

1 TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF MR. DANIEL P. DRISCOLL
2 TO BE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

3
4 Thursday, January 30, 2025

5
6 U.S. Senate
7 Committee on Armed Services
8 Washington, D.C.
9

10 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in
11 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger
12 Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

13 Committee Members Present: Senators Wicker, Fischer,
14 Ernst, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott, Tuberville, Budd, Schmitt,
15 Banks, Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Hirono, Kaine, Warren,
16 Peters, Duckworth, Rosen, and Slotkin.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM MISSISSIPPI

3 Chairman Wicker: The hearing will come to order. We
4 thank the witnesses for being here, and those in
5 attendance.

6 Certainly, all of us are concerned and saddened by the
7 tragedy which occurred near Reagan National Airport last
8 night, and I ask that the committee observe a moment of
9 silence before we begin the hearing.

10 [Pause.]

11 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much.

12 The Committee on Armed Services has convened this
13 hearing to consider the pending nomination of Mr. Dan
14 Driscoll to be the 26th Secretary of the Army. In support
15 of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Mr. Driscoll served our country
16 in Iraq, spending 4 years with the Army. So we thank him
17 and the entire Driscoll family: his wife, Dr. Cassie
18 Driscoll, and their two children, Daniel and Lila, who
19 could not be with us today, for their willingness to serve
20 this country again, by accepting this new assignment.

21 After his military service, Mr. Driscoll received his
22 law degree from Yale and has worked in private equity and
23 venture capital, all the while he has retained many ties to
24 his former service.

25 The Army faces a complex array of challenges.

1 Recruitment and retention improved last year, but the Army
2 still has more than 10,000 fewer recruits than it did in
3 2023. Since the beginning of the Biden administration, the
4 service is down 36,000 soldiers. On top of that, the Army
5 is not taking full advantage of opportunities to nurture
6 interest in military service. Almost 300 high schools sit
7 on a waiting list to get their own Army Junior Reserve
8 Officer Training Corps unit. These units mean more than
9 potential individual recruits. They represent communities
10 where the Department of Defense can put down roots,
11 developing the Army of leaders for tomorrow, as well as
12 excellent citizens for our entire society.

13 As the service catches up on recruitment, it must also
14 ensure that those who do enlist are equipped for the
15 mission. The nature of large-scale combat operations is
16 changing. The world sees this every week in Ukraine. To
17 be ready for potential combat in the Western Pacific, the
18 Army must expedite modernization efforts.

19 On top of recruitment and modernization projects, the
20 next Secretary of the Army must address the servicemember
21 quality of life issues that afflict this, the largest
22 service. In the fiscal year 2025 budget, the Army
23 increased funding for barracks maintenance problems, but
24 the effects of decades of neglect cannot be fixed
25 overnight. The Army has a facility backlog of more than

1 \$100 billion. I offered an amendment which passed the most
2 recent NDAA, requiring all of the services to adopt minimum
3 annual facility sustainment levels. My colleagues and I
4 need to see evidence that this change has been embraced
5 within the service.

6 I believe Mr. Driscoll's record, his Army service, his
7 legal background, and financial experience have prepared
8 him to handle the myriad responsibilities of Army
9 Secretary. If he is confirmed, Mr. Driscoll will face the
10 challenges I have already outlined.

11 He will be handed a budget that has not kept pace with
12 inflation. He will also take the helm at a time of
13 increasing danger around the world.

14 The Army is playing a largely quiet but crucial role
15 in the Western Pacific. It is deepening partnerships with
16 our allies and partners in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the
17 service is helping us maintain deterrence against the
18 Chinese Communist Party, and it ensures that our South
19 Korean allies are postured to prevent North Korean
20 aggression.

21 Soldiers from across the United States remain
22 stationed in Europe. Their presence helps deter Russia and
23 helps assure our NATO allies.

24 In the Middle East, the Army continues to play a lead
25 role in combating Iranian aggression.

1 Clearly, the Army's work has been instrumental in
2 these theaters. It must choose to remain relevant in
3 today's complex threat environment. The Army should
4 accelerate its transformation efforts and focus on new
5 portions of the defense industrial base. It should expand
6 its work on small unmanned aerial systems, or UAS, and
7 counter-UAS. And I say that even as I recognize and
8 appreciate the chief of staff of the Army's focus in this
9 area.

10 In the Western Pacific theater, the Army's
11 contribution to sensing and shooting remains in its
12 infancy. The service has the chance to realize its key
13 logistics role for the joint force in contested areas, but
14 it can do so with significant investment and focus.

15 So I look forward to this hearing on how Mr. Driscoll
16 will work to change the culture around the issues I have
17 listed, as well as other pressing matters.

18 And I now recognize my friend, the Ranking Member of
19 the committee, Senator Jack Reed for any opening remarks he
20 may offer.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
2 ISLAND

3 Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
4 very much. Before I begin I want to take a moment to
5 express my profound sorrow for those involved in the crash
6 at National Airport last evening. This is a tragedy beyond
7 words, and my thoughts are with the families both on board
8 both aircraft as well as the entire Army community. And I
9 am grateful to the hundreds of brave first responders who
10 worked throughout the night, and this committee will do
11 everything we can to assist. And I thank the chairman for
12 recognizing it with a moment of silence. Thank you, Mr.
13 Chairman.

