

## OVERSIGHT HEARING ON MILITARY RECRUITING

Thursday, January 31, 2008

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:33 a.m. in Room SR-232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Ben Nelson, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: E. Benjamin Nelson [presiding], Webb, McCaskill, and Chambliss.

Committee Staff Members Present: John H. Quirk V, Security Clerk.

Majority Staff Members Present: Gabriella Eisen, Counsel, and Gerald J. Leeling, Counsel.

Minority Staff Members Present: Diana G. Tabler, Professional Staff Member, and Richard F. Walsh, Counsel.

Staff Assistants Present: Jessica L. Kingston and Ali Z. Pasha.

Committee Members' Assistants Present: Frederick M. Downey, Assistant to Senator Lieberman, Andrew R. Vanlandingham, Assistant to Senator Ben Nelson, Gordon I. Peterson, Assistant to Senator Webb, Stephen C. Hedger, Assistant to Senator McCaskill, Jennifer Cave, Assistant to Senator Warner, Lenwood Landrum, Assistant to Senator Sessions, Mark J. Winter, Assistant to Senator Collins, and Clyde A. Taylor IV, Assistant to Senator Chambliss.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. E. BENJAMIN NELSON, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEBRASKA

Senator Ben Nelson: Good morning. The subcommittee will come to order.

Senator Graham, the ranking member of this subcommittee, is unable to be with us this morning and so Senator Chambliss has graciously agreed to take his place today. This brings back very pleasant memories. I was the ranking member when Senator Chambliss was the chairman of this subcommittee. We worked very well together then as a team and I know we will continue to do so. Thank you for being here today, Senator.

Our hearing today is focused on military recruiting. Recruiting and retention is the core of this subcommittee's business and successful recruiting is critical to the continued success of the all-volunteer force. Everything that we do on this subcommittee is designed to take -- to care for our service members and their families.

Our goal is to make military service an attractive option to all young Americans and a desirable career for those who choose to serve and continue to serve.

I welcome our witnesses here today. We're privileged to have on our first panel the commanders of each service's recruiting command: Major General Bostick, the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command; Rear Admiral Kilkenny, Commander of the Navy Recruiting Command; Brigadier General Vautrinot -- I hope I said that close.

General Vautrinot: "VOE-tri-noe," sir.

Senator Ben Nelson: "VOE-tri-not," "VOE-tri-noe."

-- Commander of the Air Force Recruiting Service; and Major General Richard Tryon, Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruiting Command. We're delighted to have all of you with us this morning.

Our second panel consists of military recruiters and I'll introduce them when their panel is seated following the testimony of the first panel.

Recruiting is challenging duty even in the best of times. These are not the best of times for our military recruiters. I'm aware that the pool of young Americans from which our recruiters recruit is shrinking. Only about three of ten young Americans are qualified for military service for varying reasons, including medical conditions, criminal records, lack of education, and low aptitude test scores. Declining high school graduation rates and obesity are national issues that directly impact the national security of the United States because they limit those who are eligible to serve in the military.

We also face a significant challenge in recruiting medical officers, which we need in order to provide for our troops. I understand that all services have met their active duty recruiting goals last year and that they're doing well so far this year. But I know that this has been a particularly tough time for the Army, and I'll be interested in hearing about the experiences from all the services.

So I know the Army has increased the number of waivers for such things as medical conditions and criminal convictions. I also believe that the Army is accepting more enlistments of soldiers scoring in category 4 of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. We'd certainly be interested in hearing more about this.

So this committee has and will continue to be responsive to your requests for legislation to achieve your recruiting mission and I hope that you'll let us know if there is anything else that you need from Congress to make your mission a little easier.

So, Senator Chambliss, perhaps you have an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. SAXBY CHAMBLISS, U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA**

Senator Chambliss: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's an honor to be here with you once again at the head of the table at this important hearing of the Personnel Subcommittee on military recruiting. Senator Graham asked me to fill in for him. As you know, he's otherwise occupied with a military hero and expresses his regret to you and to our witnesses that he couldn't be here. But I'm certainly glad to be once again with our members of

the armed forces who are on the front lines of making sure that we continue to have in every branch of our service our fair share of the very finest young men and women that America has to offer.

I enjoyed our partnership during the 108th Congress during 2003-2004, when I was chairman, you were ranking member. We had a lot of good times back then and accomplished an awful lot of positive things. We also paid an awful lot of attention then, as you have done since, to our men and women of the armed forces who have sacrificed so much and have performed so magnificently in the global war on terrorism.

The changes we helped bring about during those 2 years were many and included substantial pay raises and increased bonuses for military personnel, reform of the survivor benefit plan to eliminate the old two-tier system for payment of benefits, elimination of many of the barriers to the concurrent receipt of both military retired pay and veterans disability compensation, expansion of TRICARE coverage to reservists, and significant increases to service members' group life insurance, and other benefits for the survivors of these brave men and women who die while serving on active duty.

I recall our field hearings at both Robins Air Force Base as well as Offutt in Nebraska, where we heard directly from military spouses and families about the challenges they encounter in their daily lives. As you and I know and Senator Webb knows, the families make just as much sacrifice as the men and women who serve on active duty and reserve duty.

I congratulate you and Senator Graham for continuing that tradition and also on the enactment of the Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, which was signed into law a few days ago, and for the many benefits and improvements in quality of life for service members, including the landmark bipartisan legislation to aid wounded warriors and their families.

I join you in welcoming the witnesses today and look forward to hearing from these senior leaders and from the line recruiters on our second panel. I assure our witnesses that I and all the members of this committee appreciate your challenge. We place enormous value on your efforts in sustaining the all-volunteer force or, as you have said in your written statements, the all-recruited force.

I conclude my remarks here, but I do want to thank each of you and all members of your recruiting teams for the sacrifices and dedication you bring to this vitally important mission.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

Senator Webb, do you have some comments?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JIM WEBB, U.S. SENATOR FROM  
VIRGINIA**

Senator Webb: Mr. Chairman, I have a conflicting hearing on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We have a full hearing, full committee hearing this morning with respect to the situation in Afghanistan. But I wanted to come down here and reaffirm not only my support, but also my very deep interest in these issues.

Speaking of military families, I grew up in the military. My father was a career military officer. I spent many years working on

these issues inside the Pentagon. We have a strong interest on our staff in working toward different sorts of analysis perhaps on these to try to ensure that we get the highest quality of people coming into our military with the most efficiency.

So I'm going to have to leave here in a few minutes, but I'm leaving two staff members behind and without -- I would ask consent if we could submit a series of questions at the end of this hearing that we could get responses to.

Senator Ben Nelson: Without objection.

Senator Webb: And we'll look forward to working on these issues in some detail in the future.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, Senator. Thank you for being here. I think we all understand conflicts. We have to be at two different places at the same time and try to do that. Thank you.

I think what we'll do is we'll just go ahead and start with General Bostick and we'll move this direction with this panel, and the next panel we'll move the other direction, if that would meet with your satisfaction.

General Bostick?

**STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL THOMAS P. BOSTICK, U.S. ARMY, COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY RECRUITING COMMAND**

General Bostick: Good morning, sir. Chairman Nelson, Senator Chambliss, and distinguished members of this committee: Thank you for the opportunity today to talk about Army recruiting. I also want to thank you for all of your support throughout this past year on the many initiatives that we have to attract the best young men and women to our Army.

I'm very proud of our soldiers, our civilians, and our families that are involved in the recruiting mission, both within my command and outside of my command. As you pointed out, the all-volunteer force is actually an all-recruited force. The mission of manning this force is one that is not a challenge just for the Army, but a challenge for our Nation.

We continue to face an environment that is marked by decreasing influencer support and the lowest propensity to serve in 2 decades. Nonetheless, last year the Active Army, the Army Reserve, and the Army National Guard combined to enlist 170,000 soldiers during a persistent period of conflict. This is the size of the entire city of Fayetteville, North Carolina, or Newport News, Virginia. I'm confident that we will again achieve our mission this year and in so doing we will strive to meet the Department of Defense and Department of the Army goals for high school diploma graduates and aptitude.

We're recruiting men and women who are raising their right hand and volunteering to serve during a period of combat. They will join the best Army in the world. Many will deploy and serve in harm's way. Some of these soldiers will have general equivalency degrees, GEDs. Some will have waivers. But all will be qualified to serve in our Army. All will be qualified to serve in our Army.

I feel very comfortable about the soldiers in our Army. We are very careful in who we select to serve. Some have made mistakes in the past, but have demonstrated that they can serve this Nation

proudly. The more serious waivers go through ten levels of decisionmaking, ultimately arriving on the desk of a general officer to approve or disapprove that waiver.

The Army is reviewing the long-term impact of the less number of high school diploma graduates and the increased waivers on the effectiveness of an Army at war. But in talking to soldiers and drill sergeants and our Army leaders, there's a common theme that the quality and the skills of our initial entry training graduates remains high.

