tool that will expand the pool of eligibles to serve.

Senator KING. That is a bill that that we have that is active now, and I am hoping it is something that we can get general agreement on. It is just, again, it is common sense. If you have served your country for 5 years, then maybe a path to citizenship makes some sense. Marijuana.

Forty-seven percent of America is now in a State where marijuana is legal. The question is, to what extent is that a barrier to recruitment? Is it a, you know, it is a question, have you ever used marijuana? Is that a box that if it is checked, they are out?

If so, I think that is something we are going to—you are going to have to revisit simply because a lot of these young people are growing up in States where it is perfectly legal. You or I may not agree with that, but that is the reality. General, what are your thoughts?

Major General BOWERS. Thank you for the question, Senator. There is a process for those who have used marijuana before to access into the Marine Corps. But the Marine Corps is a drug free organization.

Senator KING. I get that. No—I am not suggesting that at all. I am just suggesting not being a disqualification if it is in your past.

Major General BOWERS. Yes, sir. There is a process where young men and women who have used marijuana before can become marines.

Senator KING. All of you have that policy?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Yes, Senator.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes—

Major General DAVIS. Yes—

Senator KING. Thank you. This is a marketing advice, as I mentioned with Senator Kaine. There are few jobs in our society where a young person can have as much responsibility and access to training as in the military.

You should sell that. I seriously think, I would like to see an ad in the Super Bowl that says, you want to get a head start? Join the Army, join the Navy. It is an opportunity that young people have that I don't think is marketed as much. I mean, I see the ads and, you know, a few good men and they are good—they are good.

But one of your selling points is that you are giving people an opportunity at training that they would have to pay thousands of dollars for if they were going to a community college, or an access to leadership that they would never get at the age of 22, or 23, or 24.

So that is free advice for what it is worth. One objection I have heard on the recruiting process is paperwork. That it is too slow. One of my constituents was trying to sign up and they asked him for his fax number. Come on.

[Laughter.]

Senator KING. We got to—and he kept getting forms that he had to fill out, and it was often the same information, what is your Social Security number? So, I think you ought to look at—pretend you are an applicant and see what you are given for paperwork and whether it is efficient, whether it is needed, or whether it is a barrier.

I would urge you to take a look at that, and the final question or comment is retention. One way to alleviate the recruiting problem is to have people stay longer. Is that a focus of your services, General?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Sir, retention is a focus for, I think, all the services, and for the Air and Space Force as well. What I can say is right now in our Air Force, our retention rates are unbelievably high.

I can get you—I can followup with specificity on the actual numbers. But to your point, those retention rates to retain have actually have trickle on effects with the ability within the Guard and

Reserve because normally people would choose to complete their Active Duty service and choose to go do anything else.

I do agree that retention is directly connected to a recruiting requirement. I can take any specifics back to the Air Force. I have a one that manages our retention, as far as if you would like specifics on retention initiatives. But those two are interconnected, sir.

Senator KING. I would assume in your jobs you would want to be pushing on other folks about retention because it takes the pressure off recruiting. General.

Major General BOWERS. Yes, Senator, thank you for the question. Retention is absolutely important to the Marine Corps. Our former commandant made it a top priority and we exceeded our retention goals. Our current commandant has it a priority and we are already well ahead of our retention goals.

Senator KING. Thank you. Admiral.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Likewise, Navy enjoyed really healthy retention goals in fiscal year 2023, and not only for the Active Duty, but we use retention in terms of Active Duty transitioning to the Reserves because the Reserves are as important a mission as is our Active component force.

Senator KING. Great. General.

Major General DAVIS. Yes, sir. High—I mean, historically high retention rates lately. In addition to that, we have turned to these soldiers who have determined—you know, I am having—quality life. I am doing a lot of great things. I want to stay on Active Duty. We have asked them for their referrals.

So, that is what triggered us to start a soldier referral program. Over 35,000 referrals. We have got about 1,500 in the Army just based off of the soldier referrals.

Senator KING. Well, I would love to see an ad at the Super Bowl this year that says, get a head start, and I won't ask for a commission even, so.

[Laughter.]

Senator KING. Isn't there a football game coming up this Saturday?

[Laughter.]

Senator KING. You have got both of them here.

Senator WARREN. As a fellow New Englander, I appreciate your point, Senator King, and I want to reiterate it about the importance—

Senator KING. We see no military.

Senator WARREN.—of if we don't have military bases in New England, we will not have recruits from New England. If we don't have recruiters in New England, we will not have recruits from New England.

If we want to have a military that serves all of America, we have got to be out there with our military and with our recruiters every place, not just in the South or places where it has been rich pickings in the past. All right. Good. Senator Duckworth.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman. I have to say, you know, adding to this recruiting, I mean, only 15 percent of today's youth have a parent who served compared to 1995 when it was over 40 percent of our youth had a parent who served. It really is important for our young people to see people who served.

I am going to switch a little bit back to, and you talk about the soldier referral program. At a Readiness subcommittee hearing this spring, I heard from General Alvin and General George, at the time the respective Vice Chiefs for the Air Force and the Army, and I asked about issues with aviation bonus pay.

In both instances, the services failed to process retention pay paperwork correctly, negatively impacting its members. In fact, in the Reserve components, among Reserve forces, we have reports going of the services not processing bonus pay going back to 2018, literally years behind in paying.

To all of our witnesses, do bonuses remain a key recruiting tool? Is your service properly trained and equipped to process these bonuses, and deliver them in a timely manner to servicemembers?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, ma'am. Bonuses remain an integral part to the recruiting effort, particularly in placement in our high demand ratings, think of nuclear, cyber warfare, information warfare, and our services posture to administer the bonus program.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Are you administering them in a timely manner? Are people getting their bonuses in time?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, ma'am, they are.

Major General BOWERS. Thank you for the question, Senator. Bonuses really are not an important part of our recruiting process. We do have bonuses. They are processed in a timely manner, but they are not why young men and women choose to become marines.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Okay. Thank you.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Ma'am, our accession bonus program is effective. It is timely. It similar to the Navy. It has a weighted rating for some of the most challenged areas, such as special warfare and certain maintenance areas.

We find—I have not gotten any feedback that the accession bonus program has not been timely in its payout, nor the enhanced college loan repayment program that was put in place to assume college loan up to \$65,000 for anybody wishing to come into the service of the Air Force.

Senator DUCKWORTH. I would take a look at the Air Guard and the Air Force—and the Reserve forces as well. General Davis.

Major General DAVIS. Yes, Senator. The bonuses remain an effective tool. What we have been able to do is align the bonuses with the focus, you know, military occupational skills. Right now, you know, infantry, you know, armor, field artillery, air defense artillery.

So that is where we are aligning the—really precision with the bonus, but no problems in terms of a payout or nor the long repayment.

Senator DUCKWORTH. I would ask the Army and the Air Force specifically to go re-look, rethink your answers and look deeper, because I think there are problems. But please go further than that.

Obviously, we have talked already about how the Marine Corps and the Space Force have met their recruiting goals. The other branches haven't.

I would like to hear from each of you, what are the recruiting challenges that are unique to your service in particular, and what efforts are you trying to take into nest your recruiting needs within

your unique force designs? Is there anything that we here in Congress can do to help you?

Major General DAVIS. For the Army, the key with us is really getting all of the—I think, again, it goes back to the awareness, ma'am, that not everyone understands the 150 plus MOS [military occupational specialty].

I think as we get around, I think our youth only understand maybe 15 or 20. But you name it from, cyber, UAS pilots, all of the key areas that are the really moving hot career fields right now are situated in the Army.

That is really what is unique for us. It is just so many MOS and trying to get that word out. Then training our recruiters to be able to share that, that is really unique to us.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Okay. Thank you. Admiral Walker.

Rear Admiral WALKER. What we found in our analysis is that there is awareness broadly that we have a Navy, but what that Navy does specifically in peacetime is often not well understood. As an example, one of our surveys, you know, asked, which service is the most important?

The response was the Air Force and principally wrapped around the reason, aircraft carriers. That when folks believe that everything military aviation belongs to the Air Force, once we are associated carriers with the Navy, the Navy became the most important force.

So, educating our public about what the Navy does are both in conflict and in peacetime would be helpful. This is also, how you can help is in the narrative about service writ large, ma'am.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. General Bowers.

Major General BOWERS. Thank you for the question, ma'am. Our challenges in Marine Corps recruiting are the same as they have always been. Not everybody is fit to be a marine. We are not for everybody.

We are looking for those select few, again, young men and women of character who, you know, are attracted to the ethos and the core values of being part of something bigger than themselves.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Okay.

Major General BOWERS. Thank you.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. You know, thank you for the question. Similar to General Davis, and I would say that it is about familiarity with all of the jobs. We heard that story on—from Admiral Walker on aircraft and aircraft carriers.

I think it is recognizable from a brand standpoint that the Air Force has airplanes, but we also have medical professionals, civil engineers, doctors, you know, maintainers to be able to generate that air power and making sure that everyone understands you over 200 different Air Force specialty code, jobs if you will, that can come in, is a key component.

I think a very big challenge when we are maximizing our out and about and our outreach to the communities is telling that full story, getting every airmen and guardian to tell them what they do for their Air and Space Force.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. Thank you, Chairwoman.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Senator Duckworth. So, young people who are considering joining the military place a lot of weight

on how those who are currently serving are treated, and it makes sense, joining the military is a big honor, but it is also a life altering commitment that requires a lot of sacrifice.

Major General Davis, the Army has the greatest recruiting challenges of all the services, so let me direct this question to you. Do you think that quality of life is an important factor for potential recruits and whether or not they decide to enlist?

Major General DAVIS. Yes, Senator, quality of life is important. I mean, I have children in uniform. I have—whenever I have visited, I take a look at the barracks situation just like any parent would. So, I think it is so very important. It impacts retention and continued service. So, yes, I 100 percent agree.

Senator WARREN. Good. Very important, 100 percent. You know, your predecessor said quality of life is, “fundamental” to both recruiting and retention. Now, it should be obvious, what a way to start a question, but the way that DOD drags their feet on some of the issues around quality of life really makes me wonder if they get it.

I have found this particularly frustrating when it comes to privatized military housing. For years now, at Congress’s insistence, the Department of Defense has promised to repair substandard housing.

One of the reforms we passed into law was that the DOD would be required to create a public complaint data base, which would allow tenants to be able to submit their concerns about their housing.

It would also give us a way to ensure accountability for housing contractors and give military families information about the quality of their housing. Three years, 3 years after this law went into effect, DOD is only now in the initial stages of making this happen.

Major General Davis, do you think that being responsive to these families’ concerns makes these families and their servicemember more or less likely to recommend military service to others in their community?

Major General DAVIS. Yes, ma’am. If we have the families’ back, they are more likely to recommend.

Senator WARREN. Yes. Well, you know what really bothers me here is we still don’t even understand the full scope of the problem of substandard military housing because information is hidden from the public.

For example, it was only through a FOIA [Freedom Of Information Act] request by a journalist that we learned that the Army was failing to properly inspect homes with lead based paint and asbestos containing materials just to make sure that they were safe to live in. 41 percent of the military homes had no survey identifying asbestos risk areas.

So, Major General Davis, do you think it is reasonable for military families to expect the Army to do basic due diligence to make sure that servicemembers and their families aren’t breathing in fibers that could give them cancer?

Major General DAVIS. Yes, Senator.

Senator WARREN. I know the questions seem so obvious, but I don’t know what else to do to get the DOD to respond here.

You know, what frustrates me here is that we have these private contractors who run much of the military housing, and these companies refuse to provide these inspections because they claim it costs too much.

Even some of our military leaders have dismissed concerns about housing or actually blame the soldiers and their families. In fact, the Army commander at Fort Bliss said, and I quote, “I don’t have a mold problem. I have got a discipline problem,” and that the soldiers needed to be better at “adulting.” Major General Davis, do you think that remarks like this tell soldiers or potential recruits that the Army has their back?

Major General DAVIS. Senator, I won’t speak for those remarks, but I will say the Secretary, the Chief, and all of us have these families’ backs.

Senator WARREN. Well, when we fail to fix obvious problems, we will lose people’s trust. Because DOD has been too little, too late in fixing housing problems, I have turned up the heat again.

I secured a provision in this year’s National Defense Authorization Act to create a Military Housing Readiness Council to hold DOD and the services accountable. I will not let this drop. DOD’s negligence is shameful. Military families deserve decent housing, and that means housing without mold, housing without rats, housing without sewer backups—decent basic housing.

I am sick of DOD fighting us tooth and nail on addressing military families’ legitimate concerns and then being shocked, shocked that they have recruiting problems. It is long past time for DOD to implement the public complaint system and make those data available to families.

If they want to claim to put people first, then DOD and our military leadership need to walk the walk. Thank you. Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT. So, they made it easier when I was in there, and they didn’t give us any. We didn’t have any privatized housing. I wasn’t around when that happened, but it didn’t seem like the way it was set up, there was any accountability. General Davis, can you talk about the Army Recruiting Enterprise Transformation Initiative and how it is working, and why you did it?

Major General DAVIS. Yes. Thank you, Senator. The transformation based on the announcement about a little over 5 weeks ago is clearly underway. The operational planning team came together, about 100 personnel with expertise across many different areas.

From force management to personnel policy, to contracting structure all came together and are looking at each of the particular areas based off of the Secretary’s announcement. You know, how we prospect—what—you know, how we are changing the workforce.

These are all huge fundamental changes that are huge for this Command. The biggest change this Command has underwent over the last really 20 plus years. Each one has a major set of recommendations for the Secretary, and they just finished—Senator, they just finished up over the last week.

That first brief to our senior leaders will really occur next week for the Secretary and the Chief to consider.

Senator SCOTT. Good luck. I went over the memo the Army recently released about COVID discharge upgrades. Can you tell us

what the Army gave to the board that is going to adjudicate these claims? If a soldier refused a vaccine but did not ask for a religious or medical exemption, will they—is the Army going to upgrade their discharge?

Major General DAVIS. Senator, I will have to take that for the record. I don't know all the different details, but what I will say is there is a process for those that want to return to the service. Matter of fact, I think as of last—a few days ago, I think number is about 57.

That is not all back on Active Duty. That is some who are on Active Duty and some who are awaiting their ship days to return to the active force. So, that process is working. But in terms of where they are discharged, the status of that, I just got to come back and give you more—

Senator SCOTT. How are each of you dealing with people that were discharged but they didn't ask for an exception?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Thank you. We have contacted everyone who provided valid contact information once the COVID vaccine was rescinded, requirement was rescinded, and let them know that they could petition for reinstatement through Navy Recruiting Command. Since then, we have had two personnel return to Active Duty.

Major General BOWERS. Thank you, Senator. We contacted all of those who were discharged for refusing the COVID vaccine. We have contacted them about coming back. We have had 14 come back and there is another one pending.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. So, similarly, our Air Force personnel, Senator, reached out to all to notify them on the opportunities to return and the process to do so.

Senator SCOTT. Where are you all on having—on people that were discharged for not taking the vaccine have to pay for their training? Did you guys, any of you do that? Nobody did that?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. No, sir.

Senator SCOTT. Okay. Let's go ahead.

Senator WARREN. Okay. I have got one more issue I want to talk about. A Department of Defense survey finds that one reason that people don't join the military is because they fear being injured or dying. It is understandable. It is part of the job.

But while we all accept that there are risks that come with fighting the enemy on the battlefield, I am concerned that too many servicemembers are receiving lasting injuries—injuries or losing their lives due to accidents. In fact, accidents have been one of the leading causes of death for Active Duty servicemembers.

Last week, an Osprey based in Japan crashed during an Air Force Special Operations training accident, taking the life of Jake Galliher, a young father from Pittsfield, Massachusetts. He leaves behind his wife, Ivy, and two little boys. His older son is 2 years old, and his younger child is just 6 weeks old.

The Air Force does not believe that anyone on that flight will return home to their families. General Amrhein, does it hurt or help recruiting to show that the Air Force is taking safety concerns very seriously?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Senator, thank you for the question. If I could please start by saying our hearts go out to the eight

members that were lost due to that tragic incident, and they are in our thoughts and prayers at this time, their family and friends.

Regarding safety, safety is at the forefront of Air Force operations, not only from the flying aspect, from almost everything we do, everything we do, ground safety, there is an element of safety baked into it.

I think we take that extremely seriously, as well as you when you marry that up with the robust training programs that we have, that is what allows us to do our jobs to the maximum effectiveness and to maintain the ability to say we are the world's greatest Air and Space Force.

From a recruiting standpoint, ma'am, I think that is the point to reemphasize, is that we have a safety culture, a safety mindset, and that have confidence that when you come into our Air and Space Force, you will be trained, you will be trained very, very well to be able to execute missions, ma'am. That is how I would answer that portion from a recruiting standpoint.

Senator WARREN. I appreciate that. In the wake of this tragedy, Jake's family has asked the Air Force to ground these three aircraft to prevent further loss of life. They are right to raise the question.

The crash that killed Jake is only the latest in over a dozen accidents in the past 3 decades, including a crash in August that killed three marines. As Jake's father has asked, "how many more of our servicemembers need to die on those damn planes?" General, I know the Air Force shares this family's pain, and I appreciate your statement on that. But this family also wants to see action.

The Air Force grounded the V-22 for safety issues last year. I think it is time to seriously consider doing so again with the Osprey until we can be confident that we won't lose any more lives in what appears to be a preventable tragedy.

Senator Scott, do you have any more questions? All right. I want to thank all of our witnesses for your testimony today. I also want to thank you for the work you do every day and all the people who are working with you to recruit the best and the brightest.

I want to thank John Clark, Gary Leeling, Andy Scott, Sofia Kamali, Noah Sisk, Jenny Davis, Sean O'Keefe, Katie Magnus, and Brendan Gavin for their work in putting together today's hearing. It takes a lot of people to make this work well.

Our people remain our greatest strength as a Nation. If we have programs in place to support servicemembers and their families, we can prove to the next generation that we value their service and their sacrifice.

If we get this right, it won't just be the recruiters convincing people to join the military, it will be everyone in the Force. So, I look forward to working with my colleagues on this Committee, with my Ranking Member Scott, and turning this crisis around.

Thank you. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:46 p.m., the Committee adjourned.]

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

EFFORTS TO TARGET DIVERSITY SHORTFALLS IN THE USMC

1. Senator HIRONO. Major General Bowers, the results of an independent study regarding the lack of diversity in marine fighter pilots concluded the Marine Corps cannot overcome generations of discrimination and mistrust merely by removing barriers to participation in top-tier jobs, such as fighter pilots. Instead, it must establish new pathways to reach diverse candidates and entrust the role of “chief diversity officer” to the Commandant himself. Major General Bowers, what is the Marine Corps doing to address these concerns?

Major General BOWERS. Our Marine Corps is dedicated to attracting the best individuals to serve our great Nation. We seek out individuals who bring a variety of experiences and talents to the battlefield. We want marines who process information in different ways and who, collectively, come up with a broad array of solutions to solve complex global problems.

We will keep faith with the American people; they need to know that their Marine Corps reflects those that we support, that we defend. In large part we do. No matter your race, background, gender, or religion—there’s a place for you in the Marine Corps if you aspire to serve and can meet our rigorous standards. When you do, you will have an equal opportunity to perform, succeed, and excel.

To cast a wide net for Student Naval Aviators (SNA), the Marine Corps has numerous commissioning programs that allow both civilian and military personnel to obtain a commission as a Marine Corps Second Lieutenant and apply to become a SNA. The United States Naval Academy, with its STEM-focused curriculum—has historically provided roughly 25 percent of the Marine Corps’ aviation accessions annually.

Additionally, we have two community outreach programs that help inform young men and women of the opportunity to become an SNA. The Marine Corps Flight Orientation Program (MCFOP) assists in the recruitment of highly qualified applicants and enhances public awareness of Marine Corps aviation through connecting applicants with a Marine Corps Pilot and allow them to fly together in a civilian aircraft. We also use Aviation Enhanced Area Canvassing (AEAC) events, which include Marine Corps Air Station tours and aviation focused events that all contribute to the successful recruitment of SNAs.

Other programs, which offer a guaranteed opportunity to become a pilot include: Officer Candidate Course (OCC)—open to college seniors and graduates; Platoon Leader Class (PLC)—open to college freshmen, sophomores and juniors; Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC)—Offers 2, 3, and 4 year scholarships that lead to a commission; Enlisted Commissioning Program (ECP)—designed to provide the opportunity for marines who have earned a 4-year degree before joining the Marine Corps or during Active Duty to serve as Marine Corps officers; and Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP)—an enlisted-to-officer commissioning program designed to provide outstanding enlisted marines the opportunity to serve as Marine Corps officers.

CITIZENSHIP FOR ENLISTEES

2. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, despite recruiting shortfalls, many immigrants, including over half a million DACA recipients, are barred from joining the military. Our country has a proud tradition of immigrants serving in the military, which we should support. Key to this is legislation like the DREAM Act, which would provide a pathway to citizenship for certain young people brought to the U.S. as children who now meet some requirements, like military service. How would legislation like this help each of your Services meet their recruitment goals?

Major General DAVIS. Any legislation that opens the aperture to allow more qualified and propensed individuals to serve in the military will support the Army’s recruiting mission.

Rear Admiral WALKER. First, it would increase the number of people eligible to pursue military service while meeting our high standards for character and performance. Second, those who would be newly eligible are also likely more propensed to serve, seeing military service as a way to meaningfully give back to their adoptive country. Finally, those brought to the U.S. as children are often ideal candidates for future service because they have a U.S. education, participate in ASVAB testing, and high school recruiting processes, and have the supporting records accumulated by U.S. and state-level government.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps is always open to new ideas that will open the aperture for more quality recruits. We would be interested in working with Congress, the Department, and other Services on finding a way forward.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. A legislation change to title 10 USC 504 could expand the pool of eligibles to serve by allowing immigrants a pathway to citizenship through military service.

3. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, how has the Biden Administration's Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative program affected your ability to reach and recruit from immigrant communities?

Major General DAVIS. The Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative (IMMVI) consists primarily of a partnership between the VA and the Department of Homeland Security. It is focused on consolidating relevant Federal resources for noncitizen servicemembers, Veterans and their families, caregivers and survivors. The Army does not have any statistical data concerning how the IMMVI impacts recruitment from immigrant communities. The Army defers to the VA and DHS concerning the specifics of the program.

Rear Admiral WALKER. As we are in a war for talent in a highly challenging recruiting environment, we welcome any initiative that offers opportunity to highlight military service. We always drive toward ensuring a diverse force that is comprised of people from all walks of life across our Nation and beyond. Specific to the Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative, we have no data to understand its effect on our ability to reach and recruit immigrant communities.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps continues to recruit from every zip code in the Nation. Recruiters have conversations with prospective applicants and inform them of their ability to earn their citizenship in accordance with current law.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The DAF has not seen a change in recruiting policy due to this program.

MENTAL HEALTH AS BARRIER TO RECRUITMENT

4. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, current policies preclude some candidates from military service for what are now generally commonplace mental health conditions that have been found to not impact effective service. As our understanding and treatment of mental health improves, how are each of your services re-evaluating eligibility standards?

Major General DAVIS. The Army has codified guidance for the team that reviews the waiver requests regarding Behavior Health (BH) conditions and medications. This guidance includes flexibilities of BH diagnosis based on history and BH meds that are older than 24 months. Additionally, we have codified for recruiting command that no waiver is needed for grief counseling, and ADHD without medication for over 24 months. The Army is relooking all waiverable and non-waiverable conditions and treatments to determine what can be changed reasonably with updated standards of care.

DOD adheres to criteria for applicants who have received mental health treatment as outlined in DODI 6130.03 Volume 1, "Medical Standards for Military Service: Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction," May 6, 2018, as amended. To reduce barriers to service, DOD consults with the civilian medical community to ensure these standards align with the needs of DOD and increase accurate suitability determinations. Through the Accession and Retention Medical Standards Working Group, DOD also reviews the current standards related to mental health and completes periodic revisions, as appropriate. The DOD is also collaborating with the Military Services to assess the potential for relaxing several mental health standards.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Accessions standards published in Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 6130.03 Volume 1 are regularly reviewed by the DOD Accession and Retention Medical Standards Working Group with periodic changes published for smaller revisions (the last was in November 2022) and total Volume 1 revisions completed every 4–5 years. In November 2023, the Services submitted suggestions to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for inclusion in the next revision, which would relax several of the mental health standards.

Since formal changes or revisions to a DODI take time, in the interim, the Service medical waiver reviewer authorities have adjusted their waiver criteria for many of these mental health conditions if the individual's condition is stable and has good prognosis within the training and operational environments. In addition, the Services have proposed several mental health conditions be included on the Medical Ac-

cession Records Pilot list used by the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command to qualify individuals who do not meet the Volume 1 accession standards, but have shown a several-year period of stability for inclusion in the conditional Delayed Entry Program list. This allows the individual Services to contract disqualified applicants in advance of receiving a medical waiver.

Major General BOWERS. Marine Corps Recruiting Command is working with our recruiting and medical partners to review the current DOD Instruction on accession medical standards with an aim at modernization and improving opportunities for those who wish to serve their nation.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Mental Health conditions are certainly a major concern for all recruiting services. The Air Force Recruiting Service's Accession Medical Waiver Division (AMWD) regularly looks at the data for all diagnoses to see where it is appropriate to take more risk for accession. Of the top 13 medical conditions where a disposition was provided for an accession waiver request, 6 were mental health related. 5,360 dispositions (out of 14,080, or 38 percent) were for mental health conditions. A waiver was provided for these members about 60 percent of the time. The AMWD regularly provides waivers for those with less severe mental health conditions (e.g. those who sought counseling for stress or who were on medication treatment for short periods of time). Those who had symptoms/needed treatment for longer periods of time (over a year or more), or who had recurrence of symptoms after remission, are at higher risk of having symptoms while in the Air Force that impact mission capabilities. Decisions regarding whether to provide a waiver are made based on whether the clinical notes include a diagnosis of a disorder using the criteria in current medical literature.