14 Mr. Driscoll, welcome to this morning's hearing. We
15 were expecting to see Cassie and Daniel and Lila, but they
16 are working or otherwise occupied, but give them our
17 greeting, please.

18 Let me take this opportunity to also thank you for
19 your military service. Mr. Driscoll is a third-generation
20 soldier. He follows his father, who served in the infantry
21 during Vietnam, and his grandfather, who was a decoder
22 during World War II. The committee is grateful to your
23 family's military service and for your willingness to
24 continue serving your country.

25 Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed as the Secretary of the

1 Army you will oversee the manning, training, and equipping
2 functions of the United States Army. This is no small
3 task. The Army is in the midst of a generational
4 modernization effort, currently overhauling many of its
5 major weapon systems. Simultaneously, the Army is seeking
6 to transform the structure and organization of its brigade
7 combat teams, equipping them with cutting-edge technology
8 in order to be more mobile and lethal. The service is
9 experimenting with rapidly evolving technology such as
10 unmanned system, drone defenses, and communications
11 technologies, among other.

12 However, the Army continues to face a multiyear trend
13 of flat budgets, which has forced Army leaders to fund the
14 highest priority programs by reducing procurement of modern
15 capabilities. With a smaller and more continental base
16 force, maintaining readiness must be one of your top
17 priorities. The Army has continuous deployment
18 requirements around the globe, to include supporting
19 Ukraine against Russia's invasion, defending our interests
20 and allies in the Middle East, and maintaining a forward
21 presence in the Indo-Pacific.

22 I am concerned that the Administration's orders to
23 significantly increase military support to domestic law
24 enforcement, particularly on the southwest border, will
25 harm the Army's readiness. This is a role for DHS, and I

1 am a consistent supporter of a big increase in DHS budget
2 in the appropriations process as part of a bipartisan
3 border bill. That is the way to address the border. In my
4 personal engagements with commanders at all levels, they
5 have made clear that fully readying their formations
6 requires extensive time, training, and opportunities to
7 innovate, and border missions will not build these
8 warfighting skills.

9 Mr. Driscoll, I would like to know how would you plan
10 to ensure soldiers' time, training, and capabilities are
11 not spent on the border, rather than on readiness issues.

12 Of course, the Army's success also depends on its
13 soldiers and civilians. Recently the Army has been
14 challenged to meet recruiting goals. The Army has worked
15 hard to improve its recruiting activities, and it has
16 enjoyed success with new programs like the Future Soldier
17 Preparatory Course. But it should continue to improve
18 efforts to reach all who are willing and qualified to
19 serve.

20 Mr. Driscoll, in your advanced policy questions you
21 state your intention to, quote, "review the Army recruiting
22 strategy to ensure it effectively conveys a strong value
23 proposition to young people across the nation." In
24 addition to the Army's strategy, I am concerned that
25 comments from the Secretary of Defense about women in

1 combat and the President's executive order banning
2 transgender troops may have a chilling effect on
3 recruiting, and I am interested in your thoughts on this
4 issue.

5 During our meeting early this month we discussed the
6 importance of maintaining a professional and apolitical
7 Army. I am also concerned by reports that the
8 Administration may implement a so-called "warrior board" to
9 screen senior military officers for supposed unfitness to
10 lead. This raises the chilling possibility that the
11 Administration may fire officers who are deemed to have the
12 wrong political views or have served effectively in
13 military assignments that are disagreeable to President
14 Trump. In fact, we have already seen this happen with
15 Admiral Linda Fagan, who was unceremoniously fired from her
16 position as the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and I am
17 troubled that this firing was not based on her performance.

18 Furthermore, I am alarmed that this week Secretary
19 Hegseth stripped retired Army General Mark Milley, former
20 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and former Chief of Staff of
21 the Army, of the protective security detail that he had
22 because of credible security threats from Iran, and revoked
23 General Milley's security clearance. Secretary Hegseth has
24 also directed the Defense Department's acting inspector
25 general -- acting because the inspector general was fired

1 Monday -- to look into the facts and circumstances
2 surrounding General Milley's conduct, so the Secretary may
3 determine whether it is appropriate to reopen his military
4 grade review determination.

5 President Trump seems to be fulfilling his longtime
6 threat to fire military leaders as a political loyalty
7 test. I would point out, however, that our servicemembers
8 swear an oath to the Constitution rather than a party or a
9 leader. This is what makes our Army the finest in the
10 world.

11 Mr. Driscoll, I am interested in your view on military
12 officers' obligation to provide their best military advice,
13 even if that advice contradicts the views of a political
14 appointee. I would also like to hear your thoughts on how
15 military officers can be expected to provide their best
16 military advice if they are subject to loyalty screens or
17 purge boards and whether you think we are moving members to
18 military for the views or positions will have a chilling
19 effect within the military ranks.

20 Mr. Driscoll, you face complex challenges and will
21 require all of your skills. Thank you for your willingness
22 to continue your service and lead the Army at this very
23 critical time, and I look forward to your testimony.

24 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Reed.

1 Before Mr. Driscoll makes his opening remarks he will be
2 introduced by two of our distinguished colleagues, first
3 Senator Mullin and then Senator Blumenthal.

4 Senator Mullin, you are recognized.

5 Senator Mullin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will
6 say, you guys are much more intimidating from this side. I
7 do not think I have ever really been intimidated by you all
8 until I am looking at you now, so this is really scary.