We're working several initiatives to increase our recruiter efforts. All of our soldiers are equipped with laptop computers and on that computer we have a system called Future Soldier Remote Reservation System. Today recruiters like Sergeant First Class Webb can go into the home of a parent and a prospect and they can sit in the confines of that home and decide what his specialty is going to be, what his bonuses will be. They can lock that specialty in for a period of 7 days and buy in with the parents, the family and friends, buy in that decision together.

We're working hard in the area of education that you mentioned with several programs, including one called March to Success. Many potential soldiers that are high school graduates and even some college students have a tough time with our test. March to Success is a free of charge online test preparation program that assists our prospects with the ACT, the SAT, and the Army military tests. Over 95,000 signed up for this March to Success program last year.

In addition to that, we instituted a tutor program, one on one tutoring where we're asking the people of America, the citizens of America, to stand up and support this Nation by helping to tutor young men and women that are interested in joining our Army.

We continue to develop and foster partnerships with business and industry through a program called Partnership for Youth Success, where our young men and women that sign up to the military also sign up for a guaranteed interview with that company. We want to continue to partner with America. Today we have over 260 in the Partnership for Youth Success program.

As you pointed out, America is also challenged by an epidemic of obesity. To address this challenge, we developed a program called the Assessment of Recruiter Motivation and Strength, the ARMS program, where we recognize that some young men and women are going to be 2 to 3 percent over body fat and we're going to bring them into the Army. As long as they meet and can pass this ARMS test, we're going to put them into basic training and we'll give them a year to lose the weight. We're finding that their attrition rate is no different than the other soldiers that we bring in.

We're going to roll out next month the Army Advantage Program, which will provide our soldiers an opportunity to buy a house or start a small business later on in life.

We created a Super Leads Program. Since the Super Leads Program started we've made over 7.6 million phone calls. Those are phone calls that we've taken off the backs of our soldiers that have to make them, for them to have to make, and that gives them more time.

We are transforming in the way that we recruit. We've added automation. We've changed our structure. We've looked at our processes, all of this to help our recruiters to save time, so that they can tell their story in the home towns across America.

We know that our recruiters are ambassadors for the Army and they take this responsibility very seriously. They are committed to accomplishing the mission. They're committed to maintaining the warrior ethos. They're committed to maintaining their Army values and accomplishing this mission.

I look forward to the rest of the discussion today. Thank you for the opportunity to be here. [The prepared statement of General Bostick follows:]

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, General.  
General Kilkenny?

**STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL JOSEPH F. KILKENNY, U.S.  
NAVY, COMMANDER, NAVY RECRUITING COMMAND**

Admiral Kilkenny: Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Personnel Subcommittee: I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to appear today to update you on Navy's total force recruiting. Despite an increasing challenge in the environment as you alluded to, sir, I'm pleased to report that my outstanding team of 7500 total force recruiters are succeeding in quality and quantity.

Today we are successfully competing with America's top employers, colleges and universities, Federal agencies, and our fellow uniformed services for the sharpest minds of our millennial generation, those with the highest aptitudes and natural leadership skills who are most likely to succeed and excel. We're reaching out to a new generation of potential recruits whose primary social lifestyles are experienced through the Internet, instant messaging, text messaging, and interactive social networking web sites like FaceBook and MySpace. Millennials experience the world on a global scale 24-7. We must use modern tools and methods to reach today's youth and let them know the exceptional opportunities awaiting them in the United States Navy.

Military service is often not first among career options millennials consider. Today's influencers, most of whom never served, are often not inclined to steer them toward a military option. We are responding to this challenge by meeting millennials on their terms, appealing to their search for something more, their sense of service, their spirit of volunteerism and their interest in the world around them.

Fiscal Year 2007 marked the ninth consecutive year we met overall active component accession mission, attaining 101 percent of our enlisted accession goal, with 93 percent high school diploma and 73 percent in test categories I through III-Alpha on the Armed Forces Qualification Test. This year to date we have attained 112 percent of the first quarter accession goal, with 92 percent high school diploma grads and 75 percent test score categories I through III-Alpha.

This past year we made significant progress on our number one recruiting priority, Navy Special Warfare and Special Operations. We made dramatic inroads in recruiting and retaining high performing youths in our most elite programs by hiring former SEALs

and Special Operations personnel to assist in selecting, testing, educating, and mentoring new recruits. Requiring candidates to pass the physical standard test before accessing them has contributed to improving the pass rate from a historic norm of 28 percent to 78 percent in just 1 year.

A \$40,000 enlistment bonus has proven an exceptional incentive and we thank you for your staunch support for such critical enlistment tools.

We achieved 100 percent of our reserve component accession goal in 2007, compared to 87 percent the previous year. Much of the Fiscal Year 2006 shortfall was in ratings directly supporting the global war on terror. By realigning the proportion of non-prior service sailors accessed into global war on terror ratings through our new accession training program, streamlining our transition from the active to the reserve component, and implementing a transition bonus of up to \$20,000 to convert global war on terror ratings, we attained 115 percent of overall accession goal, 122 percent of prior service goal, and 103 percent of new accession training thus far in Fiscal Year 2008.

We've had mixed results in officer recruiting, meeting 19 of 23 active component community goals in 2007, including all unrestricted and restricted and staff core goals. We've increased our focus and taken steps to enhance our chances of succeeding in the four remaining communities.

Our number one priority in Fiscal Year 2008 is medical officer recruiting. We're executing a comprehensive medical recruiting strategy to address shortfalls in this area. Many incentives enacted in 2007 and 2008 defense bills will help us keep competitive and move us forward toward sustained success in recruiting medical professions. With the help of an increase in the Nurse Corps accession bonus to \$30,000, we are currently 30 percent ahead of last year's very successful recruiting season. Enhanced direct accession bonuses for medical doctors and dentists and a \$20,000 accession bonus for medical student programs have contributed to our identifying 35 percent of our accession goals to date compared to 21 percent this time last year, keeping us on pace to make all active officer accessions in Fiscal Year 2008.

The reserve officer market continues to pose significant challenges. Faced with an accession mission requirement for 72 percent prior service personnel, we achieved just 52 percent of the overall 2007 accession mission. Accordingly, we reduced our 2008 prior service requirement to 51 percent of the accession plan in many designators and implemented several initiatives, such as a \$10,000 affiliation bonus and 2-year mobilization deferment, to attract prior service sailors to the reserve component. Thus far in 2008, we've attained 36 percent of non-medical reserve officer, compared to only 51 percent for the entire Fiscal Year in 2007.

In reserve medical recruiting, we've attained or selected 53 percent of our annual goal so far, compared to only 57 percent for all last year.

With your continued support, I'm confident we will be able to continue in the successes we are currently enjoying and in addressing existing shortfalls.

I thank you for your unwavering support for Navy recruiting and I look forward to responding to your questions. [The prepared statement of Admiral Kilkenny follows:]

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, Admiral.  
General Vautrinot. Am I getting closer?

**STATEMENT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL SUZANNE M. VAUTRINOT, U.S. AIR FORCE, COMMANDER, AIR FORCE RECRUITING SERVICE**

General Vautrinot: I go by “V-8” and you’re welcome to use it. Mr. Chairman, honorable members of the committee: Thank you so much for affording your Air Force the opportunity to talk about our robust and very experienced recruiting force, our successes and our challenges. Mr. Chairman, as you pointed out, we are in a tough environment and, like all Air Force missions around the globe, our recruiting resources are severely constrained. We continue to succeed, but in order to do so we’ve had to get leaner and much more efficient.

I’m honored today to represent our Nation’s smallest military recruiting force, all volunteers, men and women like Master Sergeant Dave White back there, who are working long hours, each covering thousands of miles, in an environment that’s not always welcoming, with the full support of their families every step of the way.

Air Force recruiters are creative and enthusiastic. But more than that, they embrace the Air Force’s highest core value, integrity first: Word of mouth, recruiters telling others exactly how it’s going to be in their basic training, in their first job; and then those recruits have an extraordinary experience and they call home and they tell their friends and they tell their families.

We want their training and their education to match what their recruiters told them, and we want their positive Air Force experience to make them want to stay. This is perpetuation. It’s what allows us to recruit and to retain effectively.

The Air Force attracts recruits with a simple but powerful message: We’re a well-trained, highly technical force, a global team defending the Nation in the war on terrorism, while simultaneously executing humanitarian missions around the globe. Above all, new airmen look forward to doing amazing things in vital air, space, and cyberspace missions, making a real difference to the future of their Nation.

The quality of our recruits remains far above DOD benchmarks. Nearly 80 percent of our recruits scored in the top half of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery last year, a number that has remained above 75 percent since 2000. Additionally, every airman enters with a high school education or equivalent and 91 percent of our new airmen enter without a waiver. Finally more than 15 percent of Air Force enlistees enter with at least a year of college credits, a clear indicator that we’re attracting a mature and well educated young American.