While it is true that public awareness of mental health issues is increasing and there are many different effective treatments, the impact on military readiness may still be very high. Therefore, any adjustments to mental health accession standards need to be made only after careful considerations. In the past few years, the AMWD has expanded the opportunities for those with a history of mental health problems to serve by reducing the required time of stability off medication/treatment prior to serving. How much time off medication/treatment is needed depends on the complexity and severity of the condition(s). We have previously used a period of 3 years for demonstrated stability, but we have recently reduced that time down to 2 years, assuming there are no other confounding factors.

Part of the mechanism to reevaluate standards and waiver decisions is dependent on having the ability to study data from prior decisions. The AF is currently working to establish a full-time capability to conduct analytic studies on operational outcomes from prior medical waiver decisions.

BARRIERS TO ENTRY FOR SINGLE PARENTS

5. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, for several years the military Services (including the Coast Guard) have each enacted policy for the recruitment of single parents which required the applicant to give legal, physical custody of their child or children to another adult under the argument that being the sole custodian of a minor is not conducive with military requirements or lifestyle. For many single parents, and potential applicants, this would mean giving custody to the non-custodial parent, with no legal assurances they would be able to get custody of their children back. For many applicants this is a significant barrier to entry. However, DOD Instruction 1304.26 allows the Service Secretary authority to waive the custody requirement. Does new accession policy require single parents to relinquish legal custody of their children while they attend entry level training?

Major General DAVIS. The Army does not advocate relinquishing custody of dependents to become eligible for enlistment into the Regular Army. It is not the Army's intent or desire of the Army to require any person to relinquish custody of their children to qualify for enlistment. However, the Army recognizes that some persons for personal reasons have given up custody of a child or children. Accordingly, Army established rules so that a determination could be made for enlistment purposes. Applicants, who on their own accord for personal reasons have placed custody of a child or children in the custody or guardianship of the other parent or another adult by court order or written custody agreement between both parents that is valid under State law, and the applicant is not required to pay support for more than three dependents, then the applicant is eligible for enlistment.

Notwithstanding, for several years, Army has allowed single custodial parents that has custody of a dependent under age 18 to enlist into its Reserve Components (US Army Reserve (USAR) and Army National Guard (ARNG)), provided he or she has an approved Family Care Plan (FCP) prior to enlistment.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps is governed by DOD Instruction 1304.26 which states, "Single parents who have sole physical or sole legal custody of minor dependents are not eligible for enlistment in either the Regular or Reserve establishments." The Secretary of the Navy has not waived this requirement, and therefore we remain in compliance with the Instruction. Therefore, currently, the enlistment processing cannot begin until 90 days have elapsed from the date of custody transfer. Questionable cases are forwarded to the appropriate region SJA for review before enlistment.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Transferring custody of family members to enter the Department of the Air Force (DAF) is prohibited. It is not the intent of the DAF to require any person to relinquish custody of their children to qualify for enlistment. Recruiting personnel must never counsel applicants to change their marital or custodial status for enlistment qualifications.

6. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, what is the legal definition of your service's requirement?

Major General DAVIS. Applicants for the Regular Army, who for personal reasons have placed custody of a child or children in the custody or guardianship of the other parent or another adult by court order or written custody agreement between both parents that is valid under State law, and the applicant is not required to pay support for more than three dependents, the applicant is eligible for enlistment.

Under Army Policy, an applicant for the Regular Army may enlist if they are:

- (1) Without a spouse and with no dependents.
- (2) Married and, in addition to the spouse, has less than three dependents.
- (3) Without a spouse and does not have custody of dependents.
- (4) Without a spouse and required to pay child support for less than three dependents by court order.

Pursuant to AR 601-210, para. 2-10d, it is not the intent or desire of the U.S. Army to require any person to relinquish custody of their children to qualify for enlistment. Under no circumstances will any Army representative advise, imply, or assist an applicant with regard to surrender of custody for the purpose of enlistment.

Major General BOWERS. Custody of minor children under the age of 18 often is determined by the State statutes where they reside. Recruiting officials must remain familiar with the domestic relations statutes where they recruit. Unmarried applicants who have relinquished permanent physical custody of dependent children by court order (final decree issued) are eligible for a Marine Corps District waiver for enlistment once 90 days have elapsed from the date of custody transfer.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Recruitment of single parents is authorized with an approved waiver to help establish a care plan, and to inform the applicant that dependents are not authorized to join the applicant until all initial training requirements are completed.

7. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, to what level of legal custody must an applicant relinquish?

Major General DAVIS. The child or children must be placed in the custody or guardianship of the other parent or another adult by court order or written custody agreement between both parents that is valid under State law, and the applicant is not required to pay support for more than three dependents, the applicant is eligible for enlistment.

Major General BOWERS. DOD Instruction 1304.26 requires that applicants may not maintain sole legal or physical custody prior to recruitment. Single parents may achieve this through dual physical custody or dual legal custody of minor dependents for enlistment purposes, the Marine Corps relies on a divorce decree, adoption decree, legal separation agreement, or court-ordered custody to verify a change in custody.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Not applicable to DAF recruits. The DAF does not require relinquishment of custody.

8. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, is your service, as the U.S. Navy has, issuing dependency-status waivers for this requirement as a way of broadening the recruiting pool? If so, how many waivers have been issued in the past 24 months?

Major General DAVIS. Army does not allow single parents with dependents under age 18 to enlist into the Regular Army. Therefore, waivers are not considered. The Army is exploring options for single parents that would broaden the recruitment pool.

For the Army's Reserve Components (USAR and ARNG), waivers are authorized. In fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2023, the recruiting commanders approved -1,854 accession waivers for single parents with dependents under the age of 18.

In the past 24 months, USAREC approved 6 Army Reserve single parent waivers. Major General BOWERS. Not yet, but the Marine Corps is reviewing the policy to explore options for allowing additional waivers to the current policy.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The DAF has allowed dependency waivers for 15 plus years, and single parent waivers for almost 10 years. In the last 24 months, the DAF has approved 130 dependency waivers.

9. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, if relinquishing custody is a requirement, is the applicant able to resume legal custody while on Active or Reserve Duty?

Major General DAVIS. Those applicants, for the Regular Army, who at time of enlistment indicate they have a child or children in the custody of the other parent, or another adult will be advised and required to acknowledge by certification that their intent at the time of enlistment was not to enter the Regular Army, with the express intention of regaining custody after enlistment. All applicants will be advised that if they regain custody during their first term of enlistment, they are in violation of the stated intent of their enlistment contract with annexes. They will (unless they can show cause, such as death or incapacity of the person who has custody) be processed for separation (involuntary) for fraudulent enlistment pursuant to Army separation policy.

Major General BOWERS. Yes, after initial training requirements are completed.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Not applicable to DAF recruits. The DAF does not require relinquishment of custody.

10. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are affected applicants able to seek/resume custody of their children once they've completed their initial training?

Major General DAVIS. Those applicants, for the Regular Army, who at time of enlistment indicate they have a child or children in the custody of the other parent, or another adult will be advised and required to acknowledge by certification that their intent at the time of enlistment was not to enter the Regular Army, with the express intention of regaining custody after enlistment. All applicants will be advised that if they regain custody during their first term of enlistment, they are in violation of the stated intent of their enlistment contract with annexes. They will (unless they can show cause, such as death or incapacity of the person who has custody) be processed for separation (involuntary) for fraudulent enlistment pursuant to Army separation policy.

Major General BOWERS. Yes, after initial training requirements are completed.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Not applicable to DAF recruits. The DAF does not require relinquishment of custody.

11. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are there limitations to the number or ages of dependents an applicant can have?

Major General DAVIS. Army policy generally disallows applicants without a spouse who either have custody of their children; single, but responsible for providing court-ordered child support to three or more children; or, married but with three or more other dependents under the age of 18. Army policy provides that applicants for enlistment that are married with two or fewer dependents may enlist into the Army's three components (RA, USAR, and ARNG) without a waiver; and applicants for enlistment that are married with three or more dependents under age 18, may not enlist unless a dependent waiver is granted by General Officer level commander of the recruiting agency.

Major General BOWERS. Currently, in accordance with DODI 1304.26 applicants cannot have more than three dependents at the time of enlistment. The service does not have a minimum age requirement for dependents.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. A waiver is required when married applicants have 3 or more dependents under age 18 or incapable of selfcare; a waiver is required when single parents have 1 or more dependents under age 18 or incapable of selfcare.

12. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, is the onus, financial or otherwise, of any legal requirements placed on the applicant, or does the service assist with legal advice or processing?

Major General DAVIS. All legal requirements, financial or otherwise, are the onus of applicants for the Army, who for personal reasons decide to place custody of a child or children in the custody or guardianship of the other parent or another adult.

Major General BOWERS. Marine Corps recruiters are prohibited from having any involvement in an applicant's decision to consider relinquishing custody of a minor dependent. Recruiting personnel will not advise, imply, or assist an applicant concerning custody of minor dependents. The legal decisions of the applicant are their responsibility. Servicemembers have access to the legal service support centers to receive legal assistance.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Not applicable to DAF recruits. No legal requirements are placed on applicants for dependency status.

13. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, does your service provide any legal assistance once the applicant is in the military to reunite them with their dependents?

Major General DAVIS. Soldiers in the regular Army and Reserve component on orders exceeding 30 days are able to seek legal advice on this matter or any other issue that may surface during the term of their enlistment through their servicing legal assistance office (LAO) . . . However, soldiers that relinquished custody of their children prior to enlistment would face potential separation for fraudulent enlistment during their first term of enlistment, absent the ability to show cause for their need to reinstate custody—such as the death or incapacity of the person who had custody of the children. While the Army provides free legal assistance to its soldiers, Judge Advocates are barred from appearing in State court to represent their clients and may only provide general advice regarding these matters.

Major General BOWERS. Servicemembers have access to the legal service support centers to receive legal assistance.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Not applicable to DAF recruits. No legal assistance is required because the DAF does not require relinquishment of custody. Dependents will reunite with the sponsoring servicemember in the same manner that all dependents join their sponsor post-initial training.

14. Senator HIRONO. Major General Davis, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are applicants with joint physical custody eligible for enlistment? If not, are waivers available for this?

Major General DAVIS. Applicants to the regular Army with a joint physical custody agreement or court order requiring joint physical custody are not eligible for enlistment. However, applicants are eligible for enlistment if the court order allows modification of custody by written agreement of the parents, and if the other parent assumes full physical custody pursuant to that written agreement.

Applicants for the Reserve component may be considered eligible for a waiver on a case-by-case basis.

Major General BOWERS. Yes, they are eligible for service with the appropriate waiver.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Yes, applicants with joint physical custody are eligible for enlistment but may require waivers if meeting the following criteria: when married applicants have 3 or more dependents under age 18 or incapable of selfcare; a waiver is required when single parents have 1 or more dependents under age 18 or incapable of selfcare.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

ACCESSIONS INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT (AIE)

15. Senator KAINE. Major General Davis, what is your assessment of how AIE is progressing and what is needed to keep the program on track or to accelerate the implementation of this system to all recruiters?

Major General DAVIS. The Army's Accessions Information Environment (AIE) is progressing well this year as the program has refined its agile approach to development. As of December, AIE has released 3 software previews of the enlisted recruiting tool to early adopters, and we are receiving positive feedback providing immediate feedback and shaping of the program. Additional funding levels will allow acceleration of the AIE by 2 years.

16. Senator KAINE. Major General Davis, how will AIE address Army recruiting challenges and improve the service's capabilities to process applicants seeking to join the service?

Major General DAVIS. AIE will be the foundation across the Army Accessions Enterprise. This Commercial off the Shelf based solution will provide recruiters with industry standard software to better identify, engage, and recruit in the current and future recruiting environments. AIE will make the recruiter more mobile and productive through its ability for single data entry, device, and network agnostic approach with refined business processes. Recruiters will have the ability to better interact with potential prospects and provide timely and more relevant information to address their buying motives to enlistment. Additionally, AIE provides the ability for recruiters to remain in one system to take a lead all the way through contracting and shipping and receiving in the training base. The system will provide virtual, AI supported assistance and includes logic and validation support for first time acceptance of required documentation. Currently, recruiters are losing time in redundant data entry across multiple antiquated systems to provide the same services.

DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

17. Senator KAINE. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, how can military recruiting commands be leveraged to contribute to the workforce shortages of our defense industrial base, particularly those of our submarine and shipbuilding industries?

Major General DAVIS. Our military recruiters have the ability to tap into a potentially valuable resource of people willing to serve their country but are unable to meet the stringent military service criteria. The potential for serving in positions in the defense industrial base may appeal to recruits who don't meet the physical standards for uniformed service but still want to serve the Nation. This is an important area in which there is real potential to improve the Army's and DOD's talent pipeline, but we would need to do some piloting and testing to establish a system that links our military recruiters to our defense industrial base.

Rear Admiral WALKER. As our CNO testified to, we need a National call to service for people to support our defense industry, whether it's in small business, big shipyards or serving in the Navy—it's all service to our Nation. We need the capacity as a Nation to be able to deter our adversaries. When potential recruits seek opportunities to join the Service, but for one reason or another are not qualified, recruiters are able to provide them recommendations for other ways to serve our Nation, to include the defense industrial base.

Major General BOWERS. Marine Corps Recruiting Command is responsible to the Commandant of the Marine Corps for the procurement of qualified personnel in sufficient numbers by category and component to meet the established personnel strength levels, officer and enlisted, of the Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserve. By keeping our promise and returning quality citizens, many veterans return home with the skills learned while serving on Active Duty. There are also opportunities for these veterans to fill these workforce shortages while also continuing to serve in the Reserves.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The DAF is leveraging military recruiting commands to contribute to the workforce shortages by recruiters providing information about DAF civilian workforce opportunities especially to the 30 percent of Leads who are unable to access. Additionally, the AirForce Civilian Service program capitalizes on retired air Force Recruiting Service recruiters to serve as recruiters for the civilian workforce.

18. Senator KAINE. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, what is the process by which information on training programs like the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) program and similar opportunities can be disseminated during the Transition Assistance Program?

Major General DAVIS. Transitioning servicemembers receive information for post service employment opportunities during their Individualized Initial Counseling (IIC) which takes place NLT 365 days prior to their transition date. Servicemembers are informed about training opportunities provided by the DOD SkillBridge program (SkillBridge) and the Army's Career Skills Program (CSP) that would allow them to obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully transition into a specific career field.

Servicemembers can participate in On-The-Job Training (OJT), Employment Skills Training (EST), Pre-apprenticeships, Apprenticeships and Internships with organizations that have a signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the

DOD or an Army Installation. The DOD SkillBridge program has over 2000 program opportunities with a signed MOU for servicemembers to choose from, the Army's CSP has over 200 program opportunities with signed MOUs to operate on 31 installations for servicemembers to choose from.

If a program like the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) does not have a MOU with the DOD or the Army to provide training opportunities for multiple servicemembers to participate in at one time, a servicemember can request an Individual Internship with that organization IAW policies and procedures outlined by the DOD.

Rear Admiral WALKER. There are numerous ways for employers to provide information on training programs and employment opportunities. The Transition Assistance Program is a collaborative interagency effort of the whole of government, coled by the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Labor. I would encourage employers or training programs to first contact the Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service. They lead the efforts to provide transition workshops dedicated to both employment and training apprenticeship programs.

Major General BOWERS. Information on training programs and opportunities is shared and disseminated during the Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) process.

Introduction to training and program opportunities begins at the Individualized Initial Counseling (IC) based on the marines' post-transition goals and their Individual Transition Plan (ITP).

At the Pre-Separation Counseling Brief, marines receive high-level transition-related information on available benefits, services, and resources.

During the DOD Day of TRS, marines receive guidance on identifying skills, education, training, and credentials gained before and during military Service. Through completion of a gap analysis, Marines are assisted with identifying required education, training, and/or credentials for their chosen career fields. Marines also conduct research to find training, educational, and employment opportunities in order to complete the gap analysis.

Marines receive career and training exploration guidance during the Employment, Vocational, and Education 2-day track. They receive valuable insights into the world of training, careers, and credentials; they also identify and explore training opportunities during the 2-day track.

Training opportunities that are approved by DOD as SkillBridge Programs are listed on the DOD's website (<https://skillbridge.osd.mil/>). Marines who are pursuing SkillBridge are instructed to select an opportunity listed on this site.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Transitioning airmen and guardians are provided information about a variety of post-separation job opportunities and training programs, similar to the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing program, at various points during Transition Assistance Program (TAP). Skillbridge, which provides the opportunity to gain civilian experience and certifications through specific industry training, apprenticeships, or internships during the last 180-days of service, is one of the most popular. Through the Skillbridge program, airmen and guardians can find opportunities cutting across all aspects of the civilian workforce.

The Individualized Initial Counseling phase, when airmen and guardians meet with a TAP counselor, complete a personal self-assessment and begin developing their Individual Transition Plan, is the first formal opportunity to learn about the various available programs. During the next phase, pre-separation counseling, they will cover additional topics including the variety of available employment resources, including certification and apprenticeship programs. Additionally, Department of Labor conducts a 1-day briefing on employment as well as provides two additional elective days that airmen and guardians can opt into covering topics such as the DOL Vocational Training Track.

ASVAB AND AFQT DATA

19. Senator KAINE. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, have your respective branches completed any analysis of, or are there any efforts to compare servicemember performance outcomes with members' ASVAB or AFQT scores as a means of substantiating their predictive value?

Major General DAVIS. The U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) conducts semi-annual analyses to establish the relationship between the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) composite score and performance outcomes. At the end of Initial Military Training and in the first unit of assignment, AFQT is the strongest predictor of several performance outcomes including significant correla-

tions with peer/supervisor ratings of knowledge and skill, an Army knowledge and skills test, attrition, and other performance outcomes.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, Navy's Selection and Classification office performs regular and in-depth comparisons of sailors' performance outcomes to their ASVAB scores. All Navy ratings (jobs) are studied on a cycle of about 3-5 years; those studies validate the ASVAB instrument's ability to predict training success. Outcome data from recent trainees are used to build predictive models. The objective is to calculate ASVAB cutscores that balance the qualification ratio (proportion of newly accessed sailors who qualify via ASVAB for the rating being studied) against the proportion of trainees who successfully complete the training pipeline. Use of Navy training resources are optimized by finding a cutscore that can keep a rating manned, while assuring that those that meet the cutscore successfully graduate training and do not use excessive resources to do so.

AFQT is used only for the initial selection of recruits for service and not for classification into ratings. The full ASVAB provides far more predictive power as to which individuals will succeed in which training paths, yet we remain beholden by law to AFQT as the standard for initial selection. This can be a difficult situation in the current environment as we may turn away candidates who qualify for an in demand rating but obtain a lower AFQT score. Our recently adjusted AFQT requirements provide an opportunity for Navy to study the success of new sailors with lower AFQT scores, particularly in the context of the Future Sailor Preparatory Course, which is an academic instruction program meant to provide academic skills development.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps is moving forward with using the results of the Retention Prediction Network (RPN), a family of supervised machine-learning models, to help verify what factors (including ASVAB/AFQT) are particularly correlated with, or predictive of, various types of servicemember performance outcomes/successes. This includes Delayed Entry Program completion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot graduation, and Special Duty Assignment acceptance, with more RPN use cases continuing to be developed.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The quality of the school system has some impact on an applicant's ASVAB score because the test measures what an applicant knows in addition to their ability to learn. ASVAB scores consistently predict the ability of a recruit to be successful in technical training and to perform successfully as an airman. DAF has instituted a procedure of developing predictive success models by AFSC with cut scores tailored to an individual AFSC that uses the relevant ASVAB subtest scores and noncognitive measures from the TAPAS to minimize the impact of the quality of the applicant's education system. The model assesses the applicant on a broad spectrum of abilities relative to those who have successfully completed milestones within their specialty.

20. Senator KAINE. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, an Army Times op-ed from April highlighted concerns that the ASVAB is subject to bias and does not accurately measure a recruit's aptitude to perform a job. Instead, it measures a snapshot of learned intelligence, evidenced by a comparison of the lowest AFQT scores by State which aligns with those states that have the lowest school ratings. Do you share these concerns and are you working with the Department of Defense to consider or implement any other measurements of aptitude?

Major General DAVIS. Army has not conducted any individual study or research on the ASVAB in regard to biases, therefore we defer to DOD, the owner of the ASVAB to address those type of concerns. Army still has confidence in the ASVAB's ability to predict academic success during training. The Army also uses an occupational physical assessment test (OPAT) to assess a new enlistee's ability to perform the physical demands for specialty for which they enlist.

Rear Admiral WALKER. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) has been generally shown in many studies and in decades of Navy personnel research to be a valid and reliable predictor of recruit aptitude. This is determined with validation studies, in which ASVAB scores are correlated with rating (job) training outcomes. In our decades of experience with the ASVAB, we have found that it is generally unbiased in what it does, in that ASVAB scores, when set to minimize demographic bias as we do, end up predicting success in training outcomes across demographic lines.

It is true that the ASVAB substantially measures learned intelligence and other occupational skills as they are at the time of the test, which is reflected in the correlation of AFQT scores to school performance across states. However the ASVAB now measures skills other than learned intelligence, and the Navy has been working to incorporate additional "fluid intelligence" sub-tests such as tests in Assembling

Objects and Coding Speed, which have been shown to increase opportunity for minority applicants without affecting training success. In the upcoming calendar quarter, we will introduce the next fluid intelligence sub-test, "Mental Counters".

Beyond aptitude testing, Navy currently uses the Job Opportunities in the Navy (JOIN) for in-service testing, and will soon be administering the test to new accessions. JOIN matches sailors to ratings by interest, and research has shown that sailors who enter into a rating that scores highly on JOIN for them promote faster compared to their peers who do not. We have also recently begun the first phases of data collection to validate the Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS). If TAPAS is proven to be predictive and useful for Navy recruits, it will be used to supplement the cognitive aptitude assessment of ASVAB by providing a measure of personality.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps continues to align to Department directed Accession standards for mental, moral and physical requirements. We continue to look to ways to open the aperture of the candidate pool of young people who desire the challenge of becoming a United States Marine and can meet the high standards of our Corps.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The quality of the school system has some impact on an applicant's ASVAB score because the test measures what an applicant knows in addition to the skills and dispositions that may impact their aptitude to perform the job. ASVAB scores consistently predict the ability of a recruit to be successful in technical training and to perform successfully as an airmen. DAF has instituted a procedure of developing predictive success models by AFSC with cut scores tailored to an individual AFSC that uses the relevant ASVAB subtest scores and noncognitive measures from the TAPAS to minimize the impact of the quality of the applicant's education. The model assesses the applicant on a broad spectrum of abilities.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ANGUS S. KING, JR.

MARIJUANA PRECLUDING RECRUITS FROM CERTAIN MILITARY JOBS AND CLEARANCES

21. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, with a shrinking pool of volunteers, the military may need to adjust outdated entry standards. My understanding of the current Armed forces policy on marijuana use is it can initiate an arduous and unnecessary waiver process and raise security concerns about an individual's reliability and trustworthiness to access classified information, potentially even precluding them from certain jobs. This seems outdated as marijuana is rapidly becoming legal in the U.S. What is your services' policy on potential recruits and officer candidates who: (1) admit to marijuana use, (2) with a past conviction for marijuana possession, and (3) have failed a drug (marijuana) test during the military entrance process?

Major General DAVIS.

- (1) Admit to marijuana use: Army has no established policy that prohibits enlistment simply for admitted marijuana use. However, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) may disqualify the applicant for habitual use indicating a psychological dependence on marijuana, as soldiers with a drug dependence are prohibited from enlisting by statute.
- (2) With a past conviction for marijuana possession: Army requires a waiver for any applicant that has two convictions for possession of marijuana or paraphernalia. The Recruiting Brigade Commander is the approval authority for such waiver.
- (3) Have failed a drug (marijuana) test during the military entrance process: Applicants that fail the drug test at the MEPS are required to wait 90 days after receipt of the results. The Army requires applicants that fail the drug test at the MEPS to wait 90 days after receipt of the results. After 90 days, the applicant can retest at the MEPS. If the results are negative, a waiver can be considered.

Officer candidates generally must not have any civil convictions, adverse juvenile adjudication, pretrial diversion for felonies or past court-martial conviction, but may request a waiver.

Any application for appointment will be disapproved if the officer candidate applicant refuses to consent to drug or alcohol testing.

Members of ROTC will be disenrolled if they refuse to consent to testing, are diagnosed with a drug dependency, or test positive for marijuana.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy Recruiting Command policy is governed by DODI 1304.26, Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction.

- (1) Navy applicants that admit to marijuana use prior to enlisting do not require a waiver for enlistment, but may require a waiver for certain programs. Furthermore, any marijuana use must be documented on their medical screening, security questionnaire and a handwritten statement regarding their drug use.
- (2) Any police involvement requires a waiver and is dependent upon the amount, type and charge.
- (3) Applicants who failed a marijuana drug test during military entrance processing cannot remain in the Navy's Delayed Entry Program (DEP) and before reapplying they must wait 60 days from the positive test date. On the 61st day or beyond they are eligible to retest and if the results are negative for drugs they are allowed a one time waiver and may enlist.

Major General BOWERS.

- (1) Recruiting Station Commanding Officers are required to ensure that all marijuana usage is documented, before approving the service level review. These reviews occur rapidly and cause virtually no delay to the enlistment process when only marijuana usage is involved.
- (2) There is a waiver process to allow enlistment for individuals with possession of marijuana convictions.
- (3) There is a waiver process to allow enlistment for individuals that have tested positive for marijuana usage at the Military Entrance Processing Stations.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN.

- (1) Admission to past marijuana use must be disclosed during the recruitment process. Past marijuana use alone is not a disqualifying factor. Marijuana use after signing the AF Form 2030, USAF Drug and Alcohol Abuse Certificate, requires a drug waiver.
- (2) Conviction of marijuana possession is considered a Category 2 moral offense and would require a morals waiver.
- (3) Applicants failing the Drug and Alcohol Test (DAT) at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) may retest with a drug waiver after 90 days post-DAT. The applicant's MEPS physical must be fully cleared by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) with a determination that the applicant is not drug dependent.

22. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, do all potential Marine, Army, Navy, and Air Force recruits and officer candidates require a drug waiver if they admit to marijuana use?

Major General DAVIS. Army has no established policy that prohibits enlistment simply for admitted marijuana use. However, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) may disqualify the applicant for psychological drug dependence for admitted multiple times or habitual use of marijuana. Such disqualification would require a medical waiver for marijuana use.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy applicants that admit to marijuana use prior to enlisting do not require a waiver for enlistment, but may require a waiver for certain programs.

For example, Cryptologic ratings (CTI, CTR, CTM and CTT) and the Cyber Warfare Technician (CWT) rating do not permit anything beyond experimental use of marijuana before accession. The same is true of Intelligence Specialist (IS) and Information Technology (IT) rating programs. More than 'experimental' use of marijuana prior to joining would require a waiver.

Major General BOWERS. Yes.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. No, the DAF does not require a drug waiver for past marijuana use. Only marijuana use after signing the AF Form 2030, USAF Drug and Alcohol Abuse Certificate, or testing positive on the DAT for marijuana use requires a drug waiver.

23. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, how long does this waiver remain in their military record?

Major General DAVIS. Army enlistment waivers executed during the accessioning process are part of the Army Military Human Resource Record Official Military Personnel File and are part of a soldier's permanent record. The Official Military Personnel File remains in Army control for 62 years from a soldier's final separation

date, then transferred to the control of the National Archives and Records Administration as a public record.

Army enlistment waivers executed during the accessioning process are part of the Army Military Human Resource Record Official Military Personnel File and are part of a soldier's permanent record. The Official Military Personnel File remains in Army control for 62 years from a soldier's final separation date, then transferred to the control of the National Archives and Records Administration as a public record.

Rear Admiral WALKER. A marijuana waiver remains in an applicant's record as part of their permanent applicant record. While the marijuana waiver remains in the sailors' permanent applicant record, it will have no bearing on future service success or failure, although it may make them ineligible for certain career fields.

Major General BOWERS. Service level reviews are permanent within servicemembers' military records.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Waiver types are recorded on the DD Form 1966, a standard form for every applicant joining the Armed Forces, that typically stays with each servicemember through the remainder of their career. The waiver type is reflected as a series of 3-letter codes; no other details of the waivers granted become part of the member's military record.

24. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, does this waiver increase the average time from entry into the program to arrival to basic training?

Major General DAVIS. Yes, average time for a marijuana waiver is 107 days. Applicants must wait a minimum of 90 days after testing positive at Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) before retesting and starting the waiver process.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy recruiting can process marijuana waivers on a same-day basis, therefore there is no increase to average entry time for applicants who require these waivers.

Major General BOWERS. No, not significantly. From January 2019 to December 2023, the Marine Corps adjudicated approximately 82 percent of all marijuana waivers within the same day. Just over 5 percent took 3 weeks or longer, but those cases are generally more complex or require additional documentation for approval/denial.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Given medical processing limitations, drug waivers typically take less than 30 days from initial request to final disposition and coincide with the rest of the enlistment process, resulting in little to no delay given the other timelines for overall accession processing which is primarily based on MEPS medical accession process as the longest in the process to clear.

25. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, does the marijuana waiver create unnecessary reviews and investigations for recruits and officer candidates?

Major General DAVIS. If a drug waiver is required, processing time for the waiver will be a 90-day waiting period in order to retest at the MEPS, plus processing time to consider a waiver, which all depends on the applicants schedule and commitments. The approval authority is the recruiting battalion commander, which means the reviews are minimal.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Marijuana use alone does not create additional requirements other than a handwritten statement documenting substance use. Any police involvement resulting from marijuana use or possession may require an additional waiver, which potentially adds several days to the process and is dependent upon the charges and the final adjudication from the courts.

Major General BOWERS. No, MCRC has contributed to a decade-long decline in substance abuse within the Marine Corps by documenting every instance of admitted drug use, including one-time experimental use. Maintaining the excellence America expects of its marines is of the highest priority for MCRC, which is why we demand applicants meet our stringent mental, moral, and medical requirements. An applicant's history of drug involvement of any type is concerning, and we maintain strict internal controls to ensure any admitted use is formally documented and subsequently evaluated by the MEPS Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for patterns of addiction and/or abuse.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The DAF drug waivers are necessary to provide the armed forces with airmen and guardians who understand the in-service policies and expectations regarding marijuana use as a servicemember.

26. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, does a marijuana waiver eliminate them from specific jobs?

Major General DAVIS. Applicants provided a drug waiver at enlistment may not be eligible for certain jobs, such as military police or other specialties that require access to high levels of classified information.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, there are specific jobs in which a waiver for marijuana use could be a discriminator. An applicant could be eliminated from up to 25 percent of available jobs in the application process due to past marijuana use. Examples include Cryptologic ratings (CTI, CTR, CTM and CTT) and the Cyber Warfare Technician (CWT) rating do not permit anything beyond experimental use of marijuana before accession. The same is true of Intelligence Specialist (IS) and Information Technology (IT) rating programs. More than 'experimental' use of marijuana prior to joining would require a waiver.

Major General BOWERS. Marijuana usage only eliminates applicants from limited, specific jobs based on current DOD security clearance requirements.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Drug waivers may limit some job availability due to the inability to obtain a Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmentalized Information clearance. Additionally, the adjudicating authorities for security clearances are outside of the DAF.

REDUCE BARRIERS FOR THOSE WITH MENTAL HEALTH

27. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, mental health issues among young people have been increasing for a long time, and that trend escalated greatly during the pandemic. However, many people who suffer from depression, anxiety, and other disorders can be effectively treated with commonly prescribed medications. The U.S. military has long allowed those in uniform to continue serving while taking such medications—but it continues to bar people on those medications from joining the force. The U.S. military should not reject otherwise qualified applicants from serving based on outdated stereotypes of mental health treatments. What is your service doing to reduce these barriers to entry?

Major General DAVIS. The Army has codified guidance for the team that reviews the waiver requests regarding Behavior Health (BH) conditions and medications. This guidance includes flexibilities of BH diagnosis based on history and BH meds that are older than 24 months. Additionally, we have codified for recruiting command that no waiver is needed for grief counseling, and ADHD without medication for over 24 months. The Army is relooking all waiverable and non-waiverable conditions and treatments to determine what can be changed reasonably with updated standards of care.

Additionally, DOD adheres to criteria for applicants who have received mental health treatment as outlined in DODI 6130.03 Volume 1, "Medical Standards for Military Service: Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction." To reduce barriers to service, DOD consults with the civilian medical community to ensure these standards align with the needs of DOD and increase accurate suitability determinations. Through the Accession and Retention Medical Standards Working Group, DOD also reviews the current standards related to mental health and completes periodic revisions, as appropriate. The DOD is also collaborating with the Military Services to assess the potential for relaxing several mental health standards.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Accessions standards published in Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 6130.03 Volume 1 are regularly reviewed by the DOD Accession and Retention Medical Standards Working Group with periodic changes published for smaller revisions (the last was in November 2022) and total Volume 1 revisions completed every 4–5 years. In November 2023, the Services submitted suggestions to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for inclusion in the next revision, which would relax several of the mental health standards.

Since formal changes or revisions to a DODI take time, in the interim, the Service medical waiver reviewer authorities have adjusted their waiver criteria for many of these mental health conditions if the individual's condition is stable and has good prognosis within the training and operational environments. Medication waivers take into consideration multiple factors such as the underlying medical condition, symptom remission, medication class, duration of treatment, level of function, and prospective duties within the military. The Services have proposed several mental health conditions be added to the Medical Accession Records Pilot list used by the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command to qualify individuals who do not meet the volume 1 accession standards, but have shown a several-year period of stability.

Furthermore, the conditional Delayed Entry Program list allows the individual Services to contract applicants in advance of receiving a medical waiver, including several disqualifying mental health conditions

Major General BOWERS. Marine Corps Recruiting Command is working with our recruiting and medical partners to review the current DOD Instruction on accession medical standards with an aim at modernization and improving opportunities for those who wish to serve their nation. DOD adheres to criteria for applicants who have received mental health treatment as outlined in DOD Instruction 6130.03 Volume 1, "Medical Standards for Military Service: Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction." May 6, 2018, as amended. To reduce barriers to service, DOD consults with the civilian medical community to ensure these standards align with the needs of DOD and increase accurate suitability determinations Through the Accession and Retention Medical Standards Working Group, DOD reviews the current standards related to mental health and completes periodic revisions, as appropriate.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Mental health conditions are certainly a major concern for all recruiting services. The Air Force Recruiting Service's Accession Medical Waiver Division (AMWD) regularly looks at the data for all diagnoses to see where it is appropriate to take more risk for accession. Of the top 13 medical conditions where a disposition was provided for an accession waiver request, 6 were mental health related. Five thousand three hundred and sixty dispositions (out of 14,080, or 38 percent) were for mental health conditions. A waiver was provided for these members about 60 percent of the time. The AMWD regularly provides waivers for those with less severe mental health conditions (e.g. those who sought counseling for stress or who were on medication treatment for short periods of time). Those who had symptoms/needed treatment for longer periods of time (over a year or more), or who had recurrence of symptoms after remission, are at higher risk of having symptoms while in the Air Force that impact mission capabilities. Decisions to provide a waiver or not are made based on if the clinical notes show a diagnosis of a disorder using the criteria outlined in current medical literature.

While it is true that mental health is increasing in public awareness and there are many different effective treatments, the impact on military readiness is still very high. Therefore, any adjustments to mental health standards need to be carefully thought through.

In the past few years, the AMWD has expanded the opportunities for those with mental health histories to serve by reducing the needed demonstrated time of stability off medication/treatment prior to serving. Just how much time off medication/treatment is needed depends on the complexity and severity of the condition(s). We have previously used a period of three years for demonstrated stability, but we have recently reduced that time down to 2 years, assuming there are no other confounding factors.

Part of the mechanism to reevaluate standards and waiver decisions is dependent on having the ability to study data from prior decisions. The AF is currently working to establish a full-time capability to conduct analytic studies on operational outcomes from prior medical waiver decisions.

28. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, what improvements have been made in the waiver process over the last 2 years?

Major General DAVIS. Army continues to look for ways to streamline its waivers process for enlistment. Over the past 2 years, Army delegated down maximum enlistment age waivers to the General Officer level within the recruiting agencies; Army modified its policy on possessions of marijuana, where a waiver was required for a single conviction for possession of marijuana, now a waiver is only required when the applicant has two convictions for possession of marijuana, and Army reduced (by half) the waiting time for consideration of a waiver by prior servicemembers that desire reenry.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Applicant's safety, applicant's deployability, and ability to function in the military are all taken into account when considering waivers. The service medical waiver reviewer authorities have adjusted their waiver criteria for many of these mental health conditions if the individual's condition is stable and has good prognosis within the training and operational environments.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps Recruiting Command in close coordination with Bureau of Naval Medicine (BUMED), the service medical waiver authority, has streamlined the waiver submission process decreasing the turnaround time for BUMED review and recommendation.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Mental health conditions are certainly a major concern for all recruiting services. The Air Force Recruiting Service's Accession Medical Waiver Division (AMWD) regularly looks at the data for all diagnoses to see where it is appropriate to take more risk for accession. Of the top 13 medical conditions where a disposition was provided for an accession waiver request, 6 were mental health related. Five thousand three hundred and sixty dispositions (out of 14,080,

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29. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, what plans do you have for reducing barriers to service?

Major General DAVIS. The Army is in close coordination with OSD to continually refine the Medical Accession Records Pilot (MARF) to assess applicants for military service using a revised time limitation for certain disqualifying conditions. The Army is collecting data on soldiers during their first term of service to assist and inform OSD's ability to redefine the medical standards of enlistment.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) expanded various policies to increase the qualified applicant pool. For example:

- Single Parent Policy Pilot: Pilot waives dependency status for Active component (AC) and Reserve component (RC) enlistment of unmarried individuals with custody of dependents under the age of 18. The program requires that applicants have no more than two dependents under 18 and no dependents 12 months or younger.
- TIER II Pilot: Authorized the contracting and accessing of applicants with 31 and above AFQT. (Tier II applicants are non-high school graduates who hold a GED, typically these applicants are only accessed with a 50 or greater AFQT).
- Age: AC and RC accessions must report to Recruit Training Command prior to their 42d birthday. All enlisted sailors (AC and RC) must be able to complete 20 years of qualifying service for retirement before their 62d birthday.
- Future Sailor Preparatory Courses (FSPC): Mirroring an Army program, the Navy has established the FSPC with two tracks: Physical Fitness and Academic.
 - o FSPC Physical Fitness first started in Spring 2023 and allows NRC to recruit applicants with a 50 AFQT and higher, and body compositions of 26.1–32 percent for males and 36.1–42 percent for females. These Future Sailors will be allowed to access into Active Duty and enter a rolling 3-week physical fitness program for up to 90-days. Once the FS reaches 26 percent (male) or 36 percent (female) body-fat, they will graduate the course and enter basic military training at Recruit Training Command.
 - o FSPC Academic first began in Summer 2023 and allows applicants with lower AFQT scores to train and retake the exam and reclassify into a new rating. The academic course remains in beta phase; the first pilot course convened January 2024.

Major General BOWERS. Marine Corps Recruiting Command is working with our recruiting and medical partners to review the current DOD Instruction on accession medical standards with an aim at modernization and improving opportunities for those who wish to serve their nation.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Mental health conditions are certainly a major concern for all recruiting services. The Air Force Recruiting Service's Accession Medical

Waiver Division (AMWD) regularly looks at the data for all diagnoses to see where it is appropriate to take more risk for accession. Of the top 13 medical conditions where a disposition was provided for an accession waiver request, 6 were mental health related. Five thousand three hundred and sixty dispositions (out of 14,080, or 38 percent) were for mental health conditions. A waiver was provided for these members about 60 percent of the time. The AMWD regularly provides waivers for those with less severe mental health conditions (e.g. those who sought counseling for stress or who were on medication treatment for short periods of time). Those who had symptoms/needed treatment for longer periods of time (over a year or more), or who had recurrence of symptoms after remission, are at higher risk of having symptoms while in the Air Force that impact mission capabilities. Decisions to provide a waiver or not are made based on if the clinical notes show a diagnosis of a disorder using the criteria outlined in current medical literature.

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EXPANDING RECRUITING POOL

30. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, Department of Defense officials continue to raise concerns about the decrease in military enlistments year over year. In fact, the number of young people who are eligible to serve in the military dropped precipitously last year, from 29 to 23 percent, largely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the last fiscal year, the Army missed its recruiting goal by 15,000 Active Duty soldiers, or 25 percent of its target. It is clear that we must address this challenge and strengthen our readiness. Do you agree that an incentive such as providing citizenship for those who serve an honorable 5-years in uniform—including participants of the DACA program, as well as dreamers who would have been eligible for DACA—can strengthen our military by creating a new recruitment tool for the Services and allow the military to retain more personnel?

Major General DAVIS. Any effort that opens the aperture to allow more qualified and propensed individuals to serve in the military will support the Army's recruiting mission.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Opening more paths to a Navy career for those eligible for military service will make the Navy stronger. The military has long attracted servicemembers through benefits that are hard to find in the private sector such as generous retirement benefits, world-class healthcare, and education benefits. However, the private sector has narrowed that gap, with entry-level jobs in some places offering tuition assistance along with healthcare and a 401(k). A streamlined path to citizenship, tied to military service, would be a good example of a military-specific benefit that would help the Services further differentiate themselves from other potential employers of our Nation's best.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps is always open to new ideas that will open the aperture for more quality recruits. We would be interested in working with Congress, the Department and Interagency partners in finding a way forward.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The DAF implemented an initiative to expedite naturalization upon graduation at BMT. The DAF estimates that this recruitment incentive will further improve our strong recruiting efforts for this fiscal year by expanding our population of eligible candidates.

STREAMLINE RECRUITING PAPERWORK

31. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, the younger generation is looking to do things online and quickly. Currently, you need to get in touch with a local recruiter, and then spend month printing and scanning paperwork back and forth—most of

which is requires the same information over and over and over (SSN, address, etc). In the process, one of our constituents was asked for his fax number! We should be making this process as easy as possible. Colleges have shifted to the 'common application' to help reduce barriers. Do you agree that streamlining the recruiting paper work through an online portal would be helpful to your efforts?

Major General DAVIS. Yes, streamlining paperwork and reducing redundancy will improve our recruiting efforts. USAREC currently uses Army Career Explorer (ACE), an online portal for the application, the security questionnaire, and uploading documents.

Rear Admiral WALKER. While I agree that work can still be done in order to continue to streamline the administrative process required to join the Navy, the above statement does not accurately reflect our current process, and there are no instances in which an applicant would be required to provide a fax number. NRC is committed to continuing to reduce barriers to service by reducing redundancies in paperwork and exploring options to work through an online portal.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps continues to refine technologies and methods to streamline the process of applying for service. However, we have seen significant delays to the implementation of MHS GENESIS and the Health Information Exchange (HIE). While we are enthusiastic to embrace new technology to achieve efficiencies, we must ensure that all aspects of the program are properly staffed. We are looking forward to seeing the Deputy Secretary of Defense's study on how to improve MHS GENESIS and HIE which her office is releasing in February, 2024.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The Air Force concurs that streamlining the application process for our new generation of airmen and guardians is of paramount importance. That is why in April 2020, the Air Force launched the Air Force Commission and Enlistment Portal (AFCEP), a feature-rich, public-facing, and secure web site which uses cloud-based technology to stream-line the collection of applicant-required data and enlistment application management. Instead of processing physical paperwork in recruiting offices, recruiters send a link to the online AFCEP where the applicant completes their accessions application from anywhere and on any device. In the portal, the applicant securely fills out their information, uploads necessary source documents and signs enlistment forms all digitally. That information is then transferred to the Air Force Recruiting Information Support System (AFRISS-TF) where their recruiter performs quality checks and manages the recruit until shipping to Basic Military Training. AFCEP is configured to utilize data and information across all required forms once it has been entered in the system. Applicants are never required to provide their PII data multiple times. AFCEP saves thousands of administrative hours and processing time annually for Air and Space Force recruiters.

32. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are any such efforts currently underway to develop a more Generation Z-friendly application?

Major General DAVIS. The Army Career Explorer (ACE) application assists recruiters by allowing Army applicants to complete most of their enlistment packet from the comfort of their own home. Once an applicant is enrolled, they can upload their Social Security Card, birth certificate, driver's license, and marriage certificate digitally. Applicants can also complete their electronic National Security Questionnaire (eNSQ) from this application. Additionally, a recruiter can send enlistment processing forms to the applicant, which they can sign and return using a touchscreen device, all within the application.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy recruiting has been proactive over the last decade streamlining the enlistment and commissioning processes by reducing the administrative burden of our recruiting force. The majority of Navy's enlistment/commissioning package can now be signed electronically using biometric signatures and submitted electronically via the self-service portal into the Navy's Enterprise Customer Relationship Management (eCRM) system and Personalized Recruiting for Immediate and Delayed Enlistment Modernization, version II (PRIDE Mod II). There is more work to be done due to other stakeholder requirements and policies throughout the enlistment/commissioning process. For example, some DOD forms and documents still require "wet" signatures. Our eCRM self-service portal allows our recruiters to provide the applicant an account to access the portal and electronically upload the applicant's enlistment/commissioning package. Additionally, via video teleconferencing capabilities, Navy recruiters can remotely and virtually assist an applicant throughout the process, avoiding typical accession barriers.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps consistently looks to improve all processes across our service. We aim to improve our visibility through marketing, adver-

tising, and the personnel interactions of our recruiting force with potential applicants and influencers. While the nature of our proven systematic recruiting process remains unchanged, the character evolves using various tools and programs to reach each subsequent generation where they are.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The Air Force Recruiting Service is in the process of modernizing from a legacy system implemented in 2014 to an "Industry Standard" Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Platform within the Talent Acquisition space. The new solution will increase transparency so that applicants always know where they are in the process. Since 96 percent of Gen Z applicants own a smartphone, AFRISS 2.0 will be a fully mobile platform which will leverage modernized capabilities for a more customer-friendly experience. With more self-service options, recruiters will be free to inspire and engage prospects while personalizing the recruiting experience. AFRISS 2.0 will also produce improved data analytics while maintaining necessary security requirements and interface flexibility. New automation capabilities and AI-features within the CRM will drive down risks and costs while enriching the recruitment experience for applicants. Additionally, the current Aim High App caters to Gen Z by simplifying the initial information-gathering process through diverse media and interactive games that delve into prospective career options. This initiative fosters engagement with potential candidates on a personalized level, facilitating continuous connectivity throughout their journey by offering recruiter messaging, events (e.g., STEM, NASCAR, UFC, FIRST Robotics etc.), fitness/nutrition guides, and BMT insights and preparation.

33. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, what has been done to reduce the administrative burden on potential recruits over the last 3 years?

Major General DAVIS. The implementation of the Army Career Explorer (ACE) application allows Army applicants the ability to complete most of their enlistment packet from the comfort of their own home. Once an applicant is enrolled, they can upload their Social Security Card, birth certificate, driver's license, and marriage certificate. Applicants can also complete their electronic National Security Questionnaire (eNSQ) from this application, which is used to initiate their background investigation. Last, a recruiter can send enlistment processing forms to the applicant, which they can sign and return using a touchscreen device, all within the application. Much of the information entered into the application populates onto multiple forms, reducing the requirement to re-enter information.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy recruiting has been proactive in streamlining the enlistment and commissioning processes and reducing the administrative burden of our recruiting force and applicants. We have adopted industry best practices by implementing a commercial Software-as-a-Service enterprise Customer Relationship Management (eCRM) product for all prospecting functions. We incorporated paperless processing using Biometric fingerprint signatures on all Official Military Personnel Forms used for enlistment/commissioning. We implemented a commercial off the shelf mobile application, which provides full eCRM capability to the recruiter's smart phone and an applicant self-service portal to streamline the process and gain efficiency.

Major General BOWERS. Our recruiters play an integral role in reducing the administrative burden on potential recruits, working diligently to identify all required documentation to meet DOD accession standards quickly and thoroughly ensuring a smooth process for the predominance of our applicants. However, we have seen significant delays to the implementation of MHS GENESIS and the Health Information Exchange (HIE). While we are enthusiastic to embrace new technology to achieve efficiencies, we must ensure that all aspects of the program are properly staffed. We are looking forward to seeing the Deputy Secretary of Defense's study on how to improve MHS GENESIS and HIE which her office is releasing in February, 2024.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Fielded at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Air Force Commission and Enlistment Portal (AFCEP) allows applicants to fill out and sign all forms as well as upload all required source documents (e.g., Birth certificates, Diplomas, etc.) from home or on their smartphones, decreasing the burden of returning multiple times to the recruiter's office to sign documents, deliver source documents and sign forms. The AFRISS-TF Forms autofill function is used to decrease time required to fill out required form. Lastly, an expedited waiver process often decreases the burden of waiting for waivers (e.g., Medical Morals, etc.).

One additional process AFRS has implemented is the Medical Administrative Support Contract which was awarded at the end of fiscal year 2023. This contract aims to decrease kickbacks from MEPS and medical waiver requests while reducing the time spent by recruiters reviewing records. The contractors will have access to

Health Information Exchange within MHS-Genesis which will enable them to review past medical history of applicants prior to applicants processing through MEPS. The contractors can work with applicants to obtain medical records, if needed.

34. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, will you move away from requesting fax numbers, and offering solutions such as web portals and emails?

Major General DAVIS. We do not ask any applicant for fax numbers. The only time we utilize a fax machine is when we request documents from an agency that only has fax capability.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, Navy recruiting will continue to leverage web portals and other secure means of collaboration between recruiter and prospect. Navy is committed to implementing and utilizing a vast variety of secure communication methods, giving us the ability to accommodate all modes of transmission. Prospects require a thorough review of their life history (e.g. civil/police, medical, academic, etc.). For Navy recruiters to request/receive these Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) documents, we must continue to maintain and utilize a diverse range of mediums to send and receive the documentation from outside entities and are at the mercy of which method the entity utilizes, whether it is a secure web portal such as DOD SAFE or the Navy's enterprise Customer Relationship Management (eCRM) self-service portal, email, facsimile, even the United States Postal Service.

Major General BOWERS. I can confirm that the Marine Corps consistently looks to modernize our processes where able by statute and DOD policy.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The Air Force Recruiting enterprise does not request a fax number from any applicants. All Air and Space Force recruiters utilize a web-based e-Fax service to allow local law enforcement and legacy medical providers who still use facsimiles to electronically send documents which are converted to email pdfs and uploaded to our system of record, Air Force Recruiting Information Support System (AFRISS-TF). Since most applicants are members of the texting generation, recruiters use the AFRISS-TF text-notification system to communicate with applicants. Email is another communication tool widely used in the recruiting process.

The Air Force also uses the very popular Aim High Application to inspire prospective applicants, facilitate communication, manage training, and guide applicants through the accession process. With 90,000 users in 2023, the Aim High Application opens communication channels using rich "social-like" content to communicate with families and friends of recruits in ways that create a positive network, leading to recruiting success and career retention.

TRANSITION

35. Senator KING. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, I believe a smooth transition out of the Military system will lead to a population that is more supportive of their friends, family, and loved ones joining the military—perhaps even encouraging them to do so. Do you believe a well-resourced and managed transition assistance program can facilitate more citizen-recruiters and improve the public perception of military service?

Major General DAVIS. The Army completely agrees. Our well-designed and well executed Transition Assistance Program not only ensures a successful transition for the individual soldier but also provides an opportunity for them to become public leaders and continue to contribute to our society in many ways. Our veterans are more highly employed now than they have been in the past decade. Their employment, salary and education successes far exceed the national average. The next generation of soldiers can look on the recent veterans as being successful. We invest significant time and energy in preparing soldiers for their next chapter post their transition. Because the American soldier is our most important resource.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, veterans who use the Transition Assistance Program resources to successfully transition to a civilian career, enroll in an education program using their veteran education benefits, and are knowledgeable about the various veteran benefits they have earned through their service can be our best recruiters.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps continues to promote the value of TAP and the transition process to commanders, senior enlisted, Unit Transition Coordinators (UTCs), and servicemembers through various formats, including re-occurring notifications containing information and guidance on Transition Readiness Seminars (TRS).