9 Hey, I am so privileged and pleased to be able to
10 introduce my good friend, Dan Driscoll. You know, we got
11 to know each other, and it has been quite an honor, because
12 I will say, right off the bat, what you see is what you
13 get. I think everybody sitting up here has had the
14 opportunity to sit down personally with him, and his
15 personality, no matter what we were dealing with, no matter
16 what pressure was facing us, was the same personality you
17 received 24/7. I do not care if I was talking to him at 3
18 in the morning, 4 in the morning, 5 in the morning, or at
19 11:00 at night, which we did multiple times, he always this
20 same type of personality, which is exactly what we need in
21 our Army today.

22 We need consistency. We need a leader that our
23 warfighters and those that are supporting our warfighters
24 can rally behind. We need someone that brings positive
25 attention to the real challenges that the Army is facing.

1 And as has been pointed out by our Ranking Member Reed, he
2 is also the third generation in the family that has served,
3 proudly and honorably, in the Army, and currently has a
4 nephew that is stationed in Korea. He is heavily invested
5 in it.

6 So I want to go through and read what he has
7 accomplished, because it honestly makes me sometimes feel
8 intimidated by sitting beside him when you start thinking
9 about it.

10 First of all, he graduated in 3 years at UNC Chapel
11 Hill with the highest distinction. I am still trying to
12 figure out how to graduate from college. He used his 9/11
13 G.I. Bill to attend Yale Law School, worked at Yale's
14 Veteran Legal Service Clinic. He ran for the U.S. House of
15 Representatives in North Carolina's 11th District in 2020.

16 He lost, but I want to show that he was willing to serve,
17 and when that happened it just got him more involved in
18 public service.

19 He did not go away. He still stayed involved, which
20 sometimes defeat shows the biggest character. And that is
21 when we first started getting to know each other, and his
22 character shined true in that. He was not upset, he was
23 not bitter, and we all know individuals that have lost
24 elections that get very bitter. Instead, he dug down and
25 still wanted to know how he could be involved in public

1 service. It spoke highly of his character.

2 He worked at the 100watt investment firm, was chief
3 operating officer at a \$200 million venture capital fund, a
4 member of the North Carolina State Bar Rotary Club, VFW
5 Post 1137, and the IAVA.

6 Just to go through some of the stuff he did in the
7 military, basic service training at Fort Jackson, OCS
8 commissioned to U.S. Army as an armor officer, completed
9 Army Ranger School, stationed at Fort Drum New York with
10 the 10th Mountain Light Infantry Division as a Cavalry
11 Scout Platoon Leader, deployed in 2009 to Baghdad, Iraq, in
12 support of Operation Freedom, earned the rank of first
13 lieutenant.

14 Awards include the Army Accommodation Medal, Combat
15 Action Badge, Ranger Tab, National Defense Service Medal,
16 Iraq Campaign Medal and a Campaign Star, Global War on
17 Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and Overseas
18 Service Ribbon.

19 I think the things if you ask him that he is most
20 proud about is his wife and his two kids though. His
21 personal life is something that guides him each day, and I
22 know this personally because we have had deep conversations
23 about our family and about how we balance the work life and
24 how it can be done.

25 We have had conversations about how you center your

1 life and make sure your priorities are right because I
2 believe wholeheartedly if your priorities are straight with
3 God, family, and everything else, that everything else you
4 will be highly successful at. And this is why Dan has been
5 highly successful in everything that he has put his hands
6 upon.

7 For us to have someone like himself that is willing to
8 step away from his family for a short period of time,
9 because you all know the challenges that he is going to
10 face, to be willing to still serve when he does not have to
11 is exactly what we need. We need a selfless server that is
12 going to be willing to take on the task of the United
13 States Army. And as Secretary of Army, we have got a
14 winner here.

15 So I really hope that all my colleagues, that this
16 could possibly be a unanimous support of someone that is
17 exactly what the United States needs today. With that, I
18 will yield back.

19 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Mullin.

20 Senator Blumenthal, I do not know about you, but I did
21 not know until this morning that Senator Mullin could be
22 intimidated, so this is a revelation to us. You are now
23 recognized.

24 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and I join
25 Senator Mullin in observing how impressive this panel looks

1 from this vantage point. More impressive without us being
2 up there, I may say.

3 I want to join my colleagues in expressing my deep
4 heartbreak at the tragic loss on American Airlines Flight
5 5342 and the soldiers lost on PAT25. And my heart goes out
6 to the families, especially of the servicemen who were
7 lost. My heart breaks for their loved ones. And I want to
8 thank the first responders for swiftly delivering their
9 critical assistance at the scene.

10 And as we await further updates, I hope that we will
11 all pledge to redouble our efforts to ensure that the
12 Federal agencies that make the nation's skies safe, the
13 FAA, the NTSB, the DOT and others, have the tools, the
14 funding, the resources, support from the Congress to
15 prevent future tragedies like this one. We all fly in and
16 out of that airport, and I must say I often look out the
17 window, as perhaps you do, with planes taking off and
18 landing and wondering how this dangerous dance is done
19 safely day in and day out. But we have to invest in the
20 technology as well as the people to make it safe.