Recruiting Service recruits a diverse, high quality volunteer force to fill jobs that are vital to accomplishing our Air Force’s worldwide mission and despite as high as a fourfold increase in requirements for Air Force hard-to-fill categories, our Special Operations, sir.

Fundamentally, every single opening for combat controller, pararescue, survival, evasion, resistance, and escape, our explosive ordnance disposal, our tactical air control parties working with the Marine Corps and the Army, and our linguists, every job filled for 7 years.

After all this is accomplished, despite the fact that the likelihood that Americans will serve their country has dipped to its lowest point in decades, as General Bostick and Admiral Kilkenny have pointed out, but also the likelihood that parents, teachers, coaches, and clergy will recommend military service has significantly dropped. Moreover, as you mentioned, nearly three-quarters of America's youth do not meet basic eligibility standards. Finally, an increasing number of communities and high schools are less likely to welcome recruiters. Still, your Air Force recruiters succeed.

We are making adjustments in health professions recruiting and we expect to be able to hurdle challenges in this area. To do that, we've carefully looked at where we've been successful and have adjusted to play to those strengths. First, we've decided it's more effective to grow our own physicians, dentists, and nurses, specifically student-based accessions. We are focusing our recruiters and our core efforts in areas where colleges and universities feed to medical, dental, and bachelor of science nursing schools. We will fill both our student-based and fully qualified health professional accessions using the incentive programs your committee has so generously supported. Thank you. And the Air Force chief of staff has directed that next year's health professions incentives will reflect this adjustment.

Moreover, recruiting has teamed with the Air Force's medical community and now has career field champions -- experienced medical professionals in each one of our core specialties that pair and partner with recruiters as they go to conventions and schools. The recruiter is able to talk about the benefits of the Air Force and the health professional is able to talk about the specific benefits, the higher education, the specialized residency, in their medical professions.

These changes are critical to the care and sustainment of our Nation's military members, highlighted by the fact that over 8,000 Air Force medical officers have deployed in support of the global war on terrorism.

Unique to Air Force Reserve's component recruiting is the fact that they're primarily a local force, uniting the civilian and the military work forces. Their units, many in your communities, take time to build, and as the guard and reserve respond to the BRAC and the Total Force Initiative and embark on new highly skilled missions in intelligence, space, cyberspace, medical support and other areas in communities across the country, it takes time to find the right people to put in the right place.

Transformation initiatives will be effective in the mid-April time frame and they should serve as a positive turning point in the Air Force's recruiting efforts, particularly office.

The bottom line is your Air Force total force recruiting team continues to bring in quality men and women because it matters. We recruit to retain, so we recruit the brightest candidates possible, then provide them with tough, highly technical training so that

they, America's Air Force, can help secure the future of this great Nation.

Thank you. [The prepared statement of General Vautrinot follows:]

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, General.  
General Tryon?

**STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL RICHARD T. TRYON, U.S. MARINE CORPS, COMMANDING GENERAL, MARINE CORPS RECRUITING COMMAND**

General Tryon: Good morning, sir. Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the committee: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and to provide information on the state of Marine Corps recruiting.

I'd like to begin first by expressing the Marine Corps's appreciation for your continued support of our recruiting effort. Our commitment to you and to the American people is that we will strive to recruit quality young men and women who meet the high standards expected of America's marines.

Today's recruiting environment, as you have alluded to earlier, is both competitive and challenging. It's tough. Our recruiters, like Staff Sergeant Britton, who has accompanied me here today, work long hours and experience difficulties in finding young men and women who are mentally, morally, and physically qualified with either the inclination or ambition to serve their country. Additionally, our recruiters find that they must invest considerable time with parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and others who influence today's youth as they consider their post-high school opportunities.

During the past Fiscal Year, the Marine Corps achieved its recruiting objectives in both quantity and quality. This was a result of the hard work performed by marines assigned to recruiting duty and those committed to accomplishing their mission. I attribute the success that we achieved this past year to the strong positive image that the Marine Corps enjoys with the American public and to a quality recruiting force, one that is screened, well trained, and properly resourced for the mission.

We are currently meeting our objectives for Fiscal Year '08 for both officer and enlisted recruiting and, while recruiting is fraught with uncertainties, I anticipate that we are on track to achieve our assigned mission for Fiscal Year '08.

Thank you again for your support and for the opportunity to appear before you today. [The prepared statement of General Tryon follows:]

Senator Ben Nelson: Well, thank you very much, General.

Senator McCaskill, would you have any opening remarks that you might like to make before we go to the questions?

**STATEMENT OF HON. CLAIRE McCASKILL, U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSOURI**

Senator McCaskill: Thank you, Senator Nelson.

Just briefly, I hope we can stay long enough to ask a few questions. All of us are I know juggling lots of stuff this morning. But I did want to just focus on misconduct in the area of recruiting. I

know and am familiar with a problem that we had in St. Louis that was actually someone went in from a news station posing as a recruit and taped the recruiting session, and of course then it was shown on the television in St. Louis. It was ugly. It was disappointing.

I would like -- particularly, I know the pressure that's on the Army in terms of the numbers, and this was in fact an Army recruiter. I want to visit with you, hopefully if I have time, about the pilot project that is ongoing about cameras in the recruiting room. I know you've done the buddy system, but cameras and looking at what the costs of that would be and when the reports expected on the pilot project.

I think it's really important, with the pressure that is bringing to bear on recruiting numbers, that we are very, very careful about how we're handling recruiters who are maybe saying things that are just frankly not true. This incident, clearly the impression was being given that if you sign up you would not have to go to Iraq or that Iraq was safer than downtown St. Louis. Obviously, that not only I think is a misstatement, it's clearly offensive to the people of St. Louis, likening their community to a war zone where very, very brave men and women have obviously lost their lives because people want to kill them because of who they represent and what they're trying to do.

So I am very impressed with all of you and the efforts that are being made. I have such respect for our military. I understand these are a few bad apples, a very, very few. But we've got to be careful because, with the pressure that's being brought to bear, we've got to make sure we have a system in place to ferret out those bad apples and make sure that we get them out of the recruiting process and appropriate action is taken in terms of accountability.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, Senator. I would hope that we would have some time to talk directly to the recruiters so that you might be able to address the question to them, because I suspect that they, as truly the boots on the ground in recruiting, they're certainly going to be aware of what is going on. Thank you.

I guess this goes to all the witnesses. Everyone's aware that the President vetoed the National Defense Authorization Act as passed by Congress last December. Congress quickly revised the bill to address the President's concerns and modified it to make sure that the military pay raise and authority to pay bonuses were retroactive, so no service member would lose pay.

Now the President signed that legislation and did so last Monday. The question I have is, did the uncertainty created by this delay in enacting the bill affect recruiting in January, because of just the uncertainty, is it going to be signed, are they going to be able to do it, will the pay raise go through, will it be retroactive, the uncertainty that comes about without having legislation in place? I just wonder if you had any experience related to that. I'm not anticipating that it was significant --

Admiral Kilkenny: Sir, I'll answer for the Navy, sir. We took precautions when we knew it wasn't going to get passed. Thank you for your support on making everything retroactive. I think most of

us are coming up at the end of the month, but I can tell you that it has had no impact on Navy recruiting for the short speed bump that I say occurred, and we appreciate your quick addressing of that information.

We all probably feel that if it went longer that it may have an impact on us. But the brevity of the time, sir, had no impact on the Navy's perspective.

Senator Ben Nelson: Did anybody else have any reaction to that, any experience?

General Vautrinot: Sir, we were very pleased with our recruiters, who were able to work with each of the new candidates, those that are in our delayed enlistment program and were going to be coming in after the first of the year. Every single one of them signed the addendum, recognized what was going on in the Congress, and I'm sure every one of them thanks you, because they signed that on good faith and based on the good relationships they had with their recruiters. So making that possible and making it retroactive was very supportive.

In addition, the language in that bill also helps us in the health professions recruiting area for continuing the bonus and the incentive programs.

Senator Ben Nelson: General?

General Tryon: Sir, we did not experience difficulties associated with the veto. Our recruiters strive first and foremost to emphasize the value of service to both Corps and country. We seek youngsters who want to be marines first and we place a premium on those intangibles that are associated with service to Corps and country, such as patriotism, pride of belonging, and the image of a smart, tough, elite warrior.

That said, the 13 skill bonuses that we do have are certainly useful in filling the low density, high demand MOS skills that are required in our service today.

Senator Ben Nelson: General?

General Bostick: We saw no impact in the Regular Army and the Army Reserve. There was some impact visible in the reenlistment end of things, and that will pick up, I'm sure, with the passing of the law.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

The reliance on a high school diploma or its equivalent as a quality indicator has really been sort of historical for all of the branches. They've all testified that a high school diploma is a key quality indicator, and certainly I would not want to dispute that. But are there other indicators in the absence of a high school diploma or its equivalent that might lead you to believe that you wouldn't have to put that as the centerpiece for recruiting? In other words, other ways of determining quality in terms of what recruiting would you be after and the kind of quality recruits you'd be after, that you could determine it maybe even in a better way, in a different way?