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. In calendar year 2022, 187,000 transitioning servicemembers utilized the DOD Transition Assistance Program. The DAF transitioned 37,000 members and 93 percent agreed or strongly agreed they will use what they learned from TAP during or after their transition. I believe if we take care of the servicemember throughout their career, they are more likely to share that positive experience with their civilian family and friends, thus being good ambassadors in recruitment and reflect a positive public perception of military service.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

ATTRITION DURING THE RECRUITING PROCESS

36. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, do you measure the attrition rate between a recruit's initial prescreening and whether they join the military? If so, can you provide the attrition data for each of the past 5 years? If your data base includes information on the reason for attrition, please include this data.

Major General DAVIS. Yes, the Army measures the attrition rates between prescreening and contract. The attrition rate for the last five fiscal years is: fiscal year 2019 83 percent, fiscal year 2020 84 percent, fiscal year 2021 84 percent, fiscal year 2022 87 percent, fiscal year 2023 85 percent. Some of the reasons for attrition we track include: unwilling to commit, not interested—continuing education, and temporarily disqualified. Temporarily disqualified includes disqualification for education, medical, moral, physical, admin, and dependents.

Rear Admiral WALKER. The Navy tracks how many applicants are sent to physical at a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) with the intent to join, as well as how many of those applicants later sign a contract (“Delayed Entry Program (DEP) in”) and ship to Recruit Training Command (RTC) (“access”). Historical analysis conducted by Navy Recruiting Command is provided below. Prior to the implementation of Military Health System (MHS) Genesis (from October 2018 to February 2022), approximately 86 percent of all applicants that were sent to MEPS for a physical later signed a contract. Since the beginning of MHS Genesis (specifically May 2022 to April 2023 as explained below), Navy has seen this rate drop to approximately 78 percent as more applicants have either been disqualified from joining during the medical review process, or were delayed so long during the process that they chose to pursue other opportunities. The data below is provided through April 2023 in order to obtain a full year of data post-MHS Genesis. Data after April 2023 was excluded from this analysis as these applicants may still be working through the application process and affect the recent conversion rate.

Fiscal Year	Percent of Physicals Leading to Contract
Fiscal Year 2018	83 percent
Fiscal Year 2019	85 percent
Fiscal Year 2020	85 percent
Fiscal Year 2021	86 percent
Fiscal Year 2022	82 percent
Fiscal Year 2023	78 percent

*Fiscal Year 2023 conversion is through April 2023

Major General BOWERS. Yes, see table below:

Calendar Year	Applicants	Mentally Disqualified	Medically Disqualified	Morally Disqualified	Disqualified for Other Reasons / Did Not Contact	Contracted into the Delayed Entry Program / Did Not Report to Recruit Training	Reported to Recruit Training
2019	73,775	5,997	5,821	1,190	14,892	10,384	35,491
2020	63,395	5,199	5,021	923	13,841	8,265	30,146
2021	64,728	5,936	5,213	765	12,999	7,792	32,023
2022	63,473	5,878	7,219	706	14,664	6,023	28,983
2023*	59,536	4,497	6,634	616	16,413	2,823	28,553
	324,907	27,507	29,908	4,200	72,809	35,287	155,196

* New working applicants declared in late 2023 have an unknown disposition

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. For the purpose of this response, AFRS considers an “initial prescreen” to be when a prospective applicant has their first appointment with a recruiter and “whether they joined the military” as when an applicant joins the Delayed Entry Program (DEP). Our ability to capture the lead information was enhanced from fiscal year 2020 to current, thus since 2020 our information is more precise to compare from year to year, thus the reason for providing only 4 years of data. Additionally, until January 2024 the reasons for applicants to not complete the process are many, so we are unable to precisely track this data. As of 12 January, AFRS has implemented a change in its information technology platform that will start tracking all applicants that did not complete the DAF recruiting process to give us a better understanding of why potential applicants are not completing the process.

initial appointments / # entered DEP / Attrition Rate (percent that didn't join)

Fiscal Year 2020: 69,666 / 28,891 / 58.5 percent

Fiscal Year 2021: 68,904 / 30,773 / 55.3 percent

Fiscal Year 2022: 66,040 / 22,812 / 65.5 percent

Fiscal Year 2023: 81,764 / 30,083 / 63.2 percent

DOD CHILD CARE

37. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, the Department of Defense's Child Development Program is considered to be widely successful, offering on-base Child Development Centers (CDCs) for children 5 years or younger, School-Age Care (SAC) for children 6–12 years old, and in-home Family Child Care (FCC). In September 2022, Secretary Austin issued a memorandum regarding the Department of Defense's “sacred obligation to take care of [its] servicemembers and families.” In that memo, Secretary Austin directed the Department to strengthen the Child Development Program, recognizing how deeply servicemembers and their children rely on military child development centers. How many families in your respective service branches are currently served by CDCs, SAC, and FCC?

Major General DAVIS. Approximately 113,212 Army families were served by CDCs, SAC, and FCC in fiscal year 2023.

Rear Admiral WALKER. As of December 31, 2023, Navy Child and Youth Programs (CYP) serve 11,843 families and 15,434 children in CDCs and SAC. Navy CYP provides fee assistance to 4,616 families and 6,000 children. In addition, Navy FCC serves 550 families with a total of 660 children enrolled.

Major General BOWERS. Child and Youth Programs serve marine children at 16 installations across 14 locations. As of the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024, the USMC serves 4,346 children in Child Development Centers, 1,272 in School Age Care, and 25 in Family Child Care.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. On December 1, 2023, there were 25,847 children enrolled in DAF CDCs, SAC and FCC.

38. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, how many families in your respective service branches are currently on waiting lists to be served by CDCs, SAC, and FCC? What is the average waiting time for families on this list?

Major General DAVIS. The average waiting time is 139 days for Army families with children ages zero to five. It is important to understand the context of child care wait time. Wait time is dependent on many factors such as location, sponsor's child care priority, age of the child, and type of care requested. MilitaryChildCare.com provides families with their individualized anticipated placement time specific to their child and location.

Rear Admiral WALKER.

- Number of families on wait lists as of 31 December 2023:
 - o Navy CYP has a total of 4,384 children on the unmet need waitlist. Immediate need is defined as a child care need that has not been met and is within 30 days of the date care needed (DCN) or the DCN has passed. This number includes Active Duty Service Members and DOD civilians, single and with working/full-time student spouses. The breakdown below shows the six Navy locations with the highest waitlist:
 - Hawaii—468
 - Kitsap—151
 - Jacksonville—168
 - Metro Norfolk—1,300
 - Metro San Diego—797
 - National Capital Region (NCR)—268
 - The average wait time for priority 1 and 2 children is 134.25 days.
 - o Priority 1: Child and youth program employees, Combat Related Wounded Warriors, and Active Duty military and Coast Guard that are single or have a spouse that is Active Duty, working, seeking employment, or a full-time student.
 - o Priority 2: DOD civilian employees that are single or have a full-time working spouse.
 - o The average wait time for priority 1 children is 97.7 days
 - o The average wait time for priority 2 children is 296.8 days
 - Navy CYP experiences highest wait times in Fleet concentrated areas. For the six concentrated areas, the wait time are as follows:
 - o Hawaii—139.49 days
 - o Kitsap—204.64 days
 - o Jacksonville—138.24 days
 - o Metro Norfolk—153.18 days
 - o Metro San Diego—153.51 days
 - o NCR—103.92 days

Major General BOWERS. The top five USMC locations with the longest waitlists are Marine Corps Base (MCB) Quantico, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) Lejeune/New River, MCCS South Carolina (Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Beaufort/Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) Parris Island), MCB Pendleton, and MCB Hawaii. The top five report a four to 6 month wait for the highest priorities (single/dual active duty, active duty with working spouse, and childcare employees). The remaining installations can place children within 45 days of the date the care is needed. It should be noted that wait list times may not be the most appropriate metric to measure access to childcare writ large. Many marines may stay on CDC waitlists while they pursue other childcare options, Marine Corps-provided childcare subsidies, or clarify other aspects of their home life.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. December 1, 2023, there were 3,278 children on the unmet need waitlist (not placed in care on date care needed) for the DAF installation CDCs and FCC homes with an average wait time on the unmet need wait list of 137 days. Across the DAF, there were 569 youth on installation SAC unmet need waitlists on 1 December 2023 with an average wait time on the unmet need waitlist of 73 days.

39. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, would you consider inadequate access to child care as a barrier to retention among servicemembers?

Major General DAVIS. Yes, it is a potential factor. Child care and youth programs contribute to force readiness which impacts soldiers' decision to continue to serve. While retention rates are high, soldiers have expressed concern that child care may impact their decision to continue to serve.

The Army continues to work to provide access to quality and affordable child care.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes, inadequate child care can be a barrier to retention of sailors, as it is tied to spouse employment. In today's society, many families rely on the income of both wage-earners. Available and affordable child care is often cited as a reason for spouses not being able to work, along with frequent moves. As our families make decisions about reenlisting—spouse employment and child care are part of this decision. In addition, child care is crucial to retaining our single parent sailors and the Department is working on ways to providing adequate access to child care.

Major General BOWERS. High-quality childcare is one of the many important Child and Youth Programs we offer. It is a readiness priority for the Marine Corps.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Access to quality and affordable child care services, along with other quality of life programs, are vital to recruitment and retention of the force of the future required to meet current and emerging threats. The Department will continue to leverage resources and partnerships to ensure programs and services provided are consistent with the support needs of today's warfighter and their families.

40. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, would access to reliable, affordable, and high-quality child care improve recruitment and retention?

Major General DAVIS. Yes. Child care and youth programs reduce the conflict between mission requirements and parental responsibilities. The Army remains committed to efforts supporting access to quality and affordable child care options whether these are installation or community-based care.

Efforts include continued investment in recruitment and retention for direct care staff by offering increased salaries, bonuses along with professional and workforce development.

All Army Child and Youth staff receive a 50 percent child care fee reduction for the first child and a 15 percent multiple child discount for additional children. The Army increased subsidies for Family Child Care providers allowing them to earn competitive salaries and the ability to transfer their business during PCS moves. Army child care fee assistance is provided for approximately 10K per month for children of Active and Reserve Component and Civilian families. The provider rate cap increased January 1, 2024, to \$1,800. To avoid waiting lists, Army Families have the option to go directly to community-based child care.

Rear Admiral WALKER. High quality, reliably accessible child care would materially improve retention by removing a factor that can lead sailors to feel they must choose between their career or their family. In our data, the military impact on a sailor's family is one of the most significant influencers to leave. Improved retention directly improves recruiting by reducing the demand for additional recruits, and also indirectly benefits recruiting by turning quality of service into a selling point to attract future recruits.

Major General BOWERS. High-quality childcare is one of the many important Child and Youth Programs we offer. It is a readiness priority for the Marine Corps. It is most certainly a factor in many marines' decisions to remain in the military.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Access to quality and affordable child care services are a force enabler important to recruitment and retention. We recognize our Air and Space Force families have unique child care needs and understand the importance of providing a comprehensive network of care solutions to include center-based care on the installation, family child care on and off the installation, and community-based child care fee assistance options. The Department is employing efforts to remove barriers and maximize care solution options to meet the child care demand across the enterprise.

41. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, in 2022, the RAND Corporation released a study, which found that over 15 percent of active duty service women experience infertility, a rate that is significantly higher than the rate among civilian women. However, the DOD's existing fertility policy excludes same-sex couples, unmarried couples, single servicemembers, and those without certain specific injuries from ac-

cessing in vitro fertilization (IVF) services. This exclusionary policy likely restricts many servicemembers from forming families. Are you concerned that the limited availability of family building benefits such as IVF services affects your recruitment and retention—particularly for women servicemembers?

Major General DAVIS. Expanding comprehensive family building benefits to servicemembers, including IVF services, may positively impact both the recruitment and retention of military personnel.

Aligning servicemembers' family building and IVF benefits with those provided to civilian Federal employees under the FEHB Program could make military service a more attractive career option.

Rear Admiral WALKER. We agree that family planning is an important issue for servicemembers and their families, and the Department continues to assess all available opportunities to support family building to the extent authorized. While TRICARE covers evaluations and treatment of the physical causes of infertility for beneficiaries, Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) services, which include IVF, are excluded from coverage under the TRICARE medical benefit program. Under separate statutory authority, the Supplemental Health Care Program (SHCP) covers expanded benefits, including ART services, for Active Duty servicemembers who have sustained a serious or severe illness or injury while on Active Duty that has led to the loss of their natural procreative ability. The intent of this expanded benefit is to help servicemembers impacted by a severe illness or injury, achieve their family planning goals.

I do want to highlight what has been done to support servicemembers in need of fertility treatment not covered by TRICARE. Last year, the Department created policies that allow servicemembers to request administrative absences and funded travel to access ART for themselves and their dependents. These policies will provide some assistance to servicemembers seeking ART.

Additionally, servicemembers and eligible beneficiaries who either desire or need to conceive via ART may pursue treatments at military medical treatment facility (MTF) Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility Graduate Medical Education (GME) Programs, which provide ART services not otherwise covered at a greatly reduced cost, where available. These programs are open to all eligible beneficiaries regardless of sexual orientation and there is no requirement for the beneficiary to be married or have a partner.

Major General BOWERS. Our Marine recruiters focus on bringing our message of aspirational opportunity to everyone who can earn our title, and we do so within the confines of statute and policy. We are always interested in reviewing policies that support all of our marines and their families.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Yes, the limited availability of family building benefits, including IVF services, is a concern for recruitment and retention, especially for female servicemembers. The DAF methodically establishes special assignment programs aiming to create family stability for military families with dependent children, and family building to the maximum extent possible. To address these limitations, optimize the career experience, and increase recruiting and retention of servicemembers, the DAF is exploring courses of action to update DAF policy to allow airmen and guardians (to include same sex couples, unmarried couples, single servicemembers, and dual military) to request deferment from a routine reassignment and deployment if their medical provider confirms they or their spouse are receiving fertility treatment. Because the success of any fertility treatment is impossible to predict, we are conducting analysis to determine the optimal length of the deferment and, if approved, expect to announce policy implementation during the 2024 calendar year.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

42. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, beginning in 2024, the Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) Program will require broader coverage of IVF services for all civilian Federal employees. Servicemembers risk their lives and their health every day to keep us safe, and many servicemembers experience infertility as a result of their service. Yet, many servicemembers will continue to be excluded from these benefits. Do you believe access to family building benefits, including IVF services, similar to those offered to all civilian Federal employees through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program could help with recruiting and retaining more servicemembers?

Major General DAVIS. The challenges with recruiting and retention in the Army are highly varied. The proposed expansion of the Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) Program in 2024, to include wider coverage for IVF services for all civilian

Federal employees, will create a discrepancy in benefits between civilian Federal employees and servicemembers. This could negatively impact recruiting and retention efforts.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Further analysis needs to be conducted on how much of a benefit IVF would have on recruiting and retention. IVF is very expensive and with DOD top-line challenges, there needs to be more internal discussion on these costs and any benefits on recruiting and retention.

Major General BOWERS. Any increase of benefits which results in a larger pool of qualified and motivated candidates who desire to earn the title of United States Marine is a benefit to our recruiting force.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Providing access to family building benefits, including IVF services, for servicemembers, akin to the benefits offered to civilian Federal employees through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, could contribute significantly to the recruitment and retention of our valuable servicemembers. Over the last several years, our Women's Initiatives Team, one of the DAF's Barrier Analysis Working Groups, estimated that approximately 1,500 airmen and guardians are affected by infertility each year. In October 2022, the Secretary of the Air Force signed a memorandum directing the DAF to take a series of actions to ensure servicemembers and their families can access reproductive health care, including assisted reproductive technology (ART), regardless of where they are stationed. The DAF specifically implemented OSD's ART policies on February 27, 2023 which grants servicemembers up to 21 days of an administrative absence to receive or to accompany a dual military spouse or dependent to receive a non-covered reproductive healthcare procedure. In addition, the policies authorized travel and transportation allowances for servicemembers and dependents to receive non-covered reproductive healthcare services. By offering such comprehensive support, we not only demonstrate our commitment to the well-being of our military personnel but also create a more attractive and supportive environment that fosters long-term dedication and loyalty. This proactive approach aligns with the evolving needs and expectations of servicemembers, ultimately enhancing the overall strength and resilience of our Armed Forces.

THC WAIVERS FOR RECRUITS

43. Senator WARREN. Brigadier General Amrhein, in 2022, the Air Force implemented a pilot program to stop permanently barring individuals who test positive for THC, and instead allow them to enlist in the Air Force if they are granted a waiver and pass a second drug test. These THC waivers are good policy; they help address the Air Force's recruitment issues, and according to a 2021 RAND Corporation study of waivers in the context of the U.S. Army, "the performance of waived recruits is often no worse and sometimes is better than the performance of similar, nonwaivered recruits." How many waivers have been requested since this pilot program began? What percentage of waiver requests are not granted, and if they are not granted, why?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Since the waiver process was just started in fiscal year 2023, and the waiver process requires a six-month wait time to be initiated, we do not have a report that shows those not granted a THC waiver. However, a system change request (SCR) is in the configuration management process to enable USAF to build that report. The report should be available in February 2024.

Two hundred forty-three waivers have been approved since launch of the pilot program. AFRS is currently only capturing analytics of approved waivers and is not tracking data for those who were disapproved. When AFRS engaged the recruiting field units for feedback, the only disapprovals given were for applicants who didn't meet the criteria for waiver eligibility, i.e., no Category 1 or 2 moral waivers. They must also have scored above a 50 on the ASVAB.

44. Senator WARREN. Brigadier General Amrhein, does the Air Force track data on the demographics of prospective recruits who test positive for THC are and are not granted waivers? If so, what does this data reveal?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. AFRS is currently not tracking data for disapproved THC waivers. As mentioned above, we are awaiting this report, however, here are the demographics for the waivers that were approved:

Race/Ethnic Category	
American Indian/Alaskan Native ...	1
Not Hispanic or Latino	1
Asian	4
Hispanic or Latino	1
Not Hispanic or Latino	3
Black	85
Hispanic or Latino	8
Not Hispanic or Latino	77
Native Hawaiian or Other P	4
Hispanic or Latino	1
Not Hispanic or Latino	3
White	144
Hispanic or Latino	133
Not Hispanic or Latino	111
White and Black	2
Not Hispanic or Latino	2
White/Black	3
Not Hispanic or Latino	3
Grand Total	243
GENDER	
Female	36
Male	207
Grand Total	243
Average Age	22

45. Senator WARREN. Brigadier General Amrhein, when determining whether to issue a waiver, the Air Force says that it gathers “a robust set of information” and puts applicants “through multiple levels of scrutiny.” During this process of determining whether to issue a THC waiver, what discretionary factors does the Air Force consider?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. AFRS considers the whole person concept, to include personal testimonies, prior moral offenses, and readiness to serve the needs of the Air Force.

46. Senator WARREN. Brigadier General Amrhein, given the Air Force’s 2020 findings of racial disparities in disciplinary and other processes, what is the Air Force doing to avoid racial disparities in its process of granting THC waivers?

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Race is not included on THC waiver requests and is not a factor in consideration.

SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST RECRUITS

47. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, in November 2023, Military.com reported that the Marine Corps is investigating a recruiter who claims to have been in a sexual relationship with an underage recruit. How many times within the past 10 years have each of your services received a report of a recruiter sexually abusing, harassing, or assaulting or engaging in other inappropriate sexual behavior with a recruit, how many were substantiated, and what disciplinary actions were taken?

Major General DAVIS. In the past 10 years, there have been 990 reported cases of sexual misconduct with a subject of recruiting. Of those reports, 806 were substantiated.

Category	# Substantiated	Court Martial/ civil conviction	Separated from service	Article 15/ Non-Judicial Punishment	Adverse Action (personal record entry)
Sexual Misconduct	87	8	19	7	37
Sexual Harassment	299	3	32	41	171
Fraternization or unauthorized relationship with an applicant	420	3	60	55	232

All individuals are immediately suspended from recruiting duties at the time of the allegation.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy recruiting takes recruiter impropriety and sexual assault and harassment very seriously. Since fiscal year 2013, we had 104 substantiated cases of either recruiter fraternization, sexual harassment or sexual assault. In the same time period, there were 47 unsubstantiated cases. The following Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) disciplinary actions were taken by fiscal year:

- Fiscal year 2013: 19 recruiters separated from Service via the administrative separation process, four were subject to UCMJ Article 15 Non-judicial punishment (NJP), and seven received other administrative action and/or were removed from recruiting duty
- Fiscal year 2014: One recruiter received a criminal conviction for misconduct, 12 were separated from the Service, one was subject to Article 15 NJP proceedings, and six were removed from recruiting duty
- Fiscal year 2015: Three recruiters were separated from the Service and one was removed from recruiting duty
- Fiscal year 2016: Eight recruiters with substantiated misconduct were separated from the Service
- Fiscal year 2017: Four recruiters with substantiated misconduct were separated from the Service
- Fiscal year 2018: Three recruiters were separated from the Service, six were removed from recruiting duty
- Fiscal year 2019: One recruiter received a criminal conviction for misconduct, five were separated from Service, three recruiters received Article 15 NJP and six were removed from recruiting duty
- Fiscal year 2020: Five recruiters were subject to Article 15 NJP, four were removed from recruiting duty
- Fiscal year 2021: Two recruiters received criminal convictions, three recruiters separated from the Service, two received Article 15 NJP, three removed from recruiting duty
- Fiscal year 2022: Three received criminal convictions, 11 recruiters separated from the Service, two received Article 15 NJP
- Fiscal year 2023: One recruiter received criminal conviction, eight separated from the Service, one received Article 15 NJP, one removed from recruiter duty, and four pending courts-martial related to recruiter fraternization

Major General BOWERS. As reported to the DOD in the Recruiter Irregularities report below is the breakdown of substantiated claims for sexual misconduct and sexual harassment by recruiters. Disciplinary actions include Nonjudicial punishment, reduction in grade, forfeiture of pay, and relief for cause. Some cases result in incarceration and Service separation.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 ¹
Sexual Misconduct	4	7	19	19	31	15	18	5	5	4
Sexual Harassment	10	7	1	2	1	2	5	3	0	2

¹ Fiscal year 2023 data through July 17, 2023

Recruits that file a report of sexual assault (whether the subject is a recruiter or stranger) are tracked and managed by the Training & Education Command (TECOM) SAPR Program. Sexual harassment cases are handled by the USMC Equal Opportunity Advisor/Representative (EOA/EOR); sexual assault of minors eligible for military services are referred and supported by the USMC Family Advocacy Program (FAP); and information in regards to Subject demographics or sentencing outcomes are more appropriately addressed by) and/or the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA).

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Between 2014 and 2023, of the nearly 700,000 applicants processed by AFRS, the DAF investigated 41 incidents alleging sexual abuse, harassment, or assault, or other inappropriate sexual behavior by a recruiter with a recruit. Of those cases, 10 were referred to a court-martial proceeding, 14 were resolved through nonjudicial punishment under Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 were resolved through other administrative action being issued to the recruiter, 5 cases were closed with no action, and 2 cases are still pending disposition. The variance in types of disciplinary actions is attributed to the requirement that commanders consider each allegation/case based on the facts presented, including the relative severity of the alleged offense(s), the strength of the evidence, the advice of their Staff Judge Advocate, the input of any alleged victim, where applicable, and the Airman/Guardian’s prior disciplinary history, if any.

48. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, what training do you provide recruiters on engaging appropriately with recruits, including regarding sexual and otherwise inappropriate relationships between recruiters and recruits? Please provide copies of any training.

Major General DAVIS. Recruiters have multiple touchpoints throughout the year, both at the Recruiting and Retention College (RRC) and their units. Training covers ethics, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), and inappropriate relationships between recruiters and recruits.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Training provided at Navy Orientation Recruiting Unit (NORU) on sexual and otherwise inappropriate relationships between recruiters and recruits is addressed in all NORU courses. In addition, the schoolhouse dedicates a significant amount of time on ethics and prohibited practices in the Enlisted Navy Recruiting Orientation course. Specifically, NORU discusses and trains to their fraternization policy and prohibited activities as it pertains to applicants, prospects, Future Sailors, and recruiting prohibited practices regarding Future Sailors.

Recruiters depart NORU with reinforced knowledge of prohibited practices on sexual and inappropriate relationships between recruiters and recruits. In addition, Navy Talent Acquisition Group CO/XOs receive training against prohibited interactions between recruiters/applicants during the NORU Recruiting Leadership Course and throughout the year from the Navy Recruiting Command legal team.

Please reference enclosure Recruiter Training on Fraternization Topics located in the Appendix.

- Training: NORU PXO Legal (fraternization slide)
- Basic Recruiter PQS (pg 22: fraternization/ethics topics)
- Trainer’s Guide, ENRO Lesson Plan
- Lesson Plans (fraternization/ethics topics)

Major General BOWERS. The USMC Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) SAPR Program ensures that a Recruiter SAPR Brief is conducted at every Basic Recruiter Course aboard MCRD San Diego (6) times a year by the Supervisory Regional Recruiting SARCs. Copies of the Recruiter SAPR Brief are available upon request and provided to recruiting personnel each year. Additionally, all marines within MCRC receive annual rank-specific SAPR training (Step-Up (E-1-E-3), Take-A-Stand (E-4-E-5), & SAPR Annual Training for Leaders (SNCOs & Officers)) conducted by trained, credentialed, and appointed MCRC SAPR personnel.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Recruiters receive training on professional/unprofessional conduct during their initial skills course before they are qualified as recruiters. Once at their unit, commanders are responsible for ensuring all members

receive training on unprofessional relationships IAW DODI 1304.33 and AFI 36-2909—AETCSUP within 30 days of assignment and annually thereafter.

49. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, what information and mechanisms are available to recruits to report inappropriate behavior toward them by recruiters?

Major General DAVIS. Recruits become prospects upon entering a recruiting station. Station Commanders brief new prospects on the recruitment process, what is considered inappropriate behavior, how to report inappropriate behavior, and who they can report it to. Any recruiter who observes inappropriate interactions or relationships is required to report it to their chain of command.

Bulletin boards are posted in each station with contact information for the recruit or others to contact for assistance and/or to report inappropriate behaviors. These bulletins boards typically contain information for: Company Commander, Company First Sergeant, Station Commander, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Victim Advocate, Equal Opportunity Advisor, Inspector General, other recruiters, and the DOD Safe Helpline.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Prior to reporting to boot camp at Recruit Training Command (RTC), recruits may report any inappropriate recruiter behavior directly to Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) leadership and/or civil law enforcement. Additionally, recruits may report inappropriate behavior to Navy Recruiting Command's Inspector General's (IG) office as a Special Inquiry or as an IG Hotline Complaint. After reporting to RTC, recruits may report inappropriate recruiter behavior to RTC leadership and/or the Recruit Quality Assurance Team during the Moment of Truth briefing that is conducted during initial processing.

Regarding available information relating to inappropriate behavior, recruits are informed early in the process of what constitutes recruit/recruiter "prohibited activities." Specifically, recruits are required to review and sign DD Form 2983 (January 2015), acknowledging that they understand that developing or conducting personal, intimate, and/or sexual relationships with a recruiter is strictly prohibited. Other additional prohibited and inappropriate behaviors and activities include, but are not limited to dating, handholding, kissing, embracing, caressing, and engaging in sexual activities. Further, prohibited personal, intimate, and/or sexual relationships include those relationships conducted in person or via cards, letters, e-mail correspondence, instant messaging, videos, photographs, social networking, or any other means of communication.

Major General BOWERS. Poolees who disclose sexual assault are referred to local advocacy/service providers and are provided USMC SARC and SAPR VA contact information for when they arrive at either MCRD San Diego or MCRD Parris Island (regardless of who perpetrated the crime against or when it occurred). There is also the USMC 24/7 Sexual Assault Support Line aboard each of the Recruit Training Depots where SARCs and SAPR VAs respond 24/7 to those in need of SAPR supportive services. MCRC SAPR collaborates on a daily basis with our TECOM SAPR counterparts to ensure that all recruits are offered services and are assigned a SARC and SAPR VA if needed/requested.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. At the beginning the recruiting process, each recruit is provided video training that includes a description of unprofessional conduct and prohibited activities between recruiters and recruits. Recruits also sign a DOD Form 2982, *Recruiter/Trainer Prohibited Activities Acknowledgment*, certifying and acknowledging activities that are prohibited between recruiters and recruits. Recruits also receive a physical *Rights and Responsibilities Card* containing two points of contact to which they can report unprofessional relationships. The first phone number provided to recruits goes directly to the HQ AFRS Staff Judge Advocate. The second phone number goes directly to the HQ AFRS Inspector General. Additionally, each recruit is given two separate surveys during their enlistment process asking multiple questions to ensure they received the training and card, as well as asking if they have experienced any unprofessional relationships with their recruiter or recruiting personnel. If at any time, a recruit claims she/he is the victim of sexual abuse, the DAF policy DAF policy requires commanders, first sergeants, and anyone else notified ensure eligible victims are notified of his/her right to receive assistance from the DAF Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program, including access to victim advocacy resources and the option to file either a restricted or unrestricted report. A restricted report allows a victim to obtain support and resources, including necessary medical and mental health treatment, without a formal report to their commander or law enforcement. SAPR personnel are also trained to inform victims about a host of available resources, including national and state resources outside the DOD, such as RAINN and other local victim support organizations. In addition, DAF policy requires we inform victims that they can seek assistance from

the DOD Safe Helpline and they have a right to obtain a Victims' Counsel, who can provide privileged attorney-client advice to the victim; however, Department of Defense Instructions limit eligibility to SAPR and other DOD victim resources based on the status of the assailant or victim. In the event, the victim cannot receive services, he/she is referred to local law enforcement and various civilian victims' programs, which vary by state. Finally, in coordination with Headquarters Air Force, the Air Force Recruitign Services incorporated mandatory SAPR program training for all delayed entry program members which is completed and tracked through the Air Force Aim High Application. This training informs them of our SAPR services and reporting options.

MHS GENESIS DELAYS

50. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, how many reservists have each of your services had to call up to assist with the delays caused by MHS Genesis?

Major General DAVIS. To date, the Army has brought on 40 Reservists to assist with MHS Genesis. The Army is currently evaluating options for additional personnel, as required.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy Recruiting Command is leveraging two Active Duty for Operational Support (ADOS) sailors and one Canvasser Recruiter (CANREC) to support the waivers team. These three sailors volunteered to support the positions.

Major General BOWERS. No Marine Corps Reservists have been activated as a result of delays caused by MHS GENESIS as the Marine Corps does not have medical personnel within our service structure.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. AFRS has utilized different manning strategies to accommodate the increase in workload caused by the health information exchange available within MHS Genesis. Initially, 7 Air National Guard enlisted medics were placed temporarily at 7 different MEPS stations to help with medical administrative support in late spring 2023. Then, a contract procuring 63 civilian medical administrative personnel was finalized in September 2023. These staff members will be assigned to various MEPS to help recruiters screen medical support documents to provide to MEPS medical staff and the AFRS Accession Medical Waiver staff for waiver processing. This should help relieve recruiters of this administrative work so they can have more time to engage with applicants in the field. Additionally, to help process the increase in waivers received, the Accession Medical Waiver Division procured a contract for 6 personnel starting in fiscal year 2024. This has helped reduce the enlisted waiver backlog from nearly 1600 to 300 in 3 months.

51. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, please provide an update on the average length of time between a recruit's final interview and their first recorded contract before and after DOD began using MHS Genesis at Military Entrance Processing Stations.

Major General DAVIS. Since the implementation of MHS Genesis at Military Entrance Process Stations, potential Army recruits are experiencing longer processing times from anywhere between 37 and 139 additional days, depending on the complexity of the medical documentation required. An applicant with no medical issues takes an average of 13 days longer to process than pre-MHS Genesis, due to the additional workload from MHS Genesis provided records.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy has experienced a significant increase in the average length of time between a recruit's final interview and their first recorded contract since the implementation of MHS Genesis. From June 2021 through November 2021, the average time between final interview and first contract was 34 days. Following implementation of MROADS and later MHS Genesis the average length of time between a recruit's final interview and their first recorded contract nearly doubled (64 days on average from December 2021 to May 2022). The delay exceeded an 80-day average entering fiscal year 2024 and continues to grow.

Major General BOWERS. Prior to the implementation of MHS GENESIS, it took 10 days on average from the time a prescreen was submitted to MEPS to when an applicant would contract. Post implementation of MHS GENESIS and access to the national Health Information Exchanges that same process now takes an average of 45 days due to the high volume of issues to sort through and validate.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. While AFRS saw an increase in processing time for applicants from the implementation time of MHS Genesis, we have made process improvements to shorten this time to near pre-MHS Genesis rates. However, our concern with MHS Genesis is the significant increase in the number of applicants we must find and process due to the substantial decrease in qualification rates since

its implementation. Prior to inception, our initial qualification rates for medical at MEPS was 80 percent. This rate dropped to 69 percent in its first year (fiscal year 2022) and continued its decline to 58 percent in fiscal year 2023. This decrease has put a significant burden on our recruiters who must now process nearly 20 percent more applicants to qualify the same number of recruits prior to MHS-Genesis. While we continue to find better ways to shorten the processing time for applicants, it does not relieve the recruiter from having to find more applicants to fill the requirements of the DAF.

MILITARY HOUSING QUALITY

52. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, how do the quality of life issues such as military housing, military barracks, and housing affordability impact your ability to recruit for the services?

Major General DAVIS. The connection between housing quality of life and military service recruiting outcomes is established and known across the Department. While not the number one reason, reports indicate that prospective recruits would consider not joining the military over concerns about the requirement to live in undesired places. They are also heavily influenced by media coverage and influencers reporting negative press about the military overall, including housing conditions. Recent other issues such as food insecurity, sexual harassment and assault, and delayed promotions have been cited in the latest JAMRS' Current Events Trackers (CET) as reasons not to support or recommend military service and reasons that youths' "changing views on the favorability of the Military and elevated concerns about the treatment of its servicemembers exemplify the perception among youth that the Military may not be a desirable organization to work for" (source: JAMRS' State of the Market briefing to USAREC MMA conference, August 2023).

Rear Admiral WALKER. Military housing, military barracks and housing affordability and other quality of life issues are part of the overall Navy compensation package. Potential recruits who read, hear or view positive comments about these issues from the media, Service Members or veterans will see the military as a good career opportunity. Conversely, our recruiters will have to overcome the negative perceptions for potential recruits who hear negative comments about quality of life issues.

Major General BOWERS. We focus on the intangibles of service when communicating with young people—the value and pride of becoming a marine. However, we recognize housing is a major quality of life factor when it comes to recruiting and, even more so with regard to retention.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The Air Force's 10-year average shows 89 percent of all enlisted accessions are under 21 years old, single with no dependents. With that, the topic of family housing is not a significant factor in the attractiveness of our initial value proposition nor on the minds of these future airmen. However, our recruiters provide a lot of information on military dormitories on our bases and will try and lead base visits with potential recruits to show them the living spaces for single airmen, which are very comparable to many college dorms.

SCREENING RECRUITS FOR EXTREMISM

53. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, the DOD Inspector General reported in August 2023 that recruiters failed to follow several steps to screen applicants for extremist ties and that as a result, "Military Service recruiters may not have identified all applicants with extremist or criminal gang associations during the screening process, increasing the potential for future security risks and disruptions to good order, morale, and discipline." Please provide an update on the status and timeline of each of the service's implementation of the IG's recommendations.

Major General DAVIS.

Recommendation A.1.a

Issue a policy memorandum to recruiting personnel reiterating the importance of completing all required steps for screening applicants for extremist or criminal gang associations during the accessions process.

Response A.1.a

The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (military Personnel and Quality of Life) issued a memorandum dated July 10, 2023, to recruiting personnel that reiterated the importance of completing required steps, including interviews and all screening. The DOD IG considers this recommendation resolved and closed.

Recommendation A.1.b

Establish and implement requirements in Service-specific policies for periodic reviews of recruiter compliance with required accessions screening procedures to ensure recruiters screen applicants for extremist and criminal gang associations in accordance with guidance.

Response A.1.b

USAREC established and published implementation requirements for recruiters to follow accessions screening procedures to ensure Recruiters screen applicants for extremist and criminal gang associations. Recruiters utilize the system of record to ask the following questions:

a. Have you ever had, or currently have, any association with an extremist/hate organization or gang?

b. Have you ever been debarred from any Government installation or facility at any time in your life?

c. Have you ever participated, either in person or via electronic communications, in an act of treason, terrorism or sedition against the United States, regardless of whether the action resulted in a citation, arrest or conviction?

d. Have you ever associated with, either in person or via electronic communications, persons who are attempting to commit or who are committing an act of treason, terrorism, or sedition against the United States?

e. Have you ever associated with, either in person or via electronic communications, persons or organizations that advocate, threaten, or use force or violence, or use any other illegal unconstitutional means in an effort to:

1) Overthrow or influence the U.S. Government or any State or local government?

2) Prevent Federal, State, or local government personnel from performing their official duties?

3) Gain retribution for perceived wrongs caused by the Federal, State, or local government?

4) Prevent others from exercising their rights under the Constitution or laws of the United States or of any state?

f. Have you ever, either in person or via electronic communications, advocated for the denial of civil rights based on the supremacy of one race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability over another race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability?

g. Have you ever, either in person or via electronic communications, committed or conspired to commit a crime motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability?

If the applicant answers 'yes' to any question the process immediately stops, and further screening is required. If all questions are 'no', the applicant may process further. USAREC monitors compliance and completes periodic reviews at least annually to ensure every applicant is properly screened for extremist and criminal gang associations.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy Recruiting Command has implemented all DOD Inspector General recommendations.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps has updated its policy regarding screening for extremism and is on track to meet the SECNAV's timeline for service implementation including training requirements outlined in 20 June 2023 Assistant Secretary of the Navy (M&RA) memorandum on "Implementation of the Countering Extremist Activity Training."

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. A policy memorandum was signed and sent to the command reiterating the importance of completing all required steps for screening applicants for extremist or criminal gang associations. This memo was sent on 2 October 2023 and its guidance reinforces the AFRS Standard Operating Procedural Guidance. Furthermore, the AFRS Inspector General Office established requirements for periodic reviews of recruiter compliance by risk-based sampling strategy and is being evaluated through scheduled unit inspections. Finally, the recruiting information system, AFRISS-TF, has been modified in various ways both during and after the audit to ensure quality control and fail safes are in place to enforce compliance.

54. Senator WARREN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, the IG found that military recruiters failed to annotate a response to the question asking recruits about extremist or criminal gang associations for 41 percent of the applicants the IG reviewed, didn't administer screening questionnaires or forms in 41 percent of cases when they should have, didn't implement tattoo review procedures for 9 percent of applicants, did not provide evidence of fingerprint results for 9 percent of applicants, and failed to provide

evidence that a background investigation was initiated for 1 percent of applicants. Are each of your services tracking whether your recruiters are fulfilling all the above requirements and what percentage of them have failed to do so since the standard screening questionnaire was created in 2021? If you are tracking this information, please provide all available data on what percent of these tasks are currently being conducted.

Major General DAVIS. The Army goes to great lengths to thoroughly screen each applicant. An applicant is unable to process without a complete Standard Form 86 (Questionnaire for National Security Positions) and fingerprinting. Upon arrival to MEPS, the applicant gets fingerprinted for a second time and completes a full medical screening, which gives medical personnel the opportunity to identify undisclosed tattoos. Last, an applicant can't ship to initial entry training (IET) without the results of the fingerprinting.

Rear Admiral WALKER. SECDEF directed the immediate actions below in April 2021 to guard against prohibited extremist activity across the Department. These actions are complete.

- Publish an updated DODI 1325.06 "Handling Protest, Extremist, and Criminal Gang Activity Among Members of the Armed Forces", to include a clearer definition of prohibited extremist activity for servicemembers.
- The full definition of prohibited extremist activity and active participation can be found in DODI 1325.06 and prohibits servicemembers from participating in six distinct categories of extremist activities and 14 distinct categories of active participation.
- Update servicemember transition checklists to help transitioning members guard against recruitment by extremist groups during their transition from the military.
- Standardize recruit screening questionnaires (information and processes) across the Military Services and clarify that providing false information may be the basis for punitive action.

Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) adheres to the above applicable requirements as all recruiters require applicants to annotate and complete screening questionnaires regarding extremist or criminal gang associations. Based on a review of application packages for Navy applicants, DODIG determined that Navy recruiters collected the required forms in accordance with the guidance.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps seeks to discover any extremist or criminal gang associations through medical screening, questionnaires, and background checks. All Marine Corps applicants are screened by medical providers at MEPS for tattoos and are required to work with their recruiter to fill out a tattoo screening form and sign a statement of understanding regarding Marine Corps aberrant behavior policies. Every recruiter utilizes a Questionable Conduct and Aberrant Behavior Screening form to discover any related participation in gangs, extremist organizations or activities. Marine Corps applicants also submit to electronic fingerprint capture and background investigation prior to shipping to the Marine Corps Recruit Depots. Marine recruiters are given approximately 10 hours of training on extremism and ethical/moral behavior at the Basic Recruiters Course and follow on training is conducted by Recruiter Instructors for a minimum of 12 hours per quarter. Poolees and Officer Candidates received Whole of Character and Civics training that cover extremist and gang related activities. Since the standard form was created in 2021, all Marine Corps applicants have fulfilled the screening requirements for service in the military.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The audit covered applicants at various stages of the recruiting process. The AF took swift action before automation/IT actions could be implemented to ensure immediacy of vetting. Nearly all the Air Force applicants received the appropriate level of screening to their respective stage. During the DOD IG inspection on Extremism vetting, 26 Air Force applicants were found to have discrepancies in their forms regarding extremism. Of the 26 applicants, the IG and AFRS resolved the issues and concluded none of the 26 had extremist activities or ties. The IG report did emphasize the need for AFRS to ensure more checks are in place so there aren't applicants that have missing data on their enlistment paperwork. AFRS implemented a change in its recruiting information technology that will automatically flag an applicant if information is missing on their enlistment paperwork, as it pertains to extremism activity. AFRS/IG has implemented spot checks to ensure these changes to the information system are validated. To date, no applicant has shipped to basic military training that should have been denied due to extremism activity.

NAVY RECRUITING

55. Senator WARREN. Rear Admiral Walker, the Navy's recruiting and advertising budget for fiscal year 2024 is \$269 million. The Marine Corps, which is significantly smaller, budgeted \$246 million. Has the Navy assessed what impact increased spending on recruiting and advertising would have on reaching its recruiting goals?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Yes. The Navy commissioned studies to ensure every dollar spent in Marketing and Advertising (M&A) is optimized so we are being good stewards of the taxpayer dollars. The Navy assessed the impact of increased spending by leveraging historical data and media mix modeling to support meeting our recruiting goals.

56. Senator WARREN. Rear Admiral Walker, the Army's Future Soldier Preparatory Course has had promising initial results in helping potential recruits meet the standards necessary to be eligible for service. Has the Navy considered initiating something similar, and if not, what steps is the Navy taking instead?

Rear Admiral WALKER. Mirroring an Army program, the Navy has established the Future Sailor Preparatory Course (FSPC), with two tracks: Physical Fitness and Academic.

FSPC Physical Fitness first began in Spring 2023 and allows Navy Recruiting Command to recruit applicants with a 50 AFQT and higher, and body compositions of 26.1–32 percent for males and 36.1–42 percent for females. These Future Sailors will be allowed to access into Active Duty and enter a rolling 3-week physical fitness program for up to 90-days. Once the FS reaches 26 percent (male) or 36 percent (female) body-fat, they will graduate the course and enter basic military training at Recruit Training Command.

FSPC Academic first began in Summer 2023 and allows applicants with lower AFQT scores to train and retake the exam and reclassify into a new rating. The academic course remains in beta phase; the first pilot course convened January 2024. With these programs, the Navy is not lowering standards. The Navy remains committed to implementing policies to help meet recruiting goals while maintaining standards, increasing recruit performance, reducing attrition, and maximizing retention to meet our established end-strength goals.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

ACCESS TO HIGH SCHOOLS

57. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are there any high schools in the United States that deny access to your recruiters?

Major General DAVIS. No, the Army has legal access to all high schools; however, we strive to build relationships with educators and school administrators to allow meaningful access. Meaningful access allows recruiters to be visible and share their Army stories with students. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery—Career Exploration Program (ASVAB-CEP) and March2Success are resources recruiters share to help develop and mentor students in their career selection, military or civilian, and improve their study skills in preparation for standardized tests.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy is currently reporting zero high schools denying access to recruiters.

Major General BOWERS. No.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Although AFRS is not tracking any public high schools denying access to our recruiters, our greatest concern is having equal quality and time of access as other organizations, such as college/university representatives.

58. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, if any schools are denying access, why are they denying access?

Major General DAVIS. The Army has legal access to schools.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy does not have any reports of schools denying access to recruiters.

Major General BOWERS. There are no schools denying access.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Although AFRS is not tracking any public high schools denying access to our recruiters, our greatest concern is having equal quality and time of access as other organizations, such as college/university representatives.

59. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, for any schools providing access less than

you would consider ideal, why have they declined to improve the quality of access? Please provide specific examples.

Major General DAVIS. Safety of the students and faculty is the main concern of many schools. High schools are very cautious regarding open access following the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, many State and local school districts have increased precautions that limit meaningful access to Army recruiters and other entities into their schools. Some recruiters experience challenges with the time the schools allocate for them being on campus, such as right before the end of the school day as students are leaving. Awareness of the military opportunities, lifestyle, and benefits is low due to recruiters less meaningful access to schools and our Nation's declining veteran population.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy Recruiting Command is currently reporting zero high schools that have declined to improve the quality of access.

Major General BOWERS. In several cases of less than ideal access, the school's administrative staff has provided parents with standardized forms for selecting to opt out of allowing recruiters to have access to directory information rather than the parent requesting to opt out formally, as written in the law. Providing the parent with a standard form that is mandatory for the parent to fill out increases the number of parents who choose to opt out and thereby minimizes the number of students on the directory list the school provides for compliance with the law. In other cases, school administrators provide access, but severely constrain location, time, and duration of recruiter visits that are not conducive to reaching the student population and building awareness of military service.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Our feedback on this topic includes access limited to less than that provided to colleges and other hiring agencies and a lack of familiarity of the military by leaders and influencers in schools. Our research (JAMRS) has shown that 70 percent of Active Duty new recruits reported that a conversation with a recruiter sparked their interest to find out more about joining their service. Without at least equal access to schools, our recruiters struggle to have these conversations with potential applicants. Additionally, all DAF enlisted recruits are automatically enrolled in Community College of the AF which is a fully accredited Associate's program and should be shared with to any high school graduates pursuing advanced education under associates or other equivalent advanced education credit. The DAF is the only service which has such an advanced associate education accreditation program.

60. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, how would you describe optimal access to high schools for your recruiters?

Major General DAVIS. Optimal access is allowing Army recruiters into the schools to share their Army stories, working with teachers and students to explore career options, offering time for recruiters to deliver classroom presentations, and allowing recruiters to set up information tables in well-traveled hallways or lunchrooms that allow for optimal visibility for meeting students and teachers. Ideally, it would be mutually beneficial for educators and recruiters to administer the ASVAB to students during the school day.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Optimal access to high schools would involve multiple visits monthly to reasonably unlimited locations within the school/school grounds (e.g. not limited to the parking lot or to only a corner of the gym), and reasonably unlimited access to students. It would revolve around the opportunity to conduct classroom presentations for juniors and seniors in STEM related courses, offering the ability to speak directly with our target audience and pitch Navy opportunities. Additionally, the ability to attend all high school career fairs and sporting events free of cost, would provide our recruiting force the opportunity to attend events in uniform and talk with both the high school students and their families about the Navy experience and potential career decisions.

Major General BOWERS. Physical access to the high school/student body at least once per month, school directory lists for juniors and seniors provided at the beginning of the school year or within 30 days of request, attendance at school-sponsored career fairs with equitable location to other participants, and administration of the Career Exploration Program-ASVAB test once per year for the entire student body or at minimum all students who volunteer to take the vocational test.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Optimal access for DAF recruiters include direct engagement with students inside the classroom or assembly; during school programs; career or college fair programs; programs or 'Armed Forces Days' centric to educating students about military options.

61. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, how would you describe access that technically complies with the law but falls short of what you consider optimal access?

Major General DAVIS. Legal access is access that complies with the law but fails to offer opportunities to get to know the students and teachers. Meaningful access allows Army recruiters sufficient opportunities and time to meet with students, have conversations, and share information on military service.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Some schools have provided inconsistency in access, where one school will allow recruiters weekly access, but another may only allow a monthly basis. Additionally, some schools only allow access during certain suboptimal times (before or after school hours), or place recruiters in areas that are not easily accessible or readily trafficked.

Major General BOWERS. Schools that provide access that meets the law to include allowing “the same access to secondary schools students as is provided generally to postsecondary educational institutions or to prospective employers of those students.” This “equal” access can be as few as one visit per semester, or a recruiting career fair scheduled at a time that will historically result in limited participation from students. We appreciate the support from the Fiscal Year 2024 NDAA, which requires submission of lists within 60 days of request, and will work continue to work with Congress to provide optimal access for recruiters to provide information to our Nation’s youth about opportunities within the United States Marine Corps.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. An example experienced by many Air Force recruiters is a school that allows a lunchroom set-up during non-optimal hours, typically displaced into a section of the lunchroom away from students and told by school authorities that they are not to engage students unless the student engages them first, and limited to a maximum of once or twice a year.

62. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, what mechanisms does your service use to interface with high schools and improve the quality of access?

Major General DAVIS. The Army offers Educator Tours to teachers, principals, school counselors, and other Centers of Influence/Community Partners to participate in events at a military installation. The event is designed to highlight Army training and education opportunities provided to soldiers, and to showcase various military careers by allowing participants to receive a hands-on experience and meet with soldiers who are experts in their fields. Some Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) showcased are Military Working Dogs Handlers, Cooks, Competitive Marksmen, and many (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) STEM-related career fields. Participants tour and receive briefings by installation Education Centers.

We also partner with educator associations such as American Association of School Administrators, National Association of Secondary School Principals, American School Counselor Association, and more. These partnerships provide the opportunity to educate and inform administrators and counselors about March2Success, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery—Career Exploration Program (ASVAB-CEP), and military service.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy Recruiting Command has established the following process to interface with non-compliant schools:

1. A Senior Officer (minimum grade of O-6/SES) is required to visit the school and try to gain access.
2. If that Officer is unsuccessful, they must notify the Service Recruiter Access to High Schools (RAHS) Program Manager and DOD RAHS Program Coordinator to get the school added as a problem/noncompliant school.
3. If the issue remains unresolved after 60 days, the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) or DOD designee will send a letter to the State Governor copying the Secretary of Education.
4. The State Governor will then work with the school to resolve the noncompliance.
5. Last, if the issue has not been resolved after 1 year, SECDEF/DOD will report the noncompliant school to Congress.

Major General BOWERS. Recruiters, Staff Non-commissioned officers, and commissioned officers assigned to recruiting stations all take part in the process of improving access to high schools. Building relationships at the lowest level and providing educators and counselors with the tangible and intangible benefits of serving in the Marine Corps. Educators’ workshops and attending influencer events like national coaches’ associations and national superintendents’ symposiums also increase the awareness of the Marine Corps and choosing military service as a post high school option.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. AFRS requires a school program for each recruiter dictating visitation frequency and teaches recruiters how to use interface incentives such as Center of Influence meetings that cultivate relationships with influencers or assist with lead generation efforts. Additionally, the AETC and AFRS Commander level conducts educator sensing sessions which includes invites to school district leadership, athletic directors, guidance counselors and other academia leadership. AFRS sponsors the Air and Space Force Educators tours hosted on installations around the U.S.

63. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are there any additional authorities needed to improve the quality of your service's access to high schools?

Major General DAVIS. Not at this time, our recruiters in conjunction with Civilian Aides to the Secretary of the Army and Reserve Ambassadors are successfully gaining meaningful access.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Current statute, 10 USC, Section 503, requires educational institutions that receive Federal funding to provide military recruiters with the same access and opportunities as they would for other employers. This ensures an equitable platform for military recruitment within schools. While this mandate establishes a baseline for fairness, practical challenges can arise in implementation. These challenges may include navigating differing school policies, managing tight schedules, or addressing specific restrictions that schools may impose. We are working with other Services to find the optimal solution to help the recruiting process and look forward to working with Congress on this challenge.

Major General BOWERS. We appreciate the additional authorities provided in the fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024 NDAA's to increase recruiter access to High Schools and the continued support from Congress for recruiter access in line with amendments made to Title 10 from the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 and subsequent NDAA's. We will continue to work with our legislative affairs offices to submit legislative proposals that will improve the quality of the Marine Corps access to high schools.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. AFRS uses a chain-of-command approach to ensure senior leaders are engaging schools that recruiters desire improved quality of access and additional authorities outside of this military chain, to include Congressional language requiring equal access, to meet the spirit of intent vs. letter of the current law compliance.

64. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, is there any correlation between the quality of access to high schools and the number of recruits?

Major General DAVIS. Yes, there is a correlation between the quality of access to high schools and the number of recruits. The vast majority of high schools comply with the access requirements to support military recruiting as outlined in title 10 U.S.C., sec. 503c and Every Student Succeeds Act, though the level of support among high schools varies considerably. A DOD Active Duty New Recruit Study conducted between October 2021 and March 2022 identified Army recruits reported personal connections to their Service, more than any other Service. The findings suggest significant interactions with military servicemembers, including recruiters and veterans, increase the likelihood that youth will consider the military as a career option.

Rear Admiral WALKER. The high school market provides Navy recruiters with the best source of high-quality accessions. The opportunity to discuss Navy opportunities with our target audience is essential to Navy's recruiting plan and is our number one source for test category upper accessions.

Major General BOWERS. The ability for the Marine Corps to run an effective High School program and accomplish all of the milestones associated with that program directly correlates to the number of recruits that access from each high school. For the Marine Corps, the high school and community college program is vital to build awareness and educate the youth population on the value of military service and opportunity to earn the title, marine.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Yes, outreach and impressions made on students make a major impact on the total number willing to serve. Our research (JAMRS) has shown that 70 percent of Active Duty new recruits reported that a conversation with a recruiter sparked their interest to find out more about joining their service. Without equal quality access to schools, our recruiters struggle to have these conversations with potential applicants.

65. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, please provide a list of all veteran or community organizations with whom you partner to improve your recruiting.

Major General DAVIS. USAREC partners with the following organizations to improve recruiting efforts: Army Reserve Ambassadors; Army Women's Foundation; Association of the United States Army; Boys & Girls Club of America; Civilian Aides to the Secretary of the Army; Future Farmers of America; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; League of United Latin American Citizens; Our Community Salutes; Team Red, White, & Blue; U.S. Chamber Foundation—Hiring our Heroes Program; Women of Color in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); and Young Presidents Organization. Throughout the country, recruiting stations partner with chapters of nationally recognized community organizations, and local organizations. For example, University of Louisville, Hardin County Chamber of Commerce, and Kentucky Regional Development Alliance.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Our 26 Navy Talent Acquisition Groups (NTAGs) and 63 Talent Acquisition Onboarding Centers (TAOCs) all partner with local organizations that best support the communities in which they serve. The Navy also ensures we are listening to feedback, identifying blind spots in our outreach initiatives, and continuing to penetrate markets that may have gone untapped in the past. Our most influential community organizations include schools (teachers and coaches), affinity groups, local veteran organizations (such as VFWs), and religious organizations. Additionally, our Chief of Navy Information (CHINFO) is working to leverage our current national and regional partners to better support recruiting efforts.

Major General BOWERS. Marine Corps Recruiting Command plans to partner with numerous organizations in fiscal year 2024. These partnerships aim to create an influencer advocacy supporting our professional recruiters on the ground across the United States. These partners have direct and daily ties to our target market. These National Partnerships include: American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA), American School Counselors Association (ASCA), American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA), National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA), USA Wrestling (USAW), National Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE), American Football Coaches Association (AFCA), WeCOACH, United Soccer Coaches Association (USC), United States Track and Field & Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) and National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC). Marine Corps recruiters across the Nation are continuously seeking out and working with local community and veteran organizations.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. In any given year, Air Force and Space Force partners with Air and Space Forces Association, Civil Air Patrol, United Service Organizations and Our Community Salutes at a large scale, as well as Veterans of Foreign Wars, Rotary Clubs at a more local squadron level. In addition to these veteran and community partnerships, we provide marketing funds and further partner with a range of 30 to 50 (resource dependent) organizations across gaming, sports/fitness, lifestyle, STEM, and diversity interests to engage with audiences and communities. Some recent examples include TED, Society of Women Engineers, Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP), FIRST Robotics, NFL and MLB teams like the Washington Commanders and Houston Astros, Professional Bull Riders (PBR), UFC, USA Wrestling, and many others. These partnerships are all critical to allowing the Air Force and Space Force to engage one-on-one with prospects and their influencers. In addition, we place mobile assets at hundreds of events across the country annually, from air shows to college football games.

COLLEGE ACCESS

66. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, the Army has stated it wants at least a third of all new recruits to have some level of postsecondary education by 2028. How does your service intend to achieve this goal?

Major General DAVIS. Increasing the share of active Army accessions with some post-secondary education from approximately one-fifth to one-third by fiscal year 2028 will be challenging, but this step is necessary to ensure our force is prepared for future conflicts. The Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army have brought to bear the full weight of the Army (within and outside the accessions enterprise) to tackle this complex problem set. As part of the Army's organizational re-design of the accessions enterprise, USAREC will stand up an experimentation unit whose sole task is to develop and rigorously test new recruiting methods aimed at bringing this expanded prospect market into the Army. Initial ideas we have prioritized for testing include expanding the Army's presence on digital job boards, attendance at professional job fairs, and increased presence at community colleges and trade schools. With disciplined execution and data analysis, the Army will be

able to determine which of the initiatives work best among this portion of the labor market. This is imperative because most high school students are deciding to go on to college.

67. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are there any colleges that prohibit ROTC programs from your service on campus?

Major General DAVIS. No, the Army is not aware of any school that prohibits Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs from their campuses.

Rear Admiral WALKER. I am not aware of any colleges that prohibit Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps (NROTC) programs on campus.

Major General BOWERS. The Marine Corps is part of the Naval ROTC program. At this time there are no reports of colleges prohibiting the Marine Corps from participating in the Naval ROTC program. We appreciate the additional authorities provided in the Fiscal Year 2024 NDAA to increase the access recruiters have to colleges. Physical access to the colleges and access to the college drop lists is critical for recruiters to make contact with students to educate them on the tangible and intangible benefits of serving in the Marine Corps.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. We are not aware of any active prohibitions to Air Force ROTC programs at any campus.

68. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are there any colleges that prohibit your service from participating in job fairs and career fairs?

Major General DAVIS. No, the Army is not aware of any colleges that prohibit participation in job fairs and career fairs. Army ROTC Cadre, including Recruiting Operations Officers, are members of the college/university faculty and staff and have the same access as the faculty/staff in other academic departments.

Rear Admiral WALKER. I am not aware of any institution that actively prohibits us from participating. Some examples of less than ideal access include:

- Recruiters are permitted on campus to meet with students and professors, however, if they want to do any table or booth setups (separate from career fairs), the school requires payment.
- Registration made challenging for career fairs with strict limit on number of personnel allowed.
- Denied requests or no responses from faculty and administration for requests to gain access for meetings, presentations and/or info tables.
- Some schools have virtual only career fairs creating difficulty to connect with students and establish physical presence on campus.

Major General BOWERS. Typically, the only issues Officer Selection Officers have in attendance at job fairs and career fairs comes from small private colleges.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Most colleges allow participation in these job fairs if we pay the required fee, normally \$200 to \$500. Generally, Air Force units, organizations, and representatives are provided (at a minimum) equal opportunity to participate in job and/or career fairs consistent with the opportunities provided other like organizations.

69. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, can you provide examples of colleges that provide exemplary access to their campus?

Major General DAVIS. Army ROTC is a partnership with our universities providing access and resources to help the Army produce officers and leaders of character. Some partner schools provide financial assistance to Cadets in the form of room and board scholarships or free access to physical fitness facilities. In some cases, school admissions offices give additional consideration for admission to those prospects who have received Army ROTC scholarships or soldiers selected for the Green to Gold program. In almost all cases, universities highlight Army ROTC programs on university websites and in literature sent to prospective students and recognize commissioning Cadets in commencement programs and ceremonies.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Exemplary access to campus can include openness to classroom presentations and career fairs, access to administration and schools lists, invites to events, and opportunities to setup recruiting tables.

A few examples of exemplary access to campus are:

- University of Delaware allowed Navy to have extra recruiters attend their fairs at no additional cost and connect to student health organizations in support of the Navy's Mission.

- Johns Hopkins University provided advance notice of career fairs of interest prior to being listed on Handshake and make a point of placing Navy recruiters in prominent positions of foot traffic at their events.
- University of Louisville allows recruiters easy access to campus, lunch halls, and open areas, and worked with the recruiters on setting up presentations and tables.

Major General BOWERS. Numerous colleges across our Nation provide outstanding access to our Marine Officer Selection Officers. A number provide nearly unlimited access including schools such as SUNY system, Southern California, Maryland-College Park, Alaska-Anchorage, Princeton and San Jose State. Key to exemplary access is a willingness to provide lists of students and ease of access to prime areas for table set ups and talks.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. All schools that have formally established an AFROTC unit are bound to support those units consistent with the provisions of DODI 1215.08 as agreed to under a bilateral (or trilateral) agreement between the Secretary of the Air Force, the leadership of a Host Unit, and (if applicable) the leadership from Crosstown or Extension units attached to a Host Unit. Though most units share the same agreed to access to classrooms, facilities, engagements, school leadership, resources, students, and personnel, there are some schools that voluntarily and actively go beyond the provisions of the agreement. As agreements between the schools and the Service Secretary serve as the only contractual expectation, we can only testify on whether a school is meeting that obligation or not. Our imperative is to create opportunity to as many highly qualified students as possible within the resources we are given rather than to actively promote or highlight the added incentives or benefits one school may offer over another. That being said, highlights include Pacific Northwest University in Yakima, WA, Salus University in Elkins Park, PA, and the Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL. A full list is available upon request.

70. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, can you provide some examples of colleges that provide unsatisfactory access to their campus?

Major General DAVIS. No. Army ROTC partner schools agree to support their ROTC programs in accordance with the requirements in the Application for Establishment of an Army Senior ROTC Unit (Department of the Army Form 918) and the Agreement for Establishment and Maintenance of an Army Senior ROTC Unit (Department of the Army Form 918A) contract.

Rear Admiral WALKER. The challenge with gaining access to post-secondary students is identifying and engaging the right person at a university. Recruiters cannot just walk onto a campus and start recruiting, but instead often have to go through layers of individuals to gain authorization to address those audiences and be in their spaces. It is not impossible, however, it takes more time and coordination. We also use influential pro-military alumni to assist with this where we can.

Major General BOWERS. Unsatisfactory access to campus typically comes from smaller, private campuses. Unsatisfactory access comes from a lack of access to school lists, blocking emails, and limiting access to undesirable areas. In urban areas, some schools completely block access to campus areas unless a student checks the Officer Selection Officer in. There is a notable number of law schools that limit or block access, providing limitations to our ability to interact and provide opportunities for the future of the Marine Corps Judge Advocate General Corps.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. There are a few examples of institutions that have combined theme of poor customer service combined with refusing to distribute student rosters or requiring a fee to visit the school. A full list is available upon request.

CHOOSING RECRUITERS

71. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, and Brigadier General Amrhein, what changes have you made to whom you select for recruiting duty in your service and how they are incentivized to excel?

Major General DAVIS. Over the past year, Army has incentivized the recruiting force by using temporary promotion authorities to the rank of SSG and SFC. Additionally, the Army is utilizing assignment incentive pay for recruiters who meet eligibility requirements. The Army has also streamlined its selection/ screening policy for recruiter candidates in an effort to allow more deserving soldiers to perform recruiting duty. The changes include: removal of college credit requirement; allow soldiers with Sleep Apnea to become recruiters, if they have no other prohibited med-

ical condition; and increased the maximum age of recruiter candidates at selection, from age 39 (a waiver may be considered for candidates up to age 42).

Rear Admiral WALKER. Currently all Navy Recruiter Canvassers (Navy Enlisted Classification Code 803R) receive Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP) level 6, which is \$450 a month. Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) was recently added for recruiter billets at nine traditionally hard to fill Navy Talent Acquisition Groups (NTAG): (NTAGs: Portland, Northern Plains, Heartland, Great Lakes, Ohio River Valley, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New England and Mid America), which is up to an additional \$500 a month. In addition to monetary compensation, recruiters are also eligible for various performance awards and may be eligible for meritorious advancement for excelling in recruiting.

Major General BOWERS. Not specifically asked of MCRC, however: i) The Marine Corps remains focused on recruiting the most qualified individuals our country has to offer, to serve in our Corps; thus, we continue to screen and select top performing marines to serve as Marine recruiters. Marine Corps Recruiting Command continues to develop dynamic and competitive non-monetary incentives (i.e. Recruiter Station Incentive, competitive promotion opportunities, etc.) and monetary incentives (i.e. Special Duty Assignment Pay, Assignment Incentive Pay, and Voluntary Supplemental Incentive) to incentivize our recruiters to excel; continuing to attract and recruit the best into our ranks. The Manpower Military Policy Branch is actively involved in the planning and development of dynamic monetary incentive policies to encourage marines to not only serve as recruiters but also excel in their roles.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. No major changes have been made with regards to recruiter selection since the stand up of the Developmental Special Duty Program in 2014. High quality airmen are vectored through their command leadership teams. If the manning levels in a member's primary job can support it, the member is released for recruiting duty. Personnel vectored and released for recruiting duty are screened and interviewed by experienced senior enlisted recruiting personnel for suitability. Personnel that clear the screening and interview process will be matched to a recruiting duty location. Air Force Recruiting Service has a robust awards program designed to incentivize and recognize superior performers, such as awarding commendation medals for the top recruiters.

72. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are you considering any additional changes to incentivize your most competent personnel to serve as recruiters?

Major General DAVIS. Army continues to look for way to incentive soldier to perform recruiting duty. Over the past year, for a select period, Army offered a \$5,000 bonus to qualified recruiter candidates for immediate attendance at the Recruiting College (within 90 days of selection) followed by an assignment to perform recruiting duty. The incentive yielded limited success. However, Army is exploring the ideal to providing a similar incentive in fiscal year 2024 to enhance the pool of eligible soldiers for recruiting duty.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) has changed the following to incentivize sailors to serve as recruiters:

- Updated board precept language to give special consideration for those serving on Recruiting;
- Adding recruiting duty to all career Learning and Development Roadmaps as part of career progression; and
- Reiterated the value and priority of recruiting duty to communities across the Navy.

Major General BOWERS. Nested within the larger retention efforts, the Marine Corps remains dedicated to attracting the most qualified marines to serve as marine recruiters by offering many competitive non-monetary incentives (e.g. Recruiter Station Incentive, competitive promotion opportunities) and monetary incentives (i.e. Special Duty Assignment Pay, Assignment Incentive Pay, and Voluntary Supplemental Incentive). Manpower and Reserve Affairs continues to conduct analysis on and evaluate the effectiveness of our current non-monetary and monetary incentive policies to develop new or change/modify existing policies in order to remain competitive while operating within the dynamic recruiting environment.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Recruiters earn special duty assignment pay (SDAP). SDAP rates of \$300 to \$450 per month have been constant since early 2000s based on specific recruiting duties. AFRS is also looking at Assignment Incentive Pay for members going to areas that are traditionally less-desirable locations as well as working to better advocate for locality pay to account for high costs of living (BAH, Medical Care, Utilities, and travel costs to and from areas not supported by the normal military base infrastructure or support agencies).

73. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, can you provide any examples of successful collaboration with campus organizations and veterans or community groups on college campuses?

Major General DAVIS. One example of a highly successful collaboration is the annual Bataan Memorial Death March. In 1989, the Army ROTC Department at New Mexico State University began sponsoring the Bataan Memorial Death March to mark a page in history that included many native sons and affected many families in the State. In 1992, White Sands Missile Range and the New Mexico National Guard joined New Mexico State University as sponsors, and the event was moved to the White Sands Missile Range. Since its inception, the Bataan Memorial Death March's participation has grown from about 100 to about 9,600 marchers. These marchers come from the local community, across the United States and several foreign countries.

Rear Admiral WALKER. We have strong relationships with Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and other Service ROTC units nationwide. These units assist in facilitating relationships with campus faculty and gaining access to students. Each campus is unique; some ROTC units can provide substantial assistance, while others are limited. We have had some success at Historically Black Colleges and Universities by leveraging officers who are sorority and fraternity members to help gain access to students and faculty. We identify junior officers who are members and have them engage with their on-campus counterparts. The challenge is sustaining the relationship with the faculty for continuous access year over year.

Major General BOWERS. Partnering with athletic teams has been a strong win for Officer Selection Officers across our Nation. Leadership talks and providing mentorship to student-athletes provides the teams' value while connecting our core values of honor, courage, and commitment to a cadre of individuals who have demonstrated physical fitness and a dedication to teamwork throughout their lives.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. In general, Air Force ROTC units are often engaged with school and community organizations which promote and support Veterans as well as students aspiring to serve. Partnerships like this help create opportunity for mission exposure, enhanced training, and valuable discussions on career considerations, military service, and other matters. Whenever possible, the Air Force will provide support via a mobile asset at events on college campuses.

74. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, can you provide examples of your service successfully recruiting outside of places where the military has a strong presence?

Major General DAVIS. While Army recruiting efforts tend to be more successful near military installations, there are examples of Army recruiting success in locations without major military installations. The Harrisburg, Pennsylvania area for example, enlisted over 220 men and women in 2023, and the Columbus, Ohio, area produced over 320 enlistments during that timeframe. These areas have no major military installations within 50 miles. Additionally, over 100 men and women from Springfield, Massachusetts, and surrounding areas joined the Army during Fiscal Year 2023 despite being over 100 miles from a major Army post and over 30 miles from the Hanscom Air Force Base. While these areas do not have major military populations, the Army tends to recruit well wherever there are high concentrations of qualified youth.

Rear Admiral WALKER. Navy's recruiting force is strategically placed throughout the country to ensure our sailors are active in markets where we believe there is a potential for enlistment contracts. Many of these stations fall outside of areas that would be considered to have a strong military presence. However, historically we have found that high quality applicants come from all over our country. For example, last year our most productive Navy Talent Acquisition Group was from the Phoenix area. Although it is landlocked and has few major military bases, they achieved the highest performance metrics for all enlisted recruiting in fiscal year 2023.

Major General BOWERS. MCRC is successful because of the marines on the ground covering every zip code across the United States. Overall, the Marine Corps recruits proportionately across the country from the qualified, eligible and propensed population. Our current recruiting metric identified markets that present opportunity for increased recruiter presence and we will be fine-tuning our recruiter presence to optimizing mission share across the recruiting force. We remain committed to assigning every ZIP code, high school, and corner of the country to a marine recruiter.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. The city of Philadelphia, PA does not have the strongest military presence but has an Ivy League school with the University of Pennsylvania. We have had great success here with many health professions schol-

arships awarded and nursing students commissioned directly into DAF. Additionally, the state of Michigan has very little military presence but has produced numerous engineers for the DAF.

MENTAL HEALTH

75. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, are you considering changes to what medical criteria require waivers? If so, please provide an example.

Major General DAVIS. Yes, current areas under consideration for updates include commonly waived conditions in ophthalmology, women's health, and behavioral health.

Rear Admiral WALKER. In November 2023, in support of a Report to Congress, each of the Services coordinated with their Surgeon General representatives to submit recommendations to OASD(HA) for consideration of inclusion in the next Department of Defense Instruction 6130.03 Volume 1, "Medical Standards for Military Service: Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction" change or publication, which would relax several mental health standards. One recommendation involves examination of the disqualification criteria for ADHD or learning disability. This is being considered.

Major General BOWERS. Marine Corps Recruiting Command is working with our recruiting and medical partners to review the current DOD Instruction on accession medical standards with an aim at modernization and improving opportunities for those who wish to serve their nation.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. See question 29 for DAF response.

76. Senator SULLIVAN. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, how is your service responding to changes in the medical history of the general recruiting population to update your criteria for what triggers a waiver requirement for a recruit that has sought mental health treatment?

Major General DAVIS. The U.S. Army Recruiting Command and the Office of the Surgeon General collaborate with the DOD Accessions and Retention Medical Standards Working Group to establish more precise standards, particularly concerning behavioral health diagnoses, that will minimize the need for waivers without increasing the risk to the Army.

More specifically, the DOD reviews accession and retention medical standards for mental health within the Accession and Retention Medical Standards Working Group on a rolling basis every month with published guidance issued every three to 4 years.

Rear Admiral WALKER. In November 2023, in support of a Report to Congress, each of the Services coordinated with their Surgeon General representatives to submit recommendations to OASD(HA) for consideration of inclusion in the next Department of Defense Instruction 6130.03 Volume 1, "Medical Standards for Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction in the Military Services," which dictates conditions that require waivers for Service entry. Potential changes are being considered.

Major General BOWERS. Marine Corps Recruiting Command is working with our recruiting and medical partners to review the current DOD Instruction on accession medical standards with an aim at modernization and improving opportunities for those who wish to serve their nation. The DOD reviews accession and retention medical standards for mental health within the Accession and Retention Medical Standards Working Group on a rolling basis every month with published guidance issued every three to 4 years.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. See question 29 for DAF response.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED BUDD

MEDICAL WAIVERS

77. Senator BUDD. Major General Bowers, in your October 21st letter to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, you requested an update to the DOD policy on medical accession standards based on current practices related to medical waivers. What sort of medical conditions is the Marine Corps waiving most frequently?

Major General BOWERS. We are glad to continue partnering with OSD on a review of DODI 6130.03 ensuring the modernization of disqualifying medical conditions from based on data analysis from the Military Accessions Review Pilot. MCRC has instituted Conditional Delayed Entry Program in the interim in which 41 disquali-

Following conditions are authorized to join the Delayed Entry Program while pursuing the approval of a medical waiver. These conditions are listed in the table below:

ICD-10	Diagnosis
A09	Infectious gastroenteritis and colitis, unspecified.
A60.00	Herpesviral infection of urogenital system, unspecified.
A63.0	Anogenital (venereal) warts.
D1B.01	Hemangioma of skin and subcutaneous tissue.
D23.9	Other benign neoplasm of skin, unspecified.
E55.9	Vitamin D deficiency, unspecified.
F07.81	Postconcussional syndrome.
F90.1	ADHD, predominantly hyperactive type.
F90.9	ADHD, unspecified type (more than 3 years ago, no current issues).
G04.90	Encephalitis and encephalomyelitis, unspecified.
HS0.0	Unspecified esotropia.
HS0.10	Unspecified exotropia.
HS0.89	Other specified strabismus.
H51.9	Convergence Insufficiency.
K02.9	Dental caries, unspecified.
L0B.9	Local infection of the skin and subcutaneous tissue, unspecified.
L20.84	intrinsic (allergic) eczema.
L20.9	Atopic dermatitis, unspecified.
M12.50	Traumatic arthropathy, unspecified site.
M12.569	Traumatic arthropathy, unspecified knee.
M25.639	Stiffness of unspecified wrist, not elsewhere classified.
M26.4	Malocclusion, unspecified (can close mouth without issue).
S02.91	Unspecified fracture of skull.
S06.0X0S	Concussion without loss of consciousness, sequela.
S06.0X1S	Concussion with loss of consciousness of 30 minutes or less, sequela.
S06.0X9S	Concussion with loss of consciousness of unspecified duration, sequela.
S53.003S	Unspecified Subluxation of Either Radial Head At The Elbow.
S53.006S	Unspecified Dislocation of Either Radial Head at the Elbow.
S53.103S	Unspecified Subluxation of Either Ulnohumeral Elbow Joint.
S53.106S	Unspecified dislocation of unspecified ulnohumeral joint, sequela.
S63.003S	Unspecified subluxation of unspecified wrist and hand.

ICD-10	Diagnosis
S83.419S	Sprain of medial collateral ligament of unspecified knee, sequela.
S83.429S	Sprain of lateral collateral ligament of unspecified knee, sequela.
S83.519S	Sprain anterior cruciate ligament, unspecified knee, sequela.
S83.529S	Sprain posterior cruciate ligament, unspecified knee, sequela.
T84.89XS	Retained hardware from orthopedic surgery.
Z87.820	Personal history of traumatic brain injury.
Z94.9	Tissue allograft (orthopedic procedure).
H52.209	Unspecified astigmatism.
Z98.890	Other specified postprocedural states (corneal refractive surgery) if at least 3 months post-op.

DIGITAL MARKETING TOOLS

78. Senator BUDD. Major General Davis, in your written testimony, you mention the Army's refreshed advertising campaign, "Be All You Can Be." and efforts to incorporate more digital marketing tools into your recruiting strategy. In addition to these steps, how else is the Army working to modernize recruitment campaigns to reach younger Americans and communicate to them the benefits of service?