21 I have the great honor to introduce Dan Driscoll, and
22 I want to thank his family, his wife Cassie, son Daniel and
23 daughter Lila. We all know that families serve along with
24 public officials, especially in our military and Department
25 of Defense. I join the Chairman and the Ranking Member in

1 observing that the Army stands at a pivotal juncture.
2 Ongoing global conflicts and nascent threats demand that
3 the Army remains the strongest, best fighting land force in
4 the world, and that we assure that they never have a fair
5 fight, that they always have superiority in every space and
6 sphere.

7 This nomination comes at a time when leadership and
8 accountability in the Department of Defense require the
9 highest standards of integrity, judgment, and capability.
10 The next Secretary of the Army will be faced with training
11 and equipping that land force in a way that reflects our
12 nation's values and commitments.

13 Now, this introduction is personal for me. As many of
14 you know, Dan Driscoll was a classmate of the Vice
15 President at Yale Law School, also my alma mater. He came
16 to know, at Yale Law School, Jake Sullivan, who has just
17 finished serving as National Security Advisor for President
18 Biden, and Matt Blumenthal, my son, who is a United States
19 Marine Corps veteran of Afghanistan.

20 Once Dan's nomination became public, I quickly heard
21 from both Jake and Matt. Both shared stories of their
22 friendship with Dan and recounted his strong intellect, his
23 powerful work ethic, and his willingness to find solutions
24 to difficult problems based on the facts, whatever those
25 solutions might be. As a lawyer, we follow the facts and

1 the law, and that is what Dan Driscoll will do as Secretary
2 of the Army. And they assured me that he is a person
3 willing to listen, to learn, and to work in a bipartisan
4 way to put our soldiers first.

5 I am confident that his prior service in the Army will
6 serve him well, and he will remember that the Army's
7 strength comes not just from its technological prowess but
8 from the Americans who proudly wear the uniform he once
9 wore.

10 I spoke to Dan a number of times in the course of his
11 preparing for his appearance here today, and those
12 conversations convinced me that he is willing to work on
13 the basis of collegiality, be transparent and open with
14 this panel, with the Congress and our colleagues. And I
15 welcome this opportunity to introduce him perhaps as a sign
16 of not just the collegiality but the bipartisanship that
17 has characterized this committee so clearly and
18 consistently.

19 So I am proud to introduce him today, and I hope that
20 my colleagues will ask him tough questions, because he has
21 indicated to me that he is not only confident in his
22 ability to serve, but also in his ability to learn and do
23 it with an open mind and a willingness to listen to members
24 of this committee when we have views that he has to hear.

25 I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield the floor.

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal, and
2 to both Senator Blumenthal and Senator Mullin, I do not
3 want either of you to feel anxious. So if you would like
4 to return to your seats up here, you may do so.

5 Mr. Driscoll, you are now recognized for your opening
6 statement. We appreciate you being here.

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1 STATEMENT OF DANIEL P. DRISCOLL, TO BE SECRETARY OF
2 THE ARMY

3 Mr. Driscoll: Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed,
4 distinguished members of the Committee, good morning.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as
6 the nominee to serve as Secretary of the United States
7 Army. It is an honor to be considered for this role. To
8 Senator Mullin and Senator Blumenthal, I am sincerely
9 thankful for the introductions, and I am deeply grateful
10 for the trust and confidence placed in me by President
11 Trump.

12 Our thoughts and prayers go out to all involved in
13 last night's tragedy, which occurred a few miles away from
14 this hearing room. If confirmed, I commit to working with
15 this committee to ensure that this never happens again.

16 Returning to my prepared remarks, I would like to
17 begin by acknowledging my family who could not join me here
18 because of the rescheduled hearing, but I know are
19 watching. To my wife Cassie, who manages to keep us afloat
20 despite being an accomplished surgeon, and children, Daniel
21 and Lila, it is your unwavering support that has made my
22 service possible, and I will be forever grateful. I also
23 want to thank the men and women of the United States Army,
24 past and present, whose courage and dedication inspire all
25 of us every day.

1 My commitment to this role is rooted in my family's
2 long lineage of military service. My grandfather served in
3 the Army during World War II as a decoder. My father
4 served as an infantryman in Vietnam. I served as a cavalry
5 scout in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. And, in as
6 much as you can trust the plans of an 8-year-old, my son,
7 Daniel plans to join too.

8 We are a family that is grateful to have had the
9 privilege of wearing the uniform of the United States Army.
10 We are a family that understands the gravity of leading
11 soldiers in and out of combat. We are a family that has
12 chosen for generations to serve alongside our brothers and
13 sisters in arms.

14 I joined the Army as a middle-class public school kid
15 from the mountains of North Carolina. The values and
16 experiences I gained through military service molded me
17 into the man I am today, and they opened up ways for
18 opportunities I could scarcely have imagined when I
19 enlisted. In my experience, the transformative power of
20 military service is open to those who are willing and able
21 to shoulder the task.

22 During my time in the Army, I was fortunate to serve
23 and deploy to combat alongside soldiers who represent the
24 very best of America. The American soldier's
25 professionalism, ingenuity, and dedication are unmatched.