General Vautrinot?

General Vautrinot: Sir, we are very proud of the 99 percent high school graduate and equivalent. I think that OSD has helped us in defining equivalency. Equivalency is a GED plus 15 successful college credit hours. It is also home school with specific credentials,

numbers of hours of contact in that home school program, plus a score above 50 on the vocational aptitude battery, which is equivalent to what your universities and colleges would accept as a program that was college-bound or an ability to work in a controlled environment, to learn in that environment, and be successful.

The correlation we look for in the Air Force is that these individuals will be successful in their highly technical training and because they are successful in training be successful in that first job, and therefore want to stay, be retained in the United States Air Force. That's why the high school diploma or equivalent as defined are so important to us.

General Tryon: Sir, I would echo my Air Force counterpart's comments and say that for Marine Corps recruiting we strongly emphasize the importance of a high school program and one that focuses on contact, not only with the students, but also with the guidance counselors, the teachers, the coaches, the music instructors. Each year the Marine Corps Recruiting Command hosts 12 educator workshops on each coast, entertaining educators from across the country, providing them with a perspective on what we do and how we do it at our recruit training, introducing them to the culture that we have in our Corps. We find that to be particularly useful and more often than not they return back home to their respective schools and communities with a very positive message with respect to the opportunities that await their students after high school.

Senator Ben Nelson: Any other thoughts?

Admiral Kilkenny: Sir, the Navy has been very keen on the high school diploma. However, we're always looking at opportunities to open the aperture. I've asked CNA to do a study for us on GED grads because I think we need to look at a big picture of the society that we live in. Many of the students today work two and three jobs to support their family. Sometimes they can't go to high school, yet they get a GED and they score very high on the AFVAB. I think we need to look at taking some of those folks in.

Sometimes just the education testing doesn't always determine the heart of the lion and their ability to want to serve a greater cause. So I think we have to look at every one of those opportunities.

Senator Ben Nelson: We don't want to miss a standard and we don't want to misapply a standard to the exclusion of people who tested otherwise and might demonstrate the skills necessary to do even greater work than those who come in with the requisite stamp of approval with a diploma or a GED.

General?

General Bostick: Mr. Chairman, we've looked at this very closely. As you know, we've taken in more of the GEDs and the tier 2 this past year, with 79 percent high school diploma graduates and the others filling out in GEDs and other categories. The high school diploma benchmark, as you know, was set because of this word "sticktoitiveness," that they would stick to it through basic training and their first unit of assignment.

One of the things to get at what you're talking about we've worked out with OSD was the tier 2 attrition study, to give a test, an additional test, to our GEDs, the assessment of individual moti-

vation, to measure their motivation to succeed and to see if that GED would seem like, act like, attrite like a high school diploma graduate. What we found in the first look at this is our high school diploma graduates' retention rate through 12 months is about 89 percent. Those that pass the AIM test, these GEDs, the tier 2 attrition study, retain at 83 percent. Those that don't pass retain at 83 percent. So there is something that we can look at.

And I think there's other skill sets within the ASVAB. My dad was a mechanic in the Army for 26-1/2 years, master sergeant, and I don't know what he scored on the test. I never asked him. But I know he was a darn good mechanic, and I don't know how his English skills were or his math skills, which are predominant measurements on that test.

A lot of these kids that we find in the GED program that have gone to vocational schools or otherwise have special talents in specific areas. What we're doing now is looking downrange and taking a look at those that have been in the Army with GEDs and determining, have we impacted negatively the Army in any way by bringing on a greater number of GEDs. I think the initial indications from the field is that they're performing very well.

Senator Ben Nelson: I remember discussing with Admiral Vernon Clark when a point that he was making about the Navy was that different skill sets were going to be required as the Navy progresses forward, and that in order to do that you would have to have different ways of measuring potential skill capabilities other than the traditional. So I applaud all the efforts to try to get outside the box and take a look and make sure that we're not using a test that by itself is -- while I'm certainly not advocating against high school diplomas -- I think they make a great deal of sense, obviously. But that's not the only test and I'm glad that you're looking at other ways of doing that, so that we don't miss opportunities and we don't foreclose opportunities for others who might want to be part of the military but for lacking this credential or that credential. Out of the Wizard of Oz, you have to have a diploma.

Senator Chambliss, do you have some thoughts that you might like to share or questions?

Senator Chambliss: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me continue down that line of education, because I know from talking to folks on active duty, as well as folks in the Guard and Reserve, that the desire to obtain money for a college education has been a key motivator for young men and women and has been a key in successful recruiting also. The services have not only attracted individuals who want to obtain an education, but have also retained individuals for careers while enabling them to achieve education goals.

New proposals regarding the Montgomery GI Bill and other education benefits have been raised. The President on Monday night talked specifically about the ability to transfer unused GI Bill benefits to dependents.

Let me ask you, how important do you view education benefits in attracting recruits? Do you think that the combination of educational benefits, including the so-called kickers or enhancements available, provide a sufficient benefit it balances the goals of recruiting and retention? And what changes in education benefits

would you recommend? General Bostick, let me start with you, please, sir.

General Bostick: This is a very, very important area. I was an instructor or professor up at West Point in engineering. My wife is a principal at an elementary school. So we talk about education all the time. But education is very important for the United States Army and we are working it in several fashions.

I talked about March to Success, that program for the Army to do something in the area of education. We're doing that from the testing end. We're also looking at an Army prep school down at Fort Jackson. This is an opportunity to bring highly qualified young men and women that don't have an education credential, to go into Fort Jackson, our prep school which is going to start in May, and earn their GED. Long-term we want this to be a high school diploma-producing institution.

We're also working with places like a mall school in Pittsburgh. At this mall school, what they're able to do is those that drop out of school go to this mall school and at the mall school they earn their degree from the high school that they dropped out of. So we're working with that, that organization, to try to proliferate that in other locations throughout the country.

Now, as to college, most youngsters want to go to college and most parents would like them to go to college. So all of the college benefits that we have are very helpful for the United States Army and I think for all of our services.

Some of the challenges for our soldiers have been, especially in this high OPTEMPO environment, to continue on with their education and to serve the United States Army in the way that they've been asked. I was talking to Command Sergeant Major Sparks who is working at our Training and Doctrine Command. He's leading an effort to build the College of the American Soldier, where when you sign up with the United States Army you're going to sign up for college at the same time. That's going to be very powerful.

With the advent of the Internet and the many colleges that are involved in partnering with the Army, to take the work that they do in basic training, in AIT, and credit those as legitimate college credits, whether they're medics or mechanics or signaleers -- we're working with institutions to ensure that they can earn their college degree, they can be in the Army at the same time.

So all of these benefits are very very important to us.

Senator Ben Nelson: In that regard, I just wanted to ask one question. In that regard, do you find that retention improves once you have a career established for them, where they get their education, they get to be in a field that they're interested in? Does that positively effect, as I would hope that it would, retention?

General Bostick: We think it's very important. I don't have the correlations directly to retention, but I can give you -- for example, we had about 260,000 soldiers taking tuition assistance courses last year. So while they're in the Army, some of them in Iraq and Afghanistan, 260,000 soldiers. We spent about \$140 million on tuition assistance.

So education is very important. We talk to the soldiers about it. We encourage them to do it while they're in their careers in the Army. Now, some take this on after they leave the service. In work-

ing with the Veterans Department, we've had over a billion dollars that has been spent on Regular Army veterans to earn their education. So whether they do it inside the Army or post their Army career, that's up to them. But we're trying to build a pathway throughout their career where they can earn it from day 1, and whether they end up with a bachelor's degree or a master's degree or a Ph.D., that's really up to how hard they would like to work in their career.

Senator Ben Nelson: Senator Chambliss? Sorry, Senator.

Senator Chambliss: No, no, that's fine.

While we're talking about particularly the issue relative to primarily Army soldiers being in Iraq taking college courses over the Internet, I was amazed, General, at the number of young folks that I've talked to on every visit I've had over there that are doing exactly that. That was one reason for my question.

While it may have seemed that I was honing in on Montgomery benefits, I really am particularly interested in active duty benefits that you're giving to these young folks too and the opportunities that you're giving them. I should know the answer to this, but I don't, but I'm assuming that is independent of Montgomery Bill benefits; is that correct?

General Bostick: The tuition assistance?

Senator Chambliss: Yes.

General Bostick: Yes.

Senator Chambliss: Okay.

Admiral Kilkenny: Sir, we completely value education in the Navy. What we attempted to do this past year was look at where we think there's some interest, is in the community college market. We think it's very big. We started a program called Accelerate to Excellence, where we will DEP somebody into the United States Navy, send them to boot camp, and at the end of boot camp they will go back and finish their associate's degree while they're going through their A school for their skill set in the United States Navy.