Major General DAVIS. We know from our foundational and ongoing research on the prospect market (Gen Z ages 17–28) that those who are open to joining the Army are seeking information about what they might receive in terms of quality of life, benefits and how the Army fulfills what they are seeking in an employer (purpose, passion, community & connection). To that end, we have two complimentary campaigns in market specifically for active duty enlisted.

First, the "Know Your Army" campaign, released 21 March 2022, features five short ads that aim to debunk common misperceptions about life in the Army by highlighting tangible benefits and the quality of life such as pensions, home buying, paid parental leave, vacation, and camaraderie. Research shows home-buying benefits, a sense of belonging, and time-off is important to the prospect audience. "Know Your Army" is in market across television, streaming/online video, digital, social media, paid search, and email. Second, the "First Steps" campaign, released 21 August 2023, features four ads that build upon the refreshed Army brand launch commercials from March 2023 by appealing directly to the prospect audience to encourage them to explore and take the first step with the Army. The ads are more empathetic to a prospective recruit. This up close and personal approach addresses what prospects seek in an ideal employer, a sense of purpose, passion, community, and connection. "First Steps" is in market across television, streaming/online video, digital, social media, paid search, and email.

Both campaigns feature a call to action to the prospect audience to visit the GoArmy.com website. We are building a new public-facing, cloud-based Next Generation GoArmy.com website that will be hosted in the Army's cloud environment by this summer. This will result in our website, GoArmy.com, rising to meet industry standards, while enabling Army accessions to leverage emerging technologies and creating a cohesive user experience for individuals to ultimately transition to Army service. Examples of some advantages are more rapid updates, more complex testing, and a full Spanish language experience.

Last, two additional tools are being implemented in fiscal year 2024 to help communicate to prospects the benefits of service. One initiative is called the Single View of the Recruit (SVOR), which will utilize various data sources to create individual lead profiles in near real time for use in marketing activations such as lead nurture emails and SMS text. The goal is to also provide SVOR profile data to developing recruiter tools such as GoRecruit (Recruiter Zone phone app). Another tool is provided by Pega Software, an Artificial Intelligence driven system that auto-sends communications to the right people at the right time with the right message to drive their next best action. Pega models will learn from individual SVOR data profiles to understand where a lead is in their mindset and determine the correct individualized message to send.

79. Senator BUDD. Major General Davis, Rear Admiral Walker, Major General Bowers, and Brigadier General Amrhein, if a recruiting advertising campaign or marketing tool is found to be counter-productive and risks harming the service's brand, what steps has each service put into place to address and mitigate these risks?

Major General DAVIS. We monitor the information environment constantly to identify potential risks to the brand that may be associated with our marketing and advertising. If a risk situation is identified, it is immediately brought to our attention and adjusted. The types of events we monitor the environment for could be wholly external or be directly related to the Army in some way. For example, if there was a recent aviation-related disaster and we had creative assets in-market or about to launch on social media that highlight aviation, we would pause or pull those spots until a more appropriate time to avert potential damage to the Army brand by appearing tone deaf in our marketing efforts. Another example is our response to news of the arrest of Jonathan Majors, the celebrity narrator in the "Be All You Can Be" brand relaunch ads. Our team, along with our media partners, worked quickly to remove the ads entirely from distribution and preserve the value of 100 percent of our media inventory, losing no money on the relaunch efforts media investment. The Army was able to replace the ads with existing creative assets that maintained relevant relaunch messaging for our target audience.

Rear Admiral WALKER. From a media standpoint, brand safety is essential to ensuring we are not leaving ourselves exposed to unnecessary risks. We have robust measures in place to mitigate any potential risks associated with our media placements. Our commitment is reflected in the following key strategies:

- *Exclusion lists:* Within our buying platforms, we have implemented comprehensive exclusion lists. These lists are carefully curated to avoid placements in contexts that may be deemed unsuitable for the Navy brand, such as news articles, violent content, or other potentially sensitive environments (full category exclusion list below). By leveraging these exclusion lists, we proactively prevent our brand from appearing alongside content that could compromise the Navy image.
- *3rd-Party Ad-Serving Partners:* In addition to proactively setting up exclusion lists, we partner with reputable third-party ad-serving providers, such as Double Verify. These partners play a crucial role in ensuring brand safety at all levels of our campaigns. Their advanced technologies and stringent ad verification processes allow us to maintain a high level of confidence in the suitability of ad placements. This includes real-time monitoring and blocking of ads that might be associated with objectionable content.
- *Community Management:* Risk mitigation is central to maintaining tone with our online presence. Our team operates on a monitoring schedule across our various social media platforms using Khoros social listening software and Khoros Care. These provide real-time oversight and feed of live comments and direct messages from our channels in the same place. This ensures prompt engagement to swiftly address issues that arise in discussions, questions via direct messages, and comments along with the use of our pre-approved Community Management response resources. Beyond observation, our approach integrates social listening tools, quick-response messages and analytics reporting. These tools provide key insights into audience sentiments, trends, and real-time reactions that empower us to anticipate potential risks to tailor live responses effectively. On a daily/hourly basis, our team oversees social channels and comments, to maintain timely responses in queue. This allows us to promptly address any potential issues, moderating discussions, and swiftly intervening in cases of inappropriate content or conversations that require escalation. By proactively engaging with the community, we steer conversations in a positive direction, mitigating risks and safeguarding our online presence while fostering an engaged online community of future and Active Duty sailors and veterans.
- *Creative/Campaign Development:* Navy is committed to featuring real sailors in real environments in order to provide an authentic look at Navy life for prospective recruits. Additionally, the Navy follows all platform best practices for activations to ensure we show up appropriately on the platform, with brand safety and authenticity at the forefront. For example, when planning and hosting Reddit "Ask Me Anything" events (AMAs), the sailor's story is front and center, and we do not stage or plant questions that would skew the activation in a particular way and potentially damage the activation. This approach has resulted in positive and engaging activations with Navy upvote rates 27 percent higher than the DOD benchmark.

Category Exclusion List

- Ad Clutter
- Adult & Sexual (Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM)-Mapped)
- Tolerance Alcohol (GARM-Mapped)
- Aviation Disasters
- Safety floor: Copyright Infringement (GARM-Mapped)
- Brand Safety floor: Extreme & Graphic (GARM-Mapped)
- Brand Safety floor: Malware (GARM-Mapped)
- Brand Safety floor: Phishing (GARM-Mapped)
- Brand Safety floor: Spam (GARM-Mapped)
- Crime (GARM-Mapped)
- Death & Injury (GARM-Mapped)
- Drug Abuse (GARM-Mapped)
- Hate Speech & Cyberbullying (GARM-Mapped)
- Human-made Disasters (GARM-Mapped)
- Incentivized Traffic
- Inflammatory Politics & News (GARM-Mapped)
- Natural Disasters
- Negative News: Financial News
- Negative News: Pharmaceutical News
- News: Journals & Blogs
- Profanity (GARM-Mapped)
- Terrorism (GARM-Mapped)
- Tobacco & eCigarettes (GARM-Mapped)
- Vehicle Disasters
- Violence (GARM-Mapped)

Major General BOWERS. Marine Corps marketing takes evolutionary steps in producing new campaigns vice revolutionary shifts. This creates minimal disruption from a historically successful brand and allows monitoring of effects that specific changes may bring. In the event a campaign or element of marketing produces negative impact, the Marine Corps can quickly pull elements from media rotation and replace with alternative content that still aligns with the overall brand idea of “Battles Won”. In the event that an additional piece of content may not be available, the Marine Corps can switch to alternative media channels through contract modification and relationship of advertising agency with media vendors for guaranteed impressions.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. Certainly, if there is a marketing tactic that is potentially harmful to our brand, we have the capability to pause it immediately until we can re-evaluate it. The best example of that would be social media posts during a national crisis—we will pause social media posts that are not related to the crisis until such a time as it’s appropriate to re-engage. We also review tactical performance monthly, quarterly, and annually, so if a campaign, tactic, or tool are underperforming, we can make optimizations fluidly or in the instance of a tactic just not working, we will not fund the tactic. We regularly review both our media tactics as well as our experiential tactics and will discontinue them when they do not deliver what we need from them.

MILITARY SERVICE APP USAGE

80. Senator BUDD. Major General Davis and Brigadier General Amrhein, part of addressing the recruiting crisis is supporting servicemembers’ quality of life. One method of supporting servicemembers’ quality of life is increasing servicemembers’ ability to communicate with their families. The Navy and the Marine Corps have implemented Sandboxx, an app designed to help new recruits, their families and the recruiting command navigate the beginning of service. Have the Air Force and the Army looked into implementing Sandboxx or similar apps to support servicemembers’ communication with their families?

Major General DAVIS. The Army recognizes the essential communication and support link between soldiers in Training (Trainees) and their families during Initial Entry Training. As such, the Army has made great efforts to ensure there is regulated and dedicated time during the initial training period for soldiers to be able to communicate with their families. Trainees are encouraged to call family and

friends at every afforded opportunity and are allowed to use their own personal devices to do so. All Trainees make an initial phone call at Reception to inform families they arrived safely and are then allowed 90 minutes of phone calls on weekends and up to 30 minutes in the middle of each week. Commanders also have the discretion to increase cell phone and electronic device usage based on mission requirements, constraints, timeline, and daily activities.

In addition to direct communication, the Army utilizes a program called “Inside the Wire” hosted on the free Facebook platform to keep families up to date on their Trainees. “Inside the Wire” provides useful and current information, detailing what their Trainees go through daily and posting multiple pictures and videos where families are offered a glimpse into their Trainees in action.

The U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training, with organizational oversight in all Initial Entry Training, has met with and reviewed proposals from Sandboxx and found that their “for fee” service—which charges anywhere from \$2.75 to \$5 per letter—was not a good fit for Initial Entry Training Soldiers or families when there are already sunk cost (personal phones), lower cost (USPS), and free options (social media platforms) readily available for use. These options are more financially beneficial, equally responsive, and more in line with the communication methods, styles, and preferences of the digital generation we are teaching and training. Trainees and family are not prohibited from utilizing Sandboxx or other similar communication programs / platforms and may do so on an individual basis if they so desire.

Brigadier General AMRHEIN. While we continually evaluate industry proposals, the Air Force fielded our own mobile recruiting application called the Aim High App (AHA) in the summer of 2020 which is available on both the Apple and Google platforms. AHA leverages a robust and secure platform bringing together leads, applicants, recruits, trainees, family, friends, and influencers while directly interfacing with our primary IT systems for seamless data integration. The app currently has 90,000 user accounts with 7,000 new users joining each month. In fiscal year 2023 alone, the Aim High App generated more than 40,000 recruiting leads while allowing over 50,000 family members to see their young airman or guardian in action during basic training through photos of their flights progress across the 8 plus weeks in training. In fiscal year 2024, we will bring the U.S. Space Force recruiting their own branded mobile app similar to AHA.



Recruiter Fraternization & UCMJ Article 93a

BLUF: once a person expresses interest in the Navy, they are off limits throughout the recruiting process and DEP, for at least 1 year from when they express a loss of interest in the Navy, or, even after entering the Navy, for 6 months after completing boot camp. Anyone in high school is always off limits. Do NOT develop, attempt to develop, or conduct a personal, intimate, or sexual relationship with any of these people.

Recruiter Fraternization Prohibitions

UCMJ Article 93a, DoDI 1304.33 & COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 5370.1K

- **Inquiry:** (1) Is the individual involved a prohibited person (high schooler, prospect, applicant, recruit, FS, family of; within 6 mo or 1 yr gate)? (2) Does the conduct violate CNFRC policy (inappropriate personal relationship, 20+ types, some mandatory ADSEP)?
- If suspected, inform CoC: **CCIR required** for recruiter fraternization.
- **UCMJ Article 93a** applies to any military recruiter who engages in prohibited sexual/activity with applicant/DEP—**5 courts-martial preferred for RF in 2022, tracking for 5 so far this year.**

The Why? See COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 5370.1K:

“Recruiting is a special position of trust. As the U.S. Navy’s ambassadors to the public, we are charged with representing all Sailors. In addition, we have a responsibility to demonstrate the Navy Core Values to those individuals who will one day shape the future of our organization. This responsibility makes it essential that we always adhere to the highest standards of professional conduct and **avoid relationships that create any actual or perceived impropriety.**”

104 PUBLICATIONS & POLICIES**References:**

- [a] COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 1130.8M, Navy Recruiting Manual Enlisted
 [b] COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 5370.1K, Fraternalization between Recruiting Personnel and Prospects, Applicants, Future Sailors, and Their Families
 [c] OPNAVINST 5354.1H, Navy Harassment Prevention and Military Equal Opportunity Program
 [d] COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 5400.2F, Standard Operating Procedures Manual
 [e] COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 4400.1G, Logistics Support Manual
 [f] COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 2061.2G, Telecommunications Services
-

104.1 Explain the Fraternalization/Sexual Harassment policies. [refs. b thru d]

 (Signature and Date)

.2 Discuss ethics and prohibited practices for Recruiters. [refs. b thru d]

 (Signature and Date)

.3 Explain the policy on Domicile to Duty. [refs. d, e]

 (Signature and Date)

.4 Explain military conduct on recruiting duty. [ref. a]

 (Signature and Date)

.5 Explain use and regulations concerning government phone systems, cell phones, and internet hot spots. [ref. f]

 (Signature and Date)



TRAINEE GUIDE

FOR

**Enlisted Navy Recruiter Orientation
(ENRO)**

S-501-0020

**PREPARED BY
NAVY RECRUITING ORIENTATION UNIT (NORU)
385 MILLINGTON AVE
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA 32508**

**10 March 2015
(With Change 13 Entered 03 January 2020)**

Terminal Objective:

- 4.7.0 **Explain** ethical behavior and prohibited practices as they pertain to Navy Recruiting Command Personnel in accordance with Navy and NRC Directives.

Enabling Objectives:

- 4.7.1 **Describe** NRC Fraternalization policy as it pertains to applicants, prospects and Future Sailors.
- 4.7.2 **Explain** the policies regarding familiarization or Coaching of applicants and Future Sailors by recruiting personnel.
- 4.7.3 **Identify** the four different types of recruiting irregularities and investigations.
- 4.7.4 **Explain** the use of Government Vehicles to include Domicile to Duty procedures, emergency and accident procedures, and Government Vehicle Credit Card Use.
- 4.7.5 **Explain** Government Cellular Phone Use.
- 4.7.6 **Explain** the policies and requirements of the Government Travel Card.
- 4.7.7 **Explain** the use of the Recruit With Integrity Card
1. Introduction
 2. Definition of Fraternalization: Any personal relationship prejudicial to good order and discipline, or of a nature to bring discredit on the naval service. Certain prohibited activities, behavior, transactions which include personal relationships that do not respect the difference between grade or rank, and relationships between recruiting personnel and prospects, applicants or Future Sailors. Personal relationships that are unduly familiar between recruiting personnel, prospect, applicants, Future Sailors or their family members are prohibited.
 - a. Definition of a Prospect. Any person who has expressed to recruiting personnel an interest in enlisting or receiving an appointment in the U.S. Navy or U.S. Navy Reserve, regardless of whether that individual is qualified to join the U.S. Navy.
 - b. Definition of an Applicant. Any person who has commenced processing for enlistment or appointment in any of the Armed Forces by beginning to complete a DD Form 1966, NAVCRUIT 1131/238, or comparable form is an applicant.
 - (1) Applicants or prospects that become disqualified but possess the potential and/or qualifications for enlistment or appointment remain in an applicant or prospect status. Applicants or prospects who possess the potential to meet qualifications include, but

are not limited to, individuals who do not meet minimum age requirements, score too low on the qualification testing but will be eligible to retest, or who have not completed their education.

- (2) A prospect or applicant who expresses a loss of interest in enlistment or appointment shall continue to be a prospect or an applicant under this instruction for a period of one year from the date the permanent eligibility is documented by recruiting personnel or the date they express this loss of interest to recruiting personnel.
- (3) An individual who expresses an interest in enlistment or appointment but is permanently barred under existing regulations is not a prospect or an applicant.
- c. Future Sailor or Delayed Entry Program member. Any person who accesses into the DEP of any of the Armed Forces and has agreed to commence active duty or active duty for training at a later date.
- 3. Prohibited Activities. The prohibitions apply from the first contact between prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor and a Talent Scout/Recruiter, through entry-level training, and for six months after the trainee complete entry-level training. Recruiting personnel shall not:
 - a. Form, or attempt to form, a dating or private social relationship with anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor. Mutual attendance at previously planned, command authorized DEP functions or similar recruiting environment events is not prohibited.
 - b. Allow anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to remain in any recruiting office except for official business.
 - c. Allow anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to ride in any government vehicle except for official purposes. Recruiting personnel shall not ride in the personal vehicle of anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
 - d. Engage in consensual sexual act or have any physical contact with anyone known to be a prospect, applicant or Future Sailor. Prohibited physical contact includes, but is not limited to, caressing, massaging, hugging, kissing, fondling, and holding hands. Authorized physical contact includes, but is not limited to, shaking hands or performing required body fat measurements on a member of the same sex.
 - e. Perform body fat measurements on any prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor of the opposite sex.
 - f. Harass any prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:
 - (1) Any language or act which would, measured by an objective standard, constitute cruelty, oppression or maltreatment under Article 93, Uniform Code of Military Justice, if the victim were subject to the orders of the harasser.

- (2) Abusive language which tends to degrade a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor, whether directed at or used in the presence of such person.
- g. Use anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to provide any benefit, financial or otherwise, for themselves or others.
 - h. Allow or invite any prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to enter into, operate, or be transported in the privately owned vehicle (POV) of recruiting personnel unless authorized in advance by the Commanding Officer.
 - i. Gamble with any prospect, applicant or Future Sailor, including playing any game of skill with money or other things of value at stake.
 - j. Solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, anything of value from any source in return for granting favors, privileges or other preferential treatment to any prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
 - k. Solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, anything of value from anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
 - l. Borrow money or any articles from, or lend the same to, anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
 - m. Engage in, or offer to engage in, any unofficial financial or business dealings with anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
 - n. Photograph or accept any pictures of anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor other than those required for official purposes.
 - o. Spend the night with, or allow anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to spend the night, in the same home, apartment, or hotel room without prior command approval.
 - p. Process for enlistment or appointment any person with whom they developed a social relationship prior to that person becoming a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor, or prior to learning that person was a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
 - q. Enter any portion of an establishment known to be a MEPS lodging and/or meal facility, except that recruiting personnel may enter the main lobby of such a facility when their official duties make it necessary to assist in the proper check-in and check-out of an applicant and/or Future Sailor.
4. "Official Use" of Government Vehicles
- a. Transportation of military and civilian personnel officially participating in public ceremonies, military field demonstrations, and parades directly related to official activities is allowed. Transportation of other individuals (e.g., hitchhikers, friends, family members)

- is prohibited.
- b. Transportation of prospective military recruits may be provided in connection with interviewing, processing, and orientation. The use of POVs for transportation of applicants or to accomplish official business is prohibited unless authorized by competent authority.
 - c. Electronic Devices. The use of portable headphones, earphones and cell phones by operators of GOVs while the vehicle is moving is prohibited. The use of a GPS device by operators is not prohibited. Operators will refrain from any activity that may be a distraction while driving and lead to traffic mishaps (i.e. adjusting or programming the device).
 - d. Domicile-to-Duty
 - (1) The use of GOVs for transportation between an individual's Domicile and place of duty is permitted only when; the individual has an assignment or official obligation away from their regular duty station which requires them to either proceed directly to the place of an assignment, or obligation, without reporting first to their regular duty station, or to return from such place of assignment or obligation after normal duty hours.
 - (2) Individuals requesting authorization to use a GOV for transportation between domicile and place of duty must submit a written request, to an authorized official (LPO/LCPO or above) prior to the date of such use is requested.
 - e. Safety Regulations
 - (1) All personnel operating Government-owned or controlled motor vehicles shall comply with current instructions.
 - (a) All vehicle operators will conduct themselves in a manner, which will not endanger or cause injury to themselves or others.
 - (b) All drivers have the right and the responsibility to ground a vehicle which they determine to be unsafe. No one shall be required to operate an unsafe vehicle.
 - (c) Safe/defensive driving shall be practiced at all times.
 - (d) No individual shall operate a Government- owned or leased motor vehicle while consuming, or within a period of eight hours after consuming, any quantity of alcoholic beverage.
 - (e) Consuming or permitting the consumption of alcoholic beverages by any occupant of a Government motor vehicle is prohibited.
 - (f) The driver has the responsibility for maintaining the mechanical and cosmetic condition of the vehicle.

f. Emergency/Accident Procedures

- (1) Vehicle operators must report any accidents and incidents immediately by telephone to the Logistics Support Department and the chain of command. This includes damage resulting from accidents, thefts, vandalism, or arising from natural phenomena.
- (2) Within three working days of an accident, the motor vehicle accident reporting kit (SF-91, SF-94) which is contained in the glove compartment of each vehicle, shall be submitted by the operator involved in the accident/mishap to the Logistics Support Department. If you are involved in an accident:
 - (a) Take necessary emergency action.
 - (b) Do not sign or make a statement as to responsibility except to your supervisor or Government Investigator. Do not engage in arguments at the accident scene. Do not divulge personal insurance information.
 - (c) Get names and addresses of all persons involved and extent of injuries, if any.
 - (d) If it is a serious accident, report by telephone to your supervisor.

g. Credit Card Use/Purchasing Fuel

- (1) Tight security of credit cards shall be maintained. Upon completion of a trip and at the end of each working day, credit cards will be removed from the vehicle and placed in a secure location.
- (2) On all purchases, the vehicle operator shall ensure that the number of gallons, price per gallon, value of purchase, vehicle tag number, mileage, and driver's signature are on the drivers' copy of the receipt. Copies of all credit card purchase receipts will be forwarded monthly to the district Vehicle Coordinator. Maximum purchase allowed is \$100. Purchases exceeding \$100 must have prior GSA approval. Guidelines are as follows:
 - (a) Use self-service pumps only.
 - (b) Fraudulent use of the credit card is subject to criminal prosecution.
 - i. Procurement of the following items with a credit card is unauthorized:
 - Waxes and polishes
 - Storages and parking
 - Tires and tubes
 - Batteries

- Routine repairs
 - Items for personal use
- h. Vehicle Care/Maintenance/Repair
- (1) The vehicle operator has the primary responsibility for maintaining the mechanical and cosmetic condition of the vehicle and ensuring the appropriate safety items are in the vehicle.
 - (2) **Unscheduled Repairs**
 - (a) **Emergency/After hours:** If GSA MCC cannot be reached for authorization; the driver must notify the LSO/Vehicle Coordinator. The Chain-of-command must decide if repairs must be completed immediately or if they can be delayed until GSA approval can be obtained. If immediate repairs are decided, they can be utilized up to \$100.
5. **Computers**
- a. Physical security standards will be implemented in accordance with current OPNAV directives. The NAVCRUITDIST Systems Administrator (SYSAD) is responsible for maintaining full accountability of all automated data processing (ADP) hardware and software. In addition, the following physical security measures will be taken:
 - (1) The SYSAD will ensure that all computers are accounted for by custody records, signatures and verified semi-annually in April and October.
 - (2) At close of business, all laptops will be properly secured in a locked container (filing cabinet, locked desk drawers, etc.) or taken home.
6. **Cellular Telephones**
- a. Use of cellular telephones is governed by the following: Cellular telephones are for official business only. Use of the cellular phone for other than authorized purposes is prohibited.
 - b. Cellular phone users are encouraged to use government communications lines whenever possible (i.e., in office). Excessive use of cell phones may result in un-programmed additional charges such as exceeding contract minutes.
 - c. Directory assisted calls are very costly, and as a result, are PROHIBITED.
 - d. The individual assigned a cellular phone is responsible for safeguarding against unauthorized use.

7. Government Travel Charge Card

a. All military and DOD civilian employees are required to apply for the government travel card. The government travel card is the primary means by which travelers will receive cash advances, pay for lodging, meals, rental vehicles, etc., and while TAD only. The cardholder will:

- (1) Limit use of card for official TAD travel expenses only. Use for other than official business can result in a disciplinary action I.A.W. the UCMJ.
- (2) Pay financial obligations to bank on time.
- (3) Notify Agency Program Coordinator of any changes.

b. Financial Obligations and Liability:

- (1) The use of the split pay option is mandatory for all military personnel.
- (2) Government assumes no liability. Cardholders are liable for all billed charges. Must pay whether or not reimbursement has been received.

8. Concealing Information.

- (1) Under no circumstances will recruiting personnel instruct an applicant to withhold any information regarding the commission of any civilian offenses, no matter how minor; medical/physical information, to include treatment, medication prescribed, or minor illnesses, regardless of when treatment occurred or the applicant's current medical/physical status; or any other information that could later result in the applicant being discharged for fraudulent enlistment/commission. Inform applicants who state they have had no previous military service that, should they conceal such service, the fact will become known as soon as their documents reach the DoN, and they will be subject to disciplinary action or discharge for fraudulent enlistment/commission.

9. ASVAB Familiarization/Coaching

a. Several information devices are available to familiarize applicants with the ASVAB:

- (1) The USMEPCOM publication, Your Future is Now, is an institutional Promotion Tool is authorized.
- (2) The Enlistment Screening Test

b. Study Guides. Several ASVAB information/study guides, such as the ARCO ASVAB preparatory study guide, have been commercially produced. Use of these commercial publications by NRC personnel is Strictly Prohibited. It is recognized that these commercial publications are available to applicants; however, NRC involvement with these publications is limited to informing applicants that they are available in some stores.

Under no circumstances shall NRC personnel use a commercial ASVAB study guide to familiarize applicants with the ASVAB. NRC personnel are prohibited from possessing any ASVAB Study Guides.

- c. Schools. NRC personnel must NOT refer applicants to any commercial ventures or schools whose purpose is to familiarize applicants with the ASVAB. NRC personnel may not offer their services to these schools, act as a distributor for their information materials, or become involved with them in any way.
- d. NRC personnel must be fully aware that acts which are conducive to test loss or compromise will not be tolerated and that individuals who are found to have aided or abetted test compromise will be subject to disciplinary action under the UCMJ.