1 Whether in garrison at Fort Drum, New York, on the training
2 grounds of Yuma, Arizona, or on the battlefield in Baghdad,
3 Iraq, I saw firsthand the immense sacrifices they and their
4 families make to uphold the freedoms we hold dear. The
5 world is changing rapidly, and we must ensure the Army is
6 prepared to operate in new, complex, and contested
7 environments. From advancing our capabilities in multi-
8 domain operations to cutting-edge technologies, my sacred
9 duty to our Army is to ensure our soldiers have the world's
10 finest training, equipment, and leadership to accomplish
11 any mission, and to be as lethal a force as it can be.

12 If confirmed, I intend to be the soldiers' Secretary
13 of the Army. This is why I believe President Trump has
14 nominated me. America's soldiers and their families will
15 be my mission.

16 Lastly, I recognize the importance of working closely
17 with Congress, and in particular with this committee.
18 Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, and members of the
19 committee, it is the honor of my life to be given the
20 opportunity to earn your trust and continue my service to
21 our great nation. I look forward to responding to your
22 questions and discussing how we can work together to
23 support the soldiers, civilians, and families who make up
24 the United States Army. Thank you.

25 [The prepared statement of Mr. Driscoll follows:]

1 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Mr. Driscoll.
2 And before I begin my questions, there are a few routine
3 questions which we ask all civilian nominees that appear
4 before this committee, so if you would answer these
5 questions. Have you adhered to applicable laws and
6 regulations governing conflicts of interest?

7 Mr. Driscoll: Yes.

8 Chairman Wicker: Have you assumed any duties or taken
9 any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the
10 confirmation process?

11 Mr. Driscoll: No.

12 Chairman Wicker: Exercising our legislative and
13 oversight responsibilities makes it important that this
14 committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate
15 committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings,
16 reports, records and other information from the executive
17 branch on a timely basis. Do you agree, if confirmed, to
18 appear and testify before this committee when requested?

19 Mr. Driscoll: Yes.

20 Chairman Wicker: Do you agree to provide records,
21 documents and electronic communications in a timely manner
22 when requested by this committee, its subcommittees, or
23 other appropriate committees of Congress and to consult
24 with the requester regarding the basis for any good faith
25 delay or denial in providing such records?

1 Mr. Driscoll: Yes.

2 Chairman Wicker: Will you ensure that your staff
3 complies with deadlines established by this committee for
4 the production of reports, records and other information
5 including timely responding to hearing questions for the
6 record?

7 Mr. Driscoll: Yes.

8 Chairman Wicker: Will you cooperate in providing
9 witnesses and briefers and response to congressional
10 requests?

11 Mr. Driscoll: Yes.

12 Chairman Wicker: And will those witnesses and
13 briefers be protected from reprisal for their testimony or
14 briefings?

15 Mr. Driscoll: Yes.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very, very much. Let me
17 begin then my line of questioning by getting back to
18 something I mentioned in my opening statement, and that is
19 Junior ROTC. This committee is serious about building
20 Junior ROTC. It is a matter of scholarly study that Junior
21 ROTC, whether Army or the other branches, is a citizenship
22 builder. Students who volunteer for Junior ROTC, and they
23 only take volunteers, they have better attendance records,
24 they have higher graduation records, they attend post-
25 secondary education at a higher rate, and in general, they

1 are better students. And this is without question based on
2 peer-reviewed studies.

3 We have increased the minimum number of Junior ROTC
4 units by 200 in our legislation, yet there are today only
5 15 more units across the DoD than there were 2 years ago.

6 Now, as chairman of this committee, and I think I
7 speak for the committee, we intend for the statute to be
8 followed. And this is not a ceiling that we have created.
9 It is a floor. And we intend for the Department of Defense
10 and the Department of the Army to follow the statute as
11 passed by the House and Senate and signed by the President
12 of the United States. And so it troubles me that only 15
13 units across the country have actually been opened in spite
14 of our statute.

15 Meanwhile, there are 300 schools around the country
16 that are on a waiting list. If you ask a principal, any
17 principal in any state of the Union, would they like a
18 Junior ROTC, they say yes. If you ask the school board or
19 the superintendent, they say, "We would love to have a
20 Junior ROTC." This is a winner. The data are clear and a
21 RAND Corporation study supports this.

22 So Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, how would you plan to
23 improve the situation that I have described and to reduce
24 the Army Junior ROTC waiting list?

25 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I appreciate the question, and

1 thank you for taking the time in your office to dive into
2 this with me. This is actually a personal issue. My
3 nephew, who is now stationed in Korea, did JROTC in
4 Lexington, Virginia. It was one of the most powerful
5 experiences in his life, and I think that this is a topic
6 that requires focus from the top. And I commit, if
7 confirmed, to looking at this, working with the team,
8 because these are the kind of lineages and relationships
9 and chains that we can build into communities that can get
10 us not just one future soldier but get us generations of
11 soldiers. And so I would love to work with your office, if
12 confirmed.

13 Chairman Wicker: And even those who do not go into
14 military service are better citizens. So I appreciate
15 that. So how are we going to tackle the overall issue of
16 Army recruiting?

17 Mr. Driscoll: I think we have an incredible
18 opportunity this year, Senator. It is the 250th
19 anniversary of the Army. The Army has an incredible
20 history that can be told of the men and women that have
21 served and the amazing deeds they have done both in and out
22 of uniform. This year, we can take that momentum and build
23 a backlog and a pipeline of soldiers that can hopefully
24 fill up for the next couple of years. The Army has been
25 actually taking some reasonably good steps, it seems from

1 the outside. The Future Soldier Corps out of Fort Jackson
2 that has been helping with ASVAB prep and a lot of the
3 physical fitness prep seems to be working.