Last year we did it with aviation ratings down in the Pensacola area. We partnered with the junior colleges to allow them to get credit on their associate's degree for some of the courses they're taking and their skill sets in the Navy. We're finding that there's an active interest in that program. Again, this year we want to collect some data, how much of a market is there. But there's a lot of folks that can't afford to go to 4-year colleges that go to community colleges for the reasons I alluded to earlier. They're staying around to help mom and dad, earn a little bit of money. I think there's an opportunity.

But clearly, every brief we get on the young generations of today, the millennials, education is talked about from them from the time they're about 4 years old. So it's clearly very important in their world, and it's very important for us to find ways to get an education prior to them coming in, when they're coming in, and when they decide to leave. It's very important.

Senator Chambliss: General?

General Vautrinot: Sir, let me point out first that recruiting falls under the Air Education and Training Command, all working together. Air University has had some great, great success in both

the efforts that we have for recruiting and the retention that Senator Nelson mentioned.

First let me talk about Community College of the Air Force. In 1972 it was started. We've graduated over 320,000 young airmen with associate degrees, over 17,000 last year alone. That is a full accredited associate degree. More importantly, the Air University has just started a program called the Associate Baccalaureate Cooperative, over 25 universities with 45 majors that provide the opportunity for each airman with a Community College of the Air Force degree, an associate degree. 12 clicks on your computer and you are a junior in college, every one of your associate degree credits towards your bachelor's degree.

It is entirely portable. As you point out, all our airmen in the field, all those that are deployed, have the opportunity to continue their education towards that baccalaureate with every single one of those credits counting. That program is in addition to tuition assistance.

I want to thank you also, sir, for your work on military health care and for the Montgomery GI Bill, which helps them if they decide to leave the Air Force. This program helps us to retain them and have them better educated to meet the new mission.

Senator Chambliss: General Tryon?

General Tryon: Sir, our emphasis on education begins with attracting the quality youngsters from high schools and bringing them into the Marine Corps. We, like the other services, have a raft of programs which permit our youngsters to continue, our marines to continue on with their education in a variety of areas.

The online education we find these days is incredibly advantageous to our forces, particularly given the fact that so many marines are deployed in an expeditionary profile. Being able to get on line and to access through tuition assistance programs or other programs an advanced education is very, very useful for us.

As a discrete incentive for recruiting, again we concentrate on attracting those youngsters who want to be marines first and foremost, not specifically for the purpose of continuing a college education. However, when they come to us 96 percent of them are high school graduates. They've been raised in an environment and a culture where they prize the value of an education. So we are in a position with the benefits that have been provided by this committee to help them achieve their goals.

Senator Chambliss: Very good.

This subcommittee recognized shortfalls in medical professionals back in 2006 and responded with enhancement of bonus authorities and stipends for medical and dental corps officers in both active and reserve components. I have two questions for you on this.

Number one, are the expanded authorities being utilized and funded by the services? Secondly, is money enough? In other words, based on your experience with recruiting in the medical field, are there other non-monetary incentives that either the services by policy or Congress should adopt to improve our recruiting successes?

Again, General Bostick, let's start with you.

General Bostick: First I'd like to thank you for the language that included and focused on the medical professionals. This has been a very challenging area for us. We've worked it very hard. Last

year there was a good improvement in our nurse corps. We're still challenged in our dental corps and we're challenged in our medical corps, especially in the 4-year scholarship, the health professional scholarship program. So this is very important.

The bonus that you approved for the critical skills bonus that is available to those that I just talked about, it is very important to them. Also important in this language is the mandatory service obligation, the reduced mandatory service obligation, particularly for our Army Reserve medical professionals.

Also important in this language is that we have a 2K referral program that we have. It doesn't seem like much maybe in the medical profession, but a lot of them, they know friends, they know other associates that might want to join, and word of mouth really helps us in recruiting, and having that 2K referral, just like we have for the enlisted, on the officer medical side is going to make a difference. It may be something we want to look at increasing in the future if this works out well for us.

But this is a challenging area. We continue to work it very hard, but we appreciate the support that you've provided to us.

Senator Chambliss: Admiral Kilkenny?

Admiral Kilkenny: Sir, absolutely your support of us and these initiatives has been very beneficial. I alluded to in my statement that in the last 3 years, based on your authority given us to increase nurse bonuses, we succeeded in mission last year. Every year that we increase the stipend, we've increased our numbers. We're happy to report that this year, based on the initiatives that you've authorized us, and the Navy's going to do these initiatives, we've seen an increased activity that we haven't seen in the past, particularly in the HPSP for the medical students.

Right now we're anxiously awaiting the February to March time frame, is when most of the medical schools make a determination on the students that they are going to accept. But we've seen an increase in activity and interest in the Navy's medical program based on what you've given us, and we're very appreciative of that.

General Vautrinot: Let me begin with scholarships. We have been very successful in the Grow Your Own program I discussed and in scholarships. We've been able to meet 100 percent of those scholarships, and this year it looks like we're going to increase those as well. The Air Force did support the increase in scholarships and intends to do so next year as well. So thank you for your support and your help.

In addition, particularly with our medical professionals, there are different areas that they like to see support. We've seen success in the financial assistance program for physicians. That's the combined 42,000 a year. We had 22 of the 33 available used last year.

With regard to the accession bonuses for dentists, in the previous year we filled all of those slots for dentists. While there is no accession bonus this year, the loan repayment is working very well. Then of course, as my compatriots have pointed out, we've done very well in the nursing programs.

We find also that the ability to more rapidly bring those folks into the United States military is very important. The processing for medical professionals is somewhat long and tends to be very serial. So anything that you could do on your committee that could

either put legislation for parallel processing or could perhaps put some words in the policy that allow our general counsels to bring those folks through a little more quickly would be very much appreciated. So we are continuing to expand that and we thank you for your support.

General Tryon: Sir, I defer to Admiral Kilkenny with respect to the medical recruiting. I applaud his great efforts.

I would also just pass along that the quality of the doctors and the corpsmen that work with and serve alongside marines is absolutely superb. We thank the Navy for that.

Senator Chambliss: General Vautrinot --

General Vautrinot: If you could think of the engine instead of tomato juice, sir --

Senator Chambliss: There you go.

It's interesting you make that comment about speeding up the process. That is something surely, Mr. Chairman, that we ought to be able to work on. I just tell staff, let's be sure we look closely at this and work with all of you with respect to seeing how we can make sure that whatever paperwork or whatever the holdups in the bureaucracy are can be eliminated, not circumvented by any means, but that we do everything we can to try to speed that process up. That should be easy for us.

General Vautrinot: Thank you.

Senator Chambliss: So thank you very much for that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

Senator McCaskill?

Senator McCaskill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would begin with General Bostick: Tell me what recruiters get in terms of compensation or possibilities for advancement or promotion, in terms of how well they do at recruiting? What incentives are there for recruiters in terms of how they produce?

General Bostick: There are a number of incentives that we have, everything from coins and hats and jackets and medallions to financial incentives that they can earn as a successful recruiter. Each year we recognize those soldiers at an annual training conference. One of the awards that they all strive to achieve is the Morell Award, former Sergeant Major of the Army. They also have rings that they earn.

Each of these are earned based on points that they achieve based on the numbers of recruits that they bring in. There are also financial payments that are made, recruiter incentive pay that you authorized in one of our initiatives that we've been trying. That recruiter incentive pay is for those that go above and beyond the call of duty, the average right rate that's expected for those in Recruiting Command. Those that do above that can earn financial incentives.

There are also meritorious promotions.

Senator McCaskill: Could you go into detail about the financial incentives? What kind of money are we talking about for a recruiter if they meet a certain quota or go above a certain quota?

General Bostick: It's not significant initially. It's about \$100 a month if you go over your required right rate for the command. So if the right rate for the command is 1.7 and you're doing 2 or more,

then you could earn \$100 or so that month. If you do it consistently, it can go up to \$300 for a quarter, 3 to \$ 600 for a quarter, and the maximum for a year would be up to about 5,000. Those are for recruiters that are the very best recruiters that are performing out there.

We're still studying this program to see if it's adding the kind of lift. The whole idea was to move the mass middle of USARC and right now we're not sure that that part is happening. Part of that is because of the environment that we face, but we find that the great soldiers that recruit would recruit without any coins, hats, jackets, or financial incentives. Folks like Sergeant First Class Webb is going to recruit like a hero every day of the week all year long. And we're working to still move the mass middle.

Some of that is due to training. We've got a very intense training program that's ongoing throughout the command. We're using the Internet and a virtual classroom trainer that we're able to train and get all of the recruiters up on the net in training with our schoolhouse from Fort Jackson or from the headquarters of the battalion.