10. Recruiting Irregularities and Investigations

a. Irregularity definitions:

- (1) Malpractice: Malpractice is concealment of or conspiracy to conceal a disqualifying factor of an applicant; action to qualify an ineligible applicant in violation of directives; or any intentional violation of recruiting policy or procedure, which results in the processing and enlistment of an ineligible applicant. A person in recruiting, while dealing with an applicant or processing an application for enlistment is guilty of malpractice when he/she intentionally violates an established law, regulation, written policy or directive in order to enlist an applicant who does not meet the basic enlistment eligibility requirements.
- (2) Erroneous enlistment: An enlistment agreement into which the government would not have entered had the true facts been known or had the legal conclusion based on such facts been correctly reached at that time.
- (3) Fraudulent enlistment: An enlistment with deliberate misrepresentation, omission or concealment by an applicant to the government, which, if known at the time, might have resulted in rejection of that applicant.
- (4) Misconduct: Conduct that does not affect the enlistment qualifications of the applicant, but which is in violation of regulations or policy.
 - (a) Every alleged or apparent recruiting or enlistment processing irregularity is to be acted upon and investigated at the appropriate level to determine if it occurred and how it could have been prevented.
 - (b) Investigation Procedures: The investigation will be conducted only by an impartial commissioned officer, Warrant Officer or senior enlisted person, (E-7, E8, or E9).

b. Congressional inquiries. Most common inquires.

- (1) Promised reclassification in Recruit Training.

- (2) College graduate promised commission after boot camp.
 - (3) Fraternalization/harassment.
 - (4) Harassment of potential applicants from Talent Scouts/Recruiters.
 - c. CNRC Hot line complaints. Most common complaints:
 - (1) Quality of life – working hours.
 - (2) Recruiting Procedures – DEP Discharge request.
 - (3) Misconduct – Misuse of GOV vehicle.
 - (4) Command Policies – Relief of position.
11. Present the “Recruit with Integrity” card.
- a. Background: Recent reports of Talent Scout/Recruiter misconduct, sexual assault, and other complaints by applicants have the potential to erode the public’s confidence in the military and can seriously impact our ability to achieve mission. As Talent Scouts/Recruiters, we must remember that we represent the Navy in our local communities and must conduct ourselves professionally at all times while upholding our core values of honor, courage and commitment.
 - b. Action: In order to ensure prospects, applicants, Future Sailors, and their families understand that they will be treated with dignity and respect throughout the enlistment process, the Talent Scout/Recruiter will provide the “Recruit with Integrity” card to prospective applicants at first contact.
 - (1) Be professional at all times when dealing with prospects, applicants, and Future Sailors. Treat them with courtesy and respect throughout the entire recruiting process.
 - (2) Provide the “Recruit with Integrity” card to the prospective applicant at first contact. Discuss and check for understanding.
 - (3) If parents or other persons are present, provide them a card and ensure they are aware of the Navy’s “Recruit with Integrity” policy.
 - c. Navy Talent Scout/Recruiter’s Responsibilities to you.
 - (1) Treat you with courtesy and respect throughout the recruiting process.
 - (2) Determine your eligibility and prepare you for success during recruit training and first term of enlistment.
 - (3) Inform you of any changes to Navy policy that could impact your enlistment program,

training, or entitlements.

d. Your responsibilities to your Talent Scout/Recruiter.

(1) Treat them with same courtesy and respect they provide you.

(2) Be honest and forthcoming when providing information for your enlistment application.

(3) Notify your Talent Scout/Recruiter of any changes in your status to include education, health, police involvement, drug use or dependency.

12. Talent Scout/Recruiter Prohibited Practices.

a. Coach or entice you to provide false statements, records or documents to affect your enlistment.

b. Bribe or coerce you to process for enlistment.

c. Under no circumstances shall recruiting personnel intervene with police or judicial authorities on your behalf.

d. Form, or attempt to form, a dating or private and unofficial social relationship with you.

e. Solicit to engage in, or engage in, any unofficial financial or business dealings with you.

f. Transport you in their personally owned vehicle, gamble with you, or solicit or accept anything of value from you.

13. Summary & Review

14. Application

a. Apply in daily recruiting activities

15. Evaluation

a. CBT

16. Assignment

a. None

LESSON PLAN

Unit 5. COMMAND ADMINISTRATION

CIN S-7C-2412B

Topic 5.1 Apply Regulations and Policies

DISCUSSION POINT

RELATED INSTRUCTOR ACTIVITIES

<p>4. Ethics</p> <p>a. Fraternalization</p> <p>(1) UCMJ Article 93a</p> <p>b. Prohibited activities</p> <p>c. Four different types of recruiting irregularities</p>	<p>4. Reference: COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 1130.8, COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 1131.2 (series), COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 5370.1 (series), and 10 USC 893a: Article 93a.</p> <p>a. Explain fraternalization and the different ways recruiters and other NRC personnel can violate fraternalization policies.</p> <p>(1) UCMJ Article 93a</p> <p>Provide an overview of UCMJ 93a, which effective January 1, 2019 implemented stiffer penalties for recruiters and other positions of trust.</p> <p>According to Army.mil, "UCMJ Article 93a provides stiffer penalties for recruiters, drill sergeants, and others in 'positions of special trust' convicted of abusing their authority over recruits or trainees."</p> <p>b. Overview prohibited activities within NRC.</p> <p>c. Overview the different types of recruiting irregularities.</p>
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TOPIC 4.7: Ethics and Prohibited Practices Class Periods: 3.5

Terminal Objective:

4.7.0 Explain ethical behavior and prohibited practices as they pertain to Navy Recruiting Command Personnel in accordance with Navy and NRC Directives.

Enabling Objectives:

4.7.1 Describe NRC Fraternization policy as it pertains to applicants, prospects and Future Sailors.

4.7.2 Explain the policies regarding familiarization or Coaching of applicants and Future Sailors by recruiting personnel.

4.7.3 Identify the four different types of recruiting irregularities and investigations.

4.7.4 Explain the use of Government Vehicles to include Domicile to Duty procedures, emergency and accident procedures, and Government Vehicle Credit Card Use.

4.7.5 Explain Government Cellular Phone Use.

4.7.6 Explain the policies and requirements of the Government Travel Card.

4.7.7 Explain the use of the Recruit With Integrity Card

Trainee Preparation:

A. Trainee Support Material

1. Student Guide

B. Reference Publications

1. None

Instructor Preparation:

A. Review Assigned Trainee Material

B. Reference Publications:

1. OPNAVINST 5334.1 (Series), Navy EO Policy
2. COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 1130.8 (Series)
3. COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 5370.1F Fraternization
4. COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 5041.1 (Series), Invest & Reporting of Allegations & Complaints
5. SECNAVINST 5350.15 (Series), DON Core Values
6. CNRCINST 4400.1D Chapter 7 Logistics Support Manual
7. CNRCINST 2061.2C Telecommunications Service

C. Training Materials Required:

1. Student Guide
2. Instructor Guide
3. Recruit With Integrity Cards

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a. Introduction

(1) Establish Contact

State name and topic.

(2) Review Objectives

Refer to page _____ in Student Guide and explain objectives.

(3) Motivation

Navy recruiting is the highest visibility job you have ever encountered in your tenure. Knowing that bad news travels much faster than good news is the very reason that the accountability and delivery of ethical conduct is our daily business. We are the Navy in 99% of the communities we recruit in. One bad encounter can impact mission, but, so can the good ones.

(4) Safety (As Required)

(5) Lesson Overview

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3. Definition of Fraternalization: Any personal relationship prejudicial to good order and discipline, or of a nature to bring discredit on the naval service. Certain prohibited activities, behavior, transactions which include personal relationships that do not respect the difference between grade or rank, and relationships between recruiting personnel and prospects, applicants or Future Sailors. Personal relationships that are unduly familiar between recruiting personnel, prospect, applicants, Future Sailors or their family members are prohibited.

Reference: SECNAVINST 5350.15 (Series) DON Core Values
References: COMNAVCRUITCOMINST 5370.1F, CNRC Fraternalization Policy & OPNAVINST 5370.2 (Series) Navy Fraternalization Policy

- a. Definition of a Prospect: Any person who has expressed to recruiting personnel an interest in enlisting or receiving an appointment in the U.S. Navy or U.S. Navy Reserve, regardless of whether that individual is qualified to join the U.S. Navy.
- b. Definition of an Applicant: Any person who has commenced processing for enlistment or appointment in any of the Armed Forces by beginning to complete a DD Form 1966, NAVCRUIT 1131/238, or comparable form is an applicant.
 - (1) Applicants or prospects that become disqualified but possess the potential and/or qualifications for enlistment or appointment remain in an applicant or prospect status. Applicants or prospects who possess the potential to meet qualifications include, but are not limited to, individuals who do not meet minimum age requirements, score too low on the qualification testing but will be eligible to retest, or who have not completed their education.
 - (2) A prospect or applicant who expresses a loss of interest in enlistment or appointment shall continue to be a prospect or an applicant under this instruction for a period of one

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year from the date the permanent eligibility is documented by recruiting personnel or the date they express this loss of interest to recruiting personnel.

(3) An individual who expresses an interest in enlistment or appointment but is permanently barred under existing regulations is not a prospect or an applicant.

c. Future Sailor or Delayed Entry Program member. Any person who accesses into the DEP of any of the Armed Forces and has agreed to commence active duty or active duty for training at a later date.

4. Prohibited Activities. The prohibitions apply from the first contact between prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor and a Talent Scout/Recruiter, through entry-level training, and for six months after the trainee complete entry-level training. Recruiting personnel shall not:

Instructors give examples or "Sea Stories" of each of the following prohibited activities.

a. Form, or attempt to form, a dating or private social relationship with anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor. Mutual attendance at previously planned, command authorized DEP functions or similar recruiting environment events is not prohibited.

b. Allow anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to remain in any recruiting office except for official business.

c. Allow anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to ride in any government vehicle except for official

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- d. Engage in consensual sexual act or have any physical contact with anyone known to be a prospect, applicant or Future Sailor. Prohibited physical contact includes, but is not limited to, caressing, massaging, hugging, kissing, fondling, and holding hands. Authorized physical contact includes, but is not limited to, shaking hands or performing required body fat measurements on a member of the same sex.
- e. Perform body fat measurements on any prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor of the opposite sex.
- f. Harass any prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:
 - (1) Any language or act which would, measured by an objective standard, constitute cruelty, oppression or maltreatment under Article 93, Uniform Code of Military Justice, if the victim were subject to the orders of the harasser.
 - (2) Abusive language which tends to degrade a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor, whether directed at or used in the presence of such person.
- g. Use anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to provide any benefit, financial or otherwise, for themselves or others.

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- h. Allow or invite any prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to enter into, operate, or be transported in the privately owned vehicle (POV) of recruiting personnel unless authorized in advance by the Commanding Officer.
- i. Gamble with any prospect, applicant or Future Sailor, including playing any game of skill with money or other things of value at stake.
- j. Solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, anything of value from any source in return for granting favors, privileges or other preferential treatment to any prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
- k. Solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, anything of value from anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
- l. Borrow money or any articles from, or lend the same to, anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
- m. Engage in, or offer to engage in, any unofficial financial or business dealings with anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
- n. Photograph or accept any pictures of anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor other than those required for official purposes.
- o. Spend the night with, or allow anyone known to be a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor to spend the night, in the same

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- home, apartment, or hotel room without prior command approval.
- p. Process for enlistment or appointment any person with whom they developed a social relationship prior to that person becoming a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor, or prior to learning that person was a prospect, applicant, or Future Sailor.
- q. Enter any portion of an establishment known to be a MEPS lodging and/or meal facility, except that recruiting personnel may enter the main lobby of such a facility when their official duties make it necessary to assist in the proper check-in and check-out of an applicant and/or Future Sailor.
- 5. "Official Use" of Government Vehicles
 - a. Transportation of military and civilian personnel officially participating in public ceremonies, military field demonstrations, and parades directly related to official activities is allowed. Transportation of other individuals (e.g., hitchhikers, friends, family members) is prohibited.
 - b. Transportation of prospective military recruits may be provided in connection with interviewing, processing, and orientation. The use of POVs for transportation of applicants or to accomplish official business is prohibited unless authorized by competent authority.
 - c. Electronic Devices. The use of portable headphones, earphones and cell phones by operators of GOV's while the vehicle is moving is prohibited. The use of a GPS device by

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operators is not prohibited. Operators will refrain from any activity that may be a distraction while driving and lead to traffic mishaps (i.e. adjusting or programming the device).

Note: Instructor show on board example of Domicile to Duty situation. Give personal example.

d. Domicile-to-Duty

(1) The use of GOVs for transportation between an individual's Domicile and place of duty is permitted only when; the individual has an assignment or official obligation away from their regular duty station which requires them to either proceed directly to the place of an assignment, or obligation, without reporting first to their regular duty station, or to return from such place of assignment or obligation after normal duty hours.

(2) Individuals requesting authorization to use a GOV for transportation between domicile and place of duty must submit a written request, to an authorized official prior to the date of such use is requested.

Individuals shall tailor their driving to prevailing road and weather conditions.

e. Safety Regulations

(1) All personnel operating Government-owned or controlled motor vehicles shall comply with current instructions.

(a) All vehicle operators will conduct themselves in a manner, which will not endanger or cause injury to themselves or others.

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- (b) All drivers have the right and the responsibility to ground a vehicle which they determine to be unsafe. No one shall be required to operate an unsafe vehicle.
 - (c) Safe/defensive driving shall be practiced at all times.
 - (d) No individual shall operate a Government-owned or leased motor vehicle while consuming or within a period of eight hours after consuming, any quantity of alcoholic beverage.
 - (e) Consuming or permitting the consumption of alcoholic beverages by any occupant of a Government motor vehicle is prohibited.
 - (f) The driver has the responsibility for maintaining the mechanical and cosmetic condition of the vehicle.
- f. Emergency/Accident Procedures
- (1) Vehicle operators must report any accidents and incidents immediately by telephone to the Logistics Support Department and the chain of command. This includes damage resulting from accidents, thefts, vandalism, or arising from natural phenomena.
 - (2) Within three working days of an accident, the motor vehicle accident reporting kit (SF-91, SF-94) which is contained in the glove compartment of each vehicle, shall be submitted by the operator in involved in the

No individual shall permit the operation of a Government-owned or leased motor vehicle by any individual who has consumed any alcoholic beverages within eight hours. Violation of any of the above mentioned situations could result in disciplinary action and immediate removal from recruiting duties.

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accident/mishap to the Logistics Support Department. If you are involved in an accident:

- (a) Take necessary emergency action.
- (b) Do not sign or make a statement as to responsibility except to your supervisor or Government Investigator. Do not engage in arguments at the accident scene. Do not divulge personal insurance information.
- (c) Get names and addresses of all persons involved and extent of injuries, if any.
- (d) If it is a serious accident, report by telephone to your supervisor.

g. Credit Card Use/Purchasing Fuel

- (1) Tight security of credit cards shall be maintained. Upon completion of a trip and at the end of each working day, credit cards will be removed from the vehicle and placed in a secure location.

An office safe in the NRS is a good location to lock up the gas card.

- (2) On all purchases, the vehicle operator shall ensure that the number of gallons, price per gallon, value of purchase, vehicle tag number, mileage, and driver's signature are on the drivers' copy of the receipt. Copies of all credit card purchase receipts will be forwarded monthly to the district Vehicle Coordinator. Maximum purchase allowed is \$100. Purchases exceeding \$100 must have prior GSA approval. Guidelines are as follows:

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(a) Use self-service pumps only. Except in the states of OR and NJ.

(b) Fraudulent use of the credit card is subject to criminal prosecution.

i. Procurement of the following items with a credit card is unauthorized:

- Waxes and polishes
- Storages and parking
- Tires and tubes
- Batteries
- Routine repairs
- Items for personal use

h. Vehicle Care/Maintenance/Repair

(1) The vehicle operator has the primary responsibility for maintaining the mechanical and cosmetic condition of the vehicle and ensuring the appropriate safety items are in the vehicle.

(2) Unscheduled Repairs

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- (a) Emergency/After hours: If GSA MCC cannot be reached for authorization, the driver must notify the LSO/Vehicle Coordinator. The Chain-of-command must decide if repairs must be completed immediately or if they can be delayed until GSA approval can be obtained. If immediate repairs are decided, they can be utilized up to \$100.

6. Computers

- a. Physical security standards will be implemented in accordance with current OPNAV directives. The NTAG/TAOC Systems Administrator (SYSAD) is responsible for maintaining full accountability of all automated data processing (ADP) hardware and software. In addition, the following physical security measures will be taken:

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- (1) The SYSAD will ensure that all computers are accounted for by custody records, signatures and verified semi-annually in April and October.

- (2) At close of business, all laptops will be properly secured in a locked container (filing cabinet, locked desk drawers, etc.) or taken home.

7. Cellular Telephones

- a. Use of cellular telephones is governed by the following: Cellular telephones are for official business only. Use of the cellular phone for other than authorized purposes is prohibited.

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- b. Cellular phone users are encouraged to use government communications lines whenever possible (i.e., in office).
 - c. Directory assisted calls are very costly, and as a result, are PROHIBITED.
 - d. The individual assigned a cellular phone is responsible for safeguarding against unauthorized use.
8. Government Travel Charge Card
- a. All military and DOD civilian employees are required to apply for the government travel card. The government travel card is the primary means by which travelers will receive cash advances, pay for lodging, meals, rental vehicles, etc., and while TAD or PCS. The cardholder will:
 - (1) Limit use of card for official TAD travel expenses only unless otherwise directed by your DTS Coordinator. Use for other than official business can result in a disciplinary action I.A.W. the UCMJ.
 - (2) Pay financial obligations to bank on time.
 - (3) Notify Agency Program Coordinator of any changes.
 - b. Financial Obligations and Liability:
 - (1) The use of the split pay option is mandatory for all military personnel.

Let Students know that NTAG/TAOCs randomly select a sample of 10% of the cellular phone billings each month to verify against the prefix listing for each NAVCRUITCOM activity, specifically looking at unusually long calls, repetitive calls out of state, directory assistance calls, international calls, calls to the same number, calls outside of normal working hours and 900, 976, etc. calls.

If you're late, your name goes on the hit list to the CO. Complete your DTS as soon as your return. Address changes, stolen card, damaged card etc.

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- (2) Government assumes no liability. Cardholders are liable for all billed charges. Must pay whether or not reimbursement has been received.

9. Concealing Information.

- (1) Under no circumstances will recruiting personnel instruct an applicant to withhold any information regarding the commission of any civilian offenses, no matter how minor; medical/physical information, to include treatment, medication prescribed, or minor illnesses, regardless of when treatment occurred or the applicant's current medical/physical status; or any other information that could later result in the applicant being discharged for fraudulent enlistment/commission. Inform applicants who state they have had no previous military service that should they conceal such service, the fact will become known as soon as their documents reach the DoN, and they will be subject to disciplinary action or discharge for fraudulent enlistment/commission.

Instructors: Stress the importance of ensuring Talent Scout/Recruiters DO NOT place their Integrity on the lines for their applicants. This is one of the top reason Talent Scout/Recruiters go to MAST.

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10. ASVAB Familiarization/Coaching

- a. Several information devices are available to familiarize applicants with the ASVAB:
 - (1) The USMEPCOM publication, *Your Future is Now*, is an Institutional Promotion Tool is authorized.
 - (2) The AFQT Predictor Test

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b. Study Guides: Several ASVAB information/study guides, such as the ARCO ASVAB preparatory study guide, have been commercially produced. Use of these commercial publications by NRC personnel is Strictly Prohibited. It is recognized that these commercial publications are available to applicants; however, NRC involvement with these publications is limited to informing applicants that they are available in some stores. Under no circumstances shall NRC personnel use a commercial ASVAB study guide to familiarize applicants with the ASVAB. NRC personnel are prohibited from possessing any ASVAB Study Guides.

c. Schools: NRC personnel must NOT refer applicants to any commercial ventures or schools whose purpose is to familiarize applicants with the ASVAB with the exception of the sources listed in the Recruiting E Tool Box. NRC personnel may not offer their services to these schools, act as a distributor for their information materials, or become involved with them in any way.

d. NRC personnel must be fully aware that acts which are conducive to test loss or compromise will not be tolerated and that individuals who are found to have aided or abetted test compromise will be subject to disciplinary action under the UCMJ.

11. Recruiting Irregularities and Investigations

a. Irregularity definitions:

NOTE: The only authorized ASVAB Prep we can show applicants is the Khan Academy. The link is located in on the recruiting e tool box, under ASVAB Prep.

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- (1) Malpractice: Malpractice is concealment of or conspiracy to conceal a disqualifying factor of an applicant; action to qualify an ineligible applicant in violation of directives; or any intentional violation of recruiting policy or procedure, which results in the processing and enlistment of an ineligible applicant. A person in recruiting, while dealing with an applicant or processing an application for enlistment is guilty of malpractice when he/she intentionally violates an established law, regulation, written policy or directive in order to enlist an applicant who does not meet the basic enlistment eligibility requirements.
- (2) Erroneous enlistment: An enlistment agreement into which the government would not have entered had the true facts been known or had the legal conclusion based on such facts been correctly reached at that time.
- (3) Fraudulent enlistment: An enlistment with deliberate misrepresentation, omission or concealment by an applicant to the government, which, if known at the time, might have resulted in rejection of that applicant.
- (4) Misconduct: Conduct that does not affect the enlistment qualifications of the applicant, but which is in violation of regulations or policy.
 - (a) Every alleged or apparent recruiting or enlistment processing irregularity is to be acted upon and investigated at the appropriate level to determine if it occurred and how it could have been prevented.

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(b) Investigation Procedures: The investigation will be conducted only by an impartial commissioned officer, Warrant Officer or senior enlisted person, (E-7, E8, or E9).

b. Congressional inquiries. Most common inquiries:

(1) Promised reclassification in Recruit Training.

(2) College graduate promised commission after boot camp.

(3) Fraternization/harassment.

(4) Harassment of potential applicants from Talent Scout/Recruiters.

c. CNRC Hot line complaints. Most common complaints:

(1) Quality of life – working hours.

(2) Recruiting Procedures – DEP Discharge request.

(3) Misconduct – Misuse of GOV vehicle.

(4) Command Policies – Relief of position.

12. Present the “Recruit with Integrity” card.

a. Background. Recent reports of Talent Scout/Recruiter misconduct, sexual assault, and other complaints by applicants have the potential to erode the public’s confidence in the

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military and can seriously impact our ability to achieve mission. As Talent Scout/Recruiters, we must remember that we represent the Navy in our local communities and must conduct ourselves professionally at all times while upholding our core values of honor, courage and commitment.

b. Action: In order to ensure prospects, applicants, Future Sailors, and their families understand that they will be treated with dignity and respect throughout the enlistment process, the Talent Scout/Recruiter will provide the "Recruit with Integrity" card to prospective applicants at first contact.

(1) Be professional at all times when dealing with prospects, applicants, and Future Sailors. Treat them with courtesy and respect throughout the entire recruiting process.

(2) Provide the "Recruit with Integrity" card to the prospective applicant at first contact. Discuss and check for understanding.

(3) If parents or other persons are present, provide them a card and ensure they are aware of the Navy's "Recruit with Integrity" policy.

c. Navy Talent Scout/Recruiter's Responsibilities to you.

(1) Treat you with courtesy and respect throughout the recruiting process.

(2) Determine your eligibility and prepare you for success during recruit training and first term of enlistment.

Instructors' note: Ensure ALL Talent Scout/Recruiters have a Card on them at all times. Review Cards with Students.

RECRUITER PROHIBITED PRACTICES

1. Coach or entice you to provide false statements, records or documents to effect your enlistment.
 2. Offer you a bribe or other special consideration.
 3. Under no circumstances shall recruiting personnel intervene with police or judicial authorities on your behalf.
 4. Form, or attempt to form, a dating or private and unofficial social relationship with you.
 5. Solicit to engage in, or engage in, any unofficial financial relationship with you.
 6. Transport you in their personally owned vehicle, gamble with you, or solicit or accept anything of value from you.
- NAVY RECRUITING COMMAND HOTLINE: (888) 247-9321

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HONOR COURAGE COMMITMENT

NAVY RECRUITERS RESPONSIBILITY TO YOU

1. Treat you with courtesy and respect throughout the recruiting process.
2. Demonstrate your ability and respect you for success during recruit training and first term of enlistment.
3. Inform you of any changes to Navy policy that could impact your enlistment program, training, or entitlements.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO YOUR NAVY RECRUITER

1. Treat them with the same courtesy and respect they provide you.
2. Be honest and forthcoming when providing information for your enlistment application.
3. Notify your Talent Scout/Recruiter of any changes in your status to include education, health, police involvement, drug use, or dependency.



- (3) Inform you of any changes to Navy policy that could impact your enlistment program, training, or entitlements.
- d. Your responsibilities to your Talent Scout/Recruiter:
 - (1) Treat them with same courtesy and respect they provide you.
 - (2) Be honest and forthcoming when providing information for your enlistment application.
 - (3) Notify your Talent Scout/Recruiter of any changes in your status to include education, health, police involvement, drug use or dependency.
- 13. Talent Scout/Recruiter Prohibited Practices:
 - a. Coach or entice you to provide false statements, records or documents to affect your enlistment.
 - b. Bribe or coerce you to process for enlistment.
 - c. Under no circumstances shall recruiting personnel intervene with police or judicial authorities on your behalf.
 - d. Form, or attempt to form, a dating or private and unofficial social relationship with you.
 - e. Solicit to engage in, or engage in, any unofficial financial or business dealings with you.

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- f. Transport you in their personally owned vehicle, gamble with you, or solicit or accept anything of value from you.
- 14. Summary & Review:
- 15. Application:
 - a. Apply in daily recruiting activities
- 16. Evaluation
 - a. CBT
- 17. Assignment
 - a. None