4 If confirmed, I would want to look and see if that can
5 be scaled even further. There are a lot of technology
6 tools that have been integrated into the recruiting
7 process. Some of them have had great benefits. Some of
8 them like digitizing young people's medical records have
9 had unintended consequences where now we are starting to
10 find all sorts of things we would not have been able to see
11 before. I think we need to take a deep dive on what are
12 those unintended consequences to some of the things we are
13 doing and try to create pathways and mechanisms for more
14 waivers or whatever it is to continue to strengthen the
15 Army's recruiting pipeline.

16 Chairman Wicker: I agree with that. Thank you very
17 much. Senator Reed, you are recognized.

18 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And
19 Mr. Driscoll, you bring integrity, intelligence, and the
20 experience as a young officer leading soldiers, which is
21 the greatest privilege an American can have, so thank you
22 for that.

23 In one of your advanced policy questions you said that
24 the current promotion system does not necessarily select
25 senior officers for their institutional knowledge or

1 strategic acumen, which are increasingly desirable. Could
2 you elaborate on that?

3 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I think contrasting my
4 experience in the military with my experience in the
5 private sector, the private sector does recruiting a little
6 bit differently where it is often the best woman or a man
7 for the job. Time in a specific role is less correlated
8 with promotion, and there are all sorts of things that
9 would be a larger mosaic of traits that you would look at.

10 I think the Army could take a similar view of promotion
11 and mechanize it.

12 Senator Reed: And so how would you describe the
13 current sort of metric for promotion in the Army? My
14 assumption is that it is principally based on performance
15 and merit.

16 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, my understanding is that is a
17 component of it with a heavy weighting toward time in
18 service or time in your role.

19 Senator Reed: Now, will you look at this promotion
20 system with the idea you are making appropriate changes?

21 Mr. Driscoll: Yes, Senator.

22 Senator Reed: Thank you. In the acquisition process
23 we have, as you suggest in your answers, barriers to doing
24 business from your perspective and particularly those in
25 the 1980s that were designed to ensure fair competition.

1 Could you generally describe these barriers and what you
2 think you can do to eliminate them?

3 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I think the first thing we
4 need to do is improve the Army as a customer. The current
5 model the Army uses to acquire things rewards entities that
6 are enormous. The big five primes are the case study in
7 who can currently survive such a hard relationship with a
8 customer. The Army's ability to project what it is going to
9 need in the future limits the ability for companies to
10 build up the infrastructure to provide that support and to
11 price things knowing how long the Army will remain in its
12 life. I think that a hard focus on improving the Army's
13 ability to project what it needs and empowering the defense
14 base to expand from, call it, 5 to 6 to 25 to 50 would be
15 powerful first steps.

16 Senator Reed: One of the issues that you will face is
17 the apparent increased deployments to the border for
18 immigration activities. Back in June of 2020, before the
19 Appropriations Committee, General Hokanson, who is the
20 previous commander of the National Guard, said, and I will
21 quote, "As I have expressed within the building as well,
22 there is no military training value for what we do. This
23 is a law enforcement mission under the Department of
24 Homeland Security." And he also emphasizes stress on
25 families of such missions.

1 So what is your assessment of the training value and
2 consequently the readiness status of the forces?

3 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I think border security is
4 national security. We have had soldiers at the border for
5 a number of years. I think the Army stands ready to
6 execute on any mission from the President of the United
7 States and Secretary of Defense up to and including helping
8 to secure our border.

9 Senator Reed: But is there a cost in terms of
10 readiness, readiness to conduct military operations against
11 a military opponent, not an immigrant?

12 Mr. Driscoll: I think the Army has a long 249-year
13 history, Senator, of balancing multiple objectives, and if
14 this is important to our commander in chief the Army will
15 execute on it.

16 Senator Reed: I guess the question would be how do
17 you account then for General Hokanson's observation after
18 serving as the Commander of the National Guard and looking
19 closely at many National Guard deployments?

20 Mr. Driscoll: I think, Senator, the burden borne by
21 our National Guard is something when I was in, when we
22 deployed, the stress on their families is incredible. They
23 were doing many deployments back to back. They have to
24 manage jobs outside of their military roles. I think it
25 adds a stress level that a lot of times is forgotten or

1 just set aside by leaders.

2 My commitment to this committee is, if confirmed, I
3 would want to, anytime we work with National Guard, make
4 sure we are considering and taking into account this stress
5 on their jobs back home and on their families.

6 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very, very much, Mr.
7 Driscoll and thank you for your family's service.

8 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator
9 Fischer.

10 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
11 welcome, Mr. Driscoll. It is good to see you. Thank you
12 for your service and really the sacrifice, service,
13 commitment of your family as well.

14 The last several years from the war in Ukraine and the
15 U.S. response to Iranian and Houthi attacks in the Middle
16 East, it really has demonstrated just how quickly munitions
17 are expended in modern conflicts. If confirmed, will you
18 commit to reviewing our current stockpile requirements for
19 Army munitions to ensure our stockpiles are right-sized for
20 modern conflicts, especially for potential conflicts that
21 would last more than a few weeks?