There are meritorious promotions that are available for recruiters that elect to stay within the recruiting command and convert to 79 Romeo and do well in the recruiting and they can be promoted. Then of course, the different leadership positions that they could move up in are very competitive for our best recruiters.

Senator McCaskill: I'm curious if there's ever been -- for example, the young man who engaged in inappropriate recruiting tactics that were exposed in the news report in St. Louis, what happened to him, do you know?

General Bostick: I can't say what happened to him specifically. I can follow up with you and get the details with you and get the details. I can tell you that we investigate every allegation, and it doesn't matter if it's an anonymous allegation, it's an allegation we hear about on CNN. But if there is an allegation against one of our recruiters, we will investigate it.

We have about 8,000 recruiters and on any given year we have about 15 percent that will receive allegations. 2 to 3 percent of those allegations, something under 200, are substantiated and we take the appropriate actions that are necessary based on the actions, inappropriate actions that were taken.

The other thing we do is we talk about our Army values and our warrior ethos every day. There is not a setting ever where recruiters and leaders come together where we don't talk about the importance of our values and integrity. We realize that we are ambassadors for the Army. We're on the front lines. We represent the Army to America.

Senator McCaskill: Well, you know, and it's heartbreaking. I know it's certainly heartbreaking to all of you because of your dedication to what you do and literally the tens upon thousands of men and women in uniform who I admire so greatly. But clearly we have had some heartbreaking incidents, whether it's the active military that have been caught actually stealing around contracting in Iraq or whether it's some of these recruiters.

I hate it for the military because when those news stories aired in St. Louis the disservice they did was to you and to the men and

women who carry what they do so well for our country and that we're all so proud of. So I want to make sure that when that happens that not only is there consequences to that recruiter, but that there is something that happens throughout the military to say: No matter how badly we need people to enter into the military, we should never ever do this.

The problem, of course, is that the substantiation up until very recently -- I know you have instituted a buddy system, but it's my understanding there are still recruiters that are one on one with potential recruits.

General Bostick: Well, you can be one on one with a potential recruit, but not of the opposite sex. There is a buddy system that we have employed that if you're with the opposite sex you must be with a buddy, male or female. Then we have a buddy system for other reasons, for safety. A lot of our soldiers are coming out of a combat environment. They're coming in here to recruit. They have a lot of different stresses and things that are on their mind in the families and what they're remembering from Iraq or Afghanistan.

It's important that we're in touch with those soldiers. So we have a buddy system for that reason as well.

The other thing that we do, whenever an incident happens we each month publicize generically what happened and what the punishment was for that activity, and we reinforce that and get it out to the entire command, to every soldier, so they have the opportunity to see what soldiers are doing and what the consequences of those actions are.

Senator McCaskill: That's terrific. I think that the substantiation, though -- as an old prosecutor, there is always a disagreement when you have two people who were in a conversation. The person that is accused of wrongdoing generally says: That's not what I said. And the person who is accusing says: No, it is; that's what they said. That's why I think the cameras are such a good idea.

Obviously, I think just the presence of the camera makes sure that we are -- it's great that you can review for training purposes. How is the pilot project going and when we see results from the pilot program?

General Bostick: It's a bit early to tell. As you know, we started this last year in New York City, and we spent about \$200,000 and we put cameras in about 38 of our different stations. We had 15 recruiter impropriety allegations, of which all except for one was unsubstantiated.

Senator McCaskill: By looking at the camera?

General Bostick: Well, none of the events happened in the station.

Senator McCaskill: I see.

General Bostick: So it was very difficult. You know, we still have the buddy system, we have the camera there. We're looking at other options that we can provide. But right now I think it's too early to tell. But the incidents that you bring up, a couple of them have happened in the station. We have great turnover of soldiers. So if it's going to happen, then we'll pick that up. But we're still taking a look to see if this is something that we need to spread further.

But we think the buddy system has really helped us, especially from the emotional standpoint of soldiers taking care of each other.

Senator McCaskill: Well, I applaud what you're trying to do. I know you all are trying to do your best and I just wanted to make sure we're paying attention, because with the pressure and with the incentives I know that it's possible that someone's going to shade what they say in order to get someone to sign the dotted line. And frankly, that may be more problematic with some of our recruits than the issues that have been talked about by some of the other Senators this morning.

Thank you all very much for being here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, Senator.

I want to thank the panel as well. Preliminarily, I knew that reports were going to be very positive as to the success of the recruiting. That's in large part due to your commitment and continuing to adjust the system and question what you've been doing based on what you now know or what you're projecting the needs are for the future, because that is essential.

So I congratulate you and your commands for what you've done and challenge you to keep doing it, and let us know, as you have today, what we can do to adjust the law, bring in new incentives, or whatever would be required, that will make it more likely that you'll be able to continue to achieve those successes in the future, because that's what it's obviously all about.

So thank you very much.

Now I'm very anxious to have the next panel come in and talk to some of the recruiters and hear the story that they have to tell. Thank you very much. If we can have the other panel.

Do any of you have any prepared remarks or are you expecting most of the discussion and dialogue to be responding to the questions that we might ask? Any prepared remarks?

Sergeant Britton: Yes, sir.

Senator Ben Nelson: Okay. Starting at this end, Sergeant Britton, do you have any prepared remarks?

**STATEMENT OF STAFF SERGEANT JAMES M. BRITTON, U.S.  
MARINE CORPS, ACTIVE DUTY RECRUITER**

Sergeant Britton: Sir, I would just like to take the opportunity here to thank you for allowing me to be here today to speak in front of you. I also thank you for the continued support that you've given the Marine Corps and will continue to do in the future. I appreciate it.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

Sergeant?

**STATEMENT OF MASTER SERGEANT DAVID B. WHITE, U.S. AIR  
FORCE, ACTIVE DUTY RECRUITER**

Sergeant White: Sir, I'd like to thank you as well, you and the committee. It's an honor to be here today to represent the Air Force and the men and women of the Air Force Recruiting Service.

Senator Ben Nelson: Well, it's an honor for us to have all of you here, too.

**STATEMENT OF MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER TRAVIS P.  
BRUMMER, U.S. NAVY, ACTIVE DUTY RECRUITER**

Chief Petty Officer Brummer: Mr. Chairman, good morning, and distinguished guests. Thank you very much, and I'm here to say thank you very much and represent the United States Navy.

Senator Ben Nelson: Sergeant?

**STATEMENT OF HON. SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RICKY LEE  
WEBB, U.S. ARMY, ACTIVE DUTY RECRUITER**

Sergeant Webb: Good morning, sir. Mr. Chairman and other distinguished guests: My name is Sergeant First Class Rick Webb and I'm an Army recruiter. I've had an awesome opportunity to serve in my home town of Charleston, West Virginia, where I've been in the Recruiting Command since 2003. I've also been blessed with the experience of being an Army drill sergeant and I was an instructor for basic combat training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Having a working knowledge of basic training has allowed me to overcome or to address some of the fears that today's youth might have about going into training.

Recruiting America's youth to become today's future soldiers has been a unique experience and has offered many challenges. I've seen many changes in my short time as a recruiter and will probably see many more. Recruiting is not business as usual.

The leadership in my time has changed tremendously. The organization has changed from a sales type organization to more of a leadership-focused organization. Recruiters are engaged daily in a fight that requires them to be mentors, coaches, and even guidance counselors.

I am thrilled and I am humbled. I'm from West Virginia. I have been out of the woods. This is my first time to Washington, D.C., so I'm very humbled at this opportunity to talk to you about the challenges of recruiting.

I am eager to answer any of your questions.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you. Thank you all.

You listened to the generals and admirals about what they have attempted to do and what we've done working together to make the military as an all-volunteer force one that is competitive with the rest of the world. Obviously -- it's obvious we have to be competitive if we want to be able to attract quality recruits. Maybe you can give me some idea and the committee some idea of the kinds of things that when you're on the ground recruiting seem to be the best tools, the best incentives, and in some cases among the best reasons why a recruit will sign up, in addition to your strong sales pitch, I'm sure. But what are the tools and the available incentives that work best when you're trying to recruit somebody to your branch?

We'll start with you, Sergeant Britton.

Sergeant Britton: Sir, just like General Tryon said earlier, the Marine Corps attracts a certain --

Senator Ben Nelson: If you want to be a marine first, I understand that.

Sergeant Britton: -- type of individual, sir, yes. The way I always explain to the future marines is you have to -- certain people join. People that join the Marine Corps want a challenge. They want to

be the best. The jobs, bonuses, all those things are talked about after the fact is established that they want to become a marine. I think that is probably our most successful tool that we have.

You see the commercials that the Marine Corps has. It talks about honor, country, duty, not so much the monetary value. I think that's why the Marine Corps has been such a great force over all the past years and will continue to be later on down the road.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

Sergeant White?