22 Mr. Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator, and this is a
23 topic that you and I have talked about. I think what we
24 have learned in Ukraine and with some of the other
25 conflicts is it is no longer sufficient to build up a

1 munition supply, put it on the shelf over 20 years, and
2 hope that we guessed the right amount that we or our allies
3 or our friends would need. We have got to have an
4 industrial base that is able to scale with us. I thank the
5 committee for this work on 155 munitions and getting it
6 going again, but we have to do more, and if confirmed, I
7 would want to work with this committee and your office,
8 Senator, to do a deep dive on this.

9 Senator Fischer: Since the Cold War, we have, I
10 think, seen this pattern of feast and famine. When there
11 is conflict, the first couple years we boost up production
12 and then we let it slide, and I do not believe we can
13 continue to have that kind of pattern there. You said you
14 would work with Congress, that you would work with the
15 committee on that.

16 Just what do you think, off the top of your head since
17 we had the discussion, what do you believe is a path
18 forward that you would suggest to this committee? And do
19 we have the necessary resources available to be able to
20 accomplish that currently, do you think?

21 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, to the resource question, I
22 would need to take a deeper dive once briefed, if
23 confirmed, to what we could do. I think the United States
24 has an incredible history of agile and innovative
25 manufacturing. It has decayed as a nation over the last

1 couple of decades, but it is still there. The American
2 people will be with us if we include them. I think if you
3 look at the private sector and the innovation loop, we do
4 have some case studies of being able to create things with
5 soldiers, having coders with them in the field, and
6 actually updating products and getting it back to the
7 manufacturing floor with a much tighter innovation loop. I
8 think we can do that working together and it could make an
9 incredible difference.

10 Senator Fischer: Do we have the authorities to be
11 able to accomplish that now, or do you think that you would
12 need more authority to be able to move us quickly forward?

13 Mr. Driscoll: I think we do have the authorities,
14 Senator.

15 Senator Fischer: Thank you. Mr. Driscoll, small
16 drones and the UAS, they are undoubtedly going to play a
17 key role in future conflicts, but where do you see
18 opportunities to expand the Army's use of those drones and
19 unmanned systems?

20 Mr. Driscoll: I think, Senator, and it was incredibly
21 great talking to you about this, it has changed how warfare
22 has fought. When I did armor school, the way we have
23 designed much of our equipment, our tanks in particular,
24 our tanks are built to receive fire from the front or
25 indirect fire from the top. They are not built to receive

1 it from the rear or the back corners. So there are soft
2 spots all over our tanks, which are some of our most
3 dependable fighting machines, that very cheap drones rigged
4 with very cheap explosives can exploit, and I think we saw
5 this with the Russian invasion in Ukraine, that a lot of
6 the way that we have thought about how to fight will have
7 to change because of drones, both large and small with
8 swarms. We can no longer shoot \$4 million missiles to take
9 down a \$400 drone. That just simple math does not add up.

10 We are going to have to find solutions, whether it is
11 directed energy or whatever it is, that can have a cost-
12 effective way to provide security.

13 Senator Fischer: You answered my second part of the
14 question on how we are going to make sure it is cost-
15 effective because right now it is not.

16 Okay, recruiting. We see tremendous challenges with
17 recruiting in the Army across all services. What is your
18 current assessment right now of the Army's recruiting
19 challenges, and how would you address them?

20 Mr. Driscoll: My sense is for the last 3 or 4 years,
21 we have missed our goals. I believe even the goals we hit
22 from the outside, it seems as if the Army lowered their
23 goals. The best analogy that I heard is the Army threw the
24 dart at the dartboard and then drew the bullseye around
25 where the dart landed. That is not a great way to staff an

1 army. We have the fewest number of active-duty soldiers
2 that we have had since World War II right now. Conflict is
3 erupting around the world.

4 I think there is a story to tell of the United States
5 Army that young people want to hear, and I think we have
6 complicated that story a bit over the last couple of years.
7 I actually do not think it is throwing more money at the
8 problem. I think it is nice to get things like the GI
9 Bill, I got to use the GI Bill but I did not enlist for
10 that. I enlisted because I wanted to go serve my country.

11 And I think young people stand by ready for us to tell
12 that story again in a compelling way. And if confirmed, I
13 look forward to working with you to tell that story.

14 Senator Fischer: Thank you. I look forward to
15 working with you.

16 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Fischer.
17 Senator Shaheen.

18 Senator Shaheen: Mr. Driscoll, congratulations on
19 your nomination. Thank you for your past service and for
20 the willingness of you and your family to continue to serve
21 this country.

22 I want to start by expressing my condolences, as the
23 chair and ranking member, on the loss of lives last night,
24 those members of the military who were lost as well as
25 everyone lost in that air tragedy.

1 And according to the Army's fiscal year 2024 accident
2 or mishap assessment that was just released this month,
3 2024 had the most Class A flight mishap rates per 100,000
4 hours since 2007. So what will your strategy be to try and
5 keep training flights out of harm's way?

6 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, to echo your remarks, it is an
7 absolute tragedy. I have seen the same thing I believe you
8 are on television. So it is an accident that seems to be
9 preventable from what we can tell today. That should not
10 happen. I think a focus from the top-down on a culture of
11 safety. There are appropriate times to take risk and there
12 are inappropriate times to take risk. I do not know the
13 details around this one. But after doing it, if confirmed,
14 and working with this committee to figure out the facts, I
15 think we might need to look at where is an appropriate time
16 to take training risk and it may not be near an airport
17 like Reagan.