Sergeant White: Yes, sir. I believe people join the Air Force for a variety of reasons. Number one, as General Vautrinot pointed out, the quality of life. The Air Force quality of life has been superior to me, to my family, and to those I know in the Air Force. I believe it's that word of mouth, that perpetuation, as she stated, that brings people to the Air Force.

Education is also a very important tool. In the Air Force you're either going to college or you're graduated, it's that simple. You're automatically enrolled in the Community College of the Air Force and you're taking classes and you're pursuing that associate degree from the Community College of the Air Force or you're pursuing a bachelor's, master's, or Ph.D.

Those are the main reasons people join the Air Force.

Senator Ben Nelson: In that regard, let me just follow up with a question. Now moving to Cyber Command as part of the Air Force's continuing mission, you're going to be looking at people with computer capabilities. Obviously, you ought to start with them when they're about 5 years old because they all top the rest of us. But as you're looking at these recruits and you know which you're going for, what are you able to offer somebody that has that strong interest in the technology and the increases in technology that are simply going to be part of the future of the Air Force and the future of all forces as we work together, seeing how Cyber Command intersects with every branch of the military?

How do you approach that? Is that a specific area you look for or is that something that's developed as a result of the education?

Sergeant White: Well, sir, cyberspace is new to us. Our recruiting efforts haven't changed. We recruit those that qualify for highly technical career fields and we continue to do that and place them into cyberspace as they come in. So at this time, to my knowledge we do not have a system to test specifically for cyberspace, but as a recruiting command we set our standards and we bring them in and place them to the needs of the Air Force.

Senator Ben Nelson: Okay.

Chief Petty Officer Brummer: Mr. Chairman, the United States Navy, the sailors out there that are representing us as recruiters, they're doing an awesome job. You have to walk the walk. Every one of these servicemen in front of you today meet young men and women who want to be like them. I have found that as a sailor you have to go out there and tell your story of what you did.

As a young man growing up in southwest Iowa and being able to be stationed in many different places around the world and be on cruises, when I came back to recruiting duty to Hometown USA, there's many people in Omaha and Council Bluffs that have no idea what a Navy guy does. It's been an awesome opportunity.

With the education side, I was able to go to the University of Bellevue, and you meet other students and you meet other servicemen and women. I tell you, the young men and women out there, they see us as recruiters with our laptops, our cellphones, our text messaging, they're interested. It really is about an interaction between two individuals and parents and grandparents and influencers. Millennials want to serve. These young men and women that we talk to today, they're excited. And we have a great story to tell. It's been an awesome opportunity.

Senator Ben Nelson: Well, obviously you've been affected by the influence of Nebraska right across the border.

Chief Petty Officer Brummer: Yes, sir.

Senator Ben Nelson: I certainly appreciate that.

Chief Petty Officer Brummer: Just moved from Omaha, sir. [Laughter.]

Senator Ben Nelson: Sergeant?

Sergeant Webb: Sir, I have to go back to another story.

Senator Ben Nelson: All right.

Sergeant Webb: In 2003, I went on my very first interview. In recruiter school they taught us how to be salesmen, taught us how to use a program, at that time Army Sales 7.0. You type in the applicant's name, it would play the patriotic music. I was sitting there with a young lady from my high school and the father was sitting directly to my right on the sofa. I was very nervous. I took a deep breath, closed my laptop, shoved it away from me.

He said: Sergeant Webb, is there a problem? I said: Yes, sir, there is. He said: Well, do you mind explaining the problem?

I said: Well, I'm having a hard time using this program. I'm not a salesman, but do you mind if I talk to you folks? They both smiled and said: Well, that's what we would much rather prefer.

And I went on telling my Army story. Now, I'm from a small town outside of Charleston, West Virginia, called Allen Creek. I used to carry rain water in five-gallon buckets to do my laundry. I used to take baths in a creek. I went to a rich school, a rich high school in Charleston, and they didn't treat us like they did the other kids. We were just treated differently.

The Army has allowed me to achieve so many of my goals. I saw an Army recruiter in my hallway in my school and I swelled up. I was 128 pounds soaking wet. I went down the hall and talked to the Army recruiter. The way that he recruited me, the way that he showed me -- and he wasn't completely honest about everything. So I use that to my advantage now. I know the way he talked to me about things, it wasn't exactly the truth once I became a soldier and knew the way of the Army. So I use that technique.

I do talk about some of the incentives, but I establish that later, like someone else on the panel alluded to. But it's primarily serving the country, serving my country. I was a State trooper in West Virginia, I have an education, things I would never have been able to achieve without the United States Army. I know you can get that with the other branches of the service, too. So it's about pride and serving my country. And the things I've been able to do, regardless of where I came from, when I tell that and they see the flash in my face -- and I hope the panel can see that -- that's what I do. That's my Army story. I tell my Army story. It's about guiding,

leading, mentoring. All the incentives are secondary to serving my country.

Senator Ben Nelson: Very good.

Senator McCaskill asks that I ask you the following question, to all of you, obviously following up on her concerns and all of our concerns and your concerns about the improprieties. She said: "Can you discuss your views on improprieties by recruiters? How prevalent are they? What are the biggest causes? What more do you think can be done to prevent them, or are we already doing enough?"

Anybody, just jump in as you feel motivated.

Sergeant Britton: Sir, for the Marine Corps, I feel that these are very isolated incidents. This doesn't reflect the conduct of Marine Corps recruiters at large. As far as measures to keep this from happening, at least from our standpoint I don't think there's anything other than the positive Marine Corps leadership that we are taught as senior marines.

Senator Ben Nelson: Ethos and values of the individual doing the recruiting in the first place.

Sergeant Britton: Yes, sir. And it's our senior leaders' job to watch over us. It's a continued education of the leadership, leadership through training, and that's worked for us and I think that's going to continue to work for us in the future, sir.

Senator Ben Nelson: Sergeant?

Sergeant White: Sir, the Air Force has zero tolerance relating to misconduct. It starts with our chief of staff and filters on down into the recruiting command. The Air Force has -- it's a .05 percent of misconduct. Although one is too many, it's a very low percentage.

As a supervisor of 16 officer sections, recruiters that recruit health professionals, I don't tolerate it. I know General Vautrinot doesn't tolerate it and it's just not accepted in the Air Force or the recruiting service.

Chief Petty Officer Brummer: Mr. Chairman, for the United States Navy, we're very fortunate. Admiral Kilkenny, once taking command, greets every sailor that goes into recruiting duty at the schoolhouse where we get trained to be recruiters. He first talks to every sailor, officer and enlisted, and explains to him his expectations. At the end of the conversation in the room, he stands at the door, shakes our hand, issues them a small little card to remind them of his expectations: honor, courage, and commitment.

At the end of that, he doesn't just stop there. Most recently around Christmas time, he put out a video, a podcast, to remind all the sailors of his expectations.

It starts with leadership. You're absolutely right, there is zero tolerance. One is too many. As a leader, that's what Admiral Kilkenny has done.

Senator Ben Nelson: It's amazing how in politics if you get introduced at a sporting event as a senator or governor, it's amazing how one boo can drown out 100,000 cheers. It's sort of the situation here. One bad situation can gain so much attention, and it's because we accept zero tolerance. We don't think it ought to happen. But that doesn't mean it's prevalent. I think that's the point you're making.

Sergeant, you may have another story to tell us.

Sergeant Webb: Well, in 2000 -- no.

Sir, since I've been recruiting in my company of 25 to 30 recruiters I have not seen one single recruiting investigation of impropriety. We have watched the video in our office. We get it sent down to each office and we sit down as a station and we watch the video, and it is an embarrassment. But as far as my knowledge, I haven't seen it. We've come along with great strides with the buddy program and I think the cameras in the stations would be a great idea.

Senator Ben Nelson: Senator Chambliss?

Senator Chambliss: Well, guys, there is a lot of pressure on you, obviously, to meet goals. There are incentives out there. Obviously, I know you have to watch that very close.

One issue that we have as a general population issue in America is the issue of obesity. When you have a potential recruit coming in to see you, sometimes I know you can tell that they have some physical issues and sometimes probably you don't even know that they do. But we've heard from some of the trainers, sergeants around the country from each branch of the military, that they're getting some kids in in greater numbers now that don't have the physical qualities that they need to have or that they expect.

From a recruiting standpoint, what do you tell your recruiters? What do you tell them to look for? Are they aware of these issues? And what are you telling potential recruits or what are your folks telling those potential recruits about what kind of shape they need to be in to be a marine? Or what is the lay of the land out there with respect to this issue in each service?

Sergeant Britton: With the Marine Corps, sir, these individuals understand that they need to be in a certain physical shape, not in peak physical shape to begin recruit training, because that is what Marine Corps recruit training is for. Before they get there, to start the process, it is our job as recruiters to get them to that appropriate first level.

I know in our offices we have a meeting once a month on a Saturday and each week on every Tuesday and Thursday where our future marines come in. They'll run with the marines at the office, go to the gym, anything to get them in shape and get them prepared for recruit training.