18 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. As I am sure you
19 know, historically the Secretary of the Army has unique
20 homeland defense responsibilities and it is especially
21 critical in times of crises. So at the direction of the
22 Army Secretary, you could direct that the National Guard be
23 available to coordinate with civilian authorities on
24 airspace. Is this something that you will be willing to
25 consider and to work with civilian authorities?

1 Mr. Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator.

2 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. I want to follow up on
3 your conversation with Senator Fischer because, as you
4 know, most of the capabilities that we have provided to
5 Ukraine come from Army stock or Army programs, Abrams
6 tanks, anti-air and anti-armor weapons, long-range strike
7 and guided multiple rocket launchers. And the National
8 Security Supplemental that Congress passed last year is
9 providing real relief to the U.S. industrial base,
10 including in New Hampshire where we have a significant
11 defense industrial base.

12 If confirmed, will you ensure that Army stockpiles can
13 meet our national security requirements and will you
14 include in your budget and supplemental requests to
15 Congress enough funding to replenish the defense industrial
16 base?

17 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, as I told your colleague, I
18 think this is one of the great problems facing our time in
19 getting our munition and getting our magazines back up to
20 where they need to be. I think we need to use this moment
21 to figure out how do we create sustainable, scalable
22 solutions so that if in the future we need to tap back into
23 those stockpiles, how do we get them to scale even faster?

24

25 And so I commit to working with your office to both

1 get us to where we need to be to replace what we have used
2 in Ukraine, or to what we have had our friends using in
3 Ukraine, but then also to get lessons learned from that,
4 that we can record, so that we are ready to go if we need
5 to for a threat like China.

6 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. One of the things
7 we talked about when we met in my office was some of the
8 challenges, those exact challenges. One of the companies I
9 mentioned was L3 and their development of ENVG-Bs, the
10 night vision goggles that have been so important to the
11 Army. You talked about improving the Army's ability to
12 project what it needs over the long term. One of the
13 challenges that we have had with the ENVG-Bs is that the
14 Army budget requests have been up and down over the years.

15 They have not been consistent despite positive feedback
16 from our warfighters.

17 So how will we commit to dealing with that kind of
18 budget inconsistency and how will you address it? What
19 kinds of things, strategies are you thinking to address it?

20 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I think this is the perfect
21 kind of topic where, if confirmed, working with this
22 committee to find solutions for funding. This is a problem
23 that includes a lot of different parties, and I think a
24 level of transparency and inclusion and planning will be
25 helpful. As the Army does things like IVAS, it may be

1 expanding away from some of the previous technologies that
2 it used. I think we have to keep our eye on what has
3 worked in the past and keep a hybrid of maintaining and
4 refurbishing some of the old technologies to kind of smooth
5 out the transition to the new ones, and I look forward to
6 working with your office on these kinds of topics, if
7 confirmed.

8 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you very much. As you
9 point out, we are not going to be able to replenish the
10 stockpiles that we are losing if we do not have a strategy
11 for how to deal with this long-term and ensure that our
12 companies that are so critical to that replenishment are
13 engaged in that conversation.

14 So thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Chairman Wicker: Thank you for that excellent point,
16 Senator Shaheen. Senator Sullivan.

17 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
18 Driscoll, congratulations. I appreciated our meeting. I
19 look forward to supporting you, in spite of your Yale law
20 degree, which I think generally is disqualifying, but I
21 will overlook that this time.

22 Ten years ago I was in this position. I was a brand
23 new U.S. Senator, been here for a month, and the Obama
24 administration announced,, as part of its gutting of our
25 U.S. military, they were going to cut 40,000 active-duty

1 Army troops including the 425 at JBER in Alaska, the only
2 airborne brigade combat team in the entire Indo-Pacific,
3 strategic national security suicide in my view. And I was
4 a brand new Senator. I fought that with everything I had.

5 I put a hold on the Chief of Staff of the Army's
6 confirmation. I put a hold on the Secretary of the Army's
7 confirmation for several weeks until we got the Army to see
8 the light, okay? Obama ended up cutting 35,000 troops, and
9 he kept the 425 in Alaska, 5,000 airborne army troopers,
10 which became the cornerstone of the 11th Airborne Division,
11 as we built up the Army in Alaska.

12 Are you aware that the Army now has two active-duty
13 airborne divisions?

14 Mr. Driscoll: I am, Senator.

15 Senator Sullivan: The 82nd, which we all love, but
16 the 11th Airborne Division, which is in Alaska, the Arctic
17 Angels. Are you aware of that?

18 Mr. Driscoll: I am, Senator.

19 Senator Sullivan: Great. So imagine my surprise,
20 there have been some recent articles in the paper saying
21 certain leaders in policy roles in the Trump Pentagon have
22 passed ideas in the debate about shifting resources to the
23 Indo-Pacific, which I support, but passed ideas on how we
24 can do that.

25 One was a report, an idea from a report from 2021,

1 that would deactivate four striker brigade combat teams,
2 six infantry brigade combat teams, two National Guard
3 aviation brigades, more than 10 percent of the Army