As far as running into a lot of problems with people coming in, the obesity issue, the way we address that, if they are grossly overweight we kind of put it on them. We invite them to come work out with us. That's showing dedication to a goal that they want to achieve if they're serious about it. If indeed they are serious, they will lose the weight and ultimately begin their journey to become a U.S. marine.

Senator Chambliss: No way a fat guy like me can scale that mountain in your ad on TV. [Laughter.]

Senator Chambliss: Sergeant?

Sergeant White: Sir, like the other branches, we have height and weight standards that we must abide by. When we sit down with an applicant, we go over that. On the initial visit, we'll take an estimated height and weight from the applicant. Really, that's our starting point with them, to determine whether we should go on with the process or not.

It's really, it's on the applicant to lose the weight. However, I don't know of a recruiter out there that's not willing to go out there and run with them. I've had physician recruiters go out and run with doctors to lose the weight so that they could enter the Air Force. It happens, and that's what recruiters do. They're willing to go the extra mile, but the applicant has to kind of meet us halfway, so that they can in fact meet those standards and begin the processing.

Chief Petty Officer Brummer: Sir, for the United States Navy, as Admiral Kilkenny mentioned earlier, we have implemented numerous different projects in the delayed entry program, with YMCA passes to help work out. Young men and women who join the United States Navy, they don't want to go to camp to fail. So we do our best as possible to encourage young men and women to work out. Our sailors out there that request recruiters, they're leading the charge, and we've also had some retired or previous service SEALs that help mentor. So it's about lead, mentor, and train, and we're making sure that the recruiters are out there equipped, and it's been a great opportunity. They know exactly what's expected of them.

Sergeant Webb: Sir, the height and weight standard is the height and weight standard. However, I'm one of those few that would like to see it changed a little bit. It's changed since 2003, but the standard I think was set many, many years ago. Unfortunately, we have a McDonald's and Burger King on every corner and the generation that we're dealing with every day, they're more involved with their computer and their Play Station, their XBox, so they stay inside the house. They don't get out and run the hills of West Virginia, like I did, and stay mean and lean.

But we encourage recruiters to get out there and help the kids. Got to go to a story again. I went to a Wal-Mart and I had to get tires on my vehicle. While I was waiting to get my tires done I walked down the gaming aisle. I wanted to waste some time while I was getting tires on my vehicle. I saw a guy who was working in the tire area and he was playing Tiger Woods. I'm a big golfer. So he said: Do you want to play a hole? I'll play a hole. So we switched back and forth playing Tiger Woods on the Play Station. And I never said a word about the Army, and I'm in uniform.

Well, the second day I showed up because I had to get tires on the back. They didn't have them in stock. And he said, after a little bit of playing the game, he said: You know, you've been here 2 days and you've not once mentioned the Army to me. I see your recruiter patch; I know you're a recruiter.

I said: Well, Steve -- name tag -- I said: The way I see it, if you're interested in the Army you will talk to me about the Army. And he said: Well, I've been told all my life that I'm a fat boy. This guy was 5 foot 9, 269 pounds, so he was obviously over the standard.

So I talked to Steve at length about, you know, you take 2 weeks of your own time and you show some progress and I'll be glad to work with you. In 2 weeks this guy lost 15 pounds on his own time. I took the next 3 months working every morning with this guy. I would meet him at 6:00 o'clock in the morning, 2 hours before I even had to be at work, just because he had a desire, a strong desire. He did 4 years of JROTC in high school and he just had a

strong desire to serve his country, and I took the time out to help him out.

But we have the ARMS test even that allows recruits to -- and the General alluded to what the acronym stands for -- allows recruits to meet the physical endurance along with cardio endurance. It's able to measure that. But I would like to see it changed even more so than what it has.

Senator Ben Nelson: Did he make it?

Sergeant Webb: Absolutely, he made it. He's been to Iraq two tours. He's already a staff sergeant. He threatens to pass my rank up.

Senator Chambliss: I'm betting on you, Sergeant.

We are constantly looking for policy changes that we need to make to make your life better, to make it easier, as well as to make the life of our men and women in uniform better. Do any of you have any suggestions of any additional tools that we need to give you to make sure that you're able to do your job in a very professional way?

Sergeant Britton?

Sergeant Britton: Sir, I feel one of the difficult things that we experience in our area sometimes involves the obtaining of lists of names of seniors from some of the local schools. A lot of times what happens, even though the lists are supposed to be released, what's happening there, they're giving out forms for the parents to sign so our names -- their names won't be on the list that we receive from the school, if we even get the list from the school.

The reason those lists are so important -- obviously, not everyone in that senior class is going to join the Marine Corps or any branch of the military. But it's our job as recruiters to go out there and contact as many of these young individuals as we can, to hopefully have an impact on somebody's life. Even if it's not joining the Marine Corps or one of the other branches, it at least -- sometimes I talked to young men before that weren't going to join the Marine Corps, but at the same time they didn't know what they were going to do. After we were finished talking, the guy ends up starting college.

It works out better for everybody that way. That way, not only do we help that young man or woman to become successful and start their journey, it allows us to do our job and greater contribute to the community in really returning the citizens, well-trained citizens, back to the community where we took them from once they decide to get out of the Marine Corps. And it starts right there.

That's probably the biggest thing that I would change if I had it to do, sir, the better obtaining of lists from the schools and a little bit more cooperation, not in all cases. Obviously that's not happening, but there's some cases out there where I think they may be trying to find a loophole in the law that was passed, and I think that's something that should be addressed, sir.

Sergeant White: Well, sir, as General Vautrinot pointed out, our scroll process in getting health professionals approved through this office. As you stated, you were willing to look into that, and we thank you for that. That would be a tremendous asset in expediting some of our health professionals on active duty.

The other thing would be the increase in bonuses for health professionals. Again we thank you for the funding. However, some of that funding doesn't necessarily filter down through each branch equally. There are different incentives in different programs. As we see it from the Air Force, we're now competing against our brothers and sisters in arms in a very competitive market for these health professionals.

What I would ask is that if we do some equal approval on bonuses for health professions, as I believe all branches are hurting in that field.

Chief Petty Officer Brummer: Sir, for the United States Navy I would say that we really appreciate the continuing support on the bonuses. It's allowed us as recruiters to focus on the needs of the Navy and be flexible on the different communities, such as medical and for the Navy SEAL and the GWOT ratings. Again, I thank you for that support and that's the continued support that every recruiter out there enjoys from some of these tough to fill ratings during this time of need.

Sergeant Webb: In my area of Charleston, West Virginia, sir, the education system seems to be failing. I don't know the way they're even teaching math. When I was on school we didn't have a calculator. The generation now, they get taught math with a calculator. I think one tool that would be helpful to all the branches is maybe allowing a calculator with this new millennium to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test.

I don't know -- if you just ask around the room, you'll probably find, what's your worst subject in school, a lot of the people in here are going to say math. I mean, they can't even carry the 1, if you will. So maybe if it was implemented that they could use a calculator on taking the ASVAB we'd probably see a spike in the mathematics section of the ASVAB.

The measurement -- the AFQT is the score, the entry level score, and that AFQT score comes from math knowledge, arithmetic reasoning, paragraph comprehension, and reading -- word knowledge, rather. I think the biggest problem is they can't pass the math because they're so used to using that calculator. So that would be the one thing I would like to change.

Senator Chambliss: That's a good point.

Well, you guys just know that we all do this, but I make it a particular point to visit with enlisted personnel whether I'm on a base in CONUS or overseas. Visiting with enlisted personnel over the last 13 years, I am so impressed with the quality of young men and women that you are recruiting in every branch. We thank you for the great job you're doing. We thank you for your commitment to freedom, and we thank you for your sacrifice that you're making on behalf of all Americans. And thanks for being here today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, Senator, and I want to add my appreciation to those remarks as well.

Obviously, the challenges are out there with an evolving military, with new commands, Cyber Command, new challenges that will have to be met with recruiting and retention. I hope that as you encounter those challenges and you see where we could be helpful, as you just suggested with lists and perhaps other areas

as well in the professional field, that you'll go through your command or directly, will make us aware, because we want to be a partner with you in this recruiting that you're doing and a partner with retention, which is also extremely important.

As you know, we end up with an awful lot invested in a soldier and we don't want that investment to end. If we can keep the recruitment of a family to begin with, a parent, the parents and their son or daughter, and then at the retention level it's another family -- now it's a husband-wife, wife-husband, children. So everything that we can do to make the military more attractive is not only in our best interest, it's the right thing to do for the men and women in an all-volunteer force.

So I thank you for what you continue to do and we want this partnership to continue, and that's extended, of course, to Admiral Kilkenny and to the generals as well.

So thank you very much. With that, Mr. Saxby, this hearing is ended.

[Whereupon, at 11:14 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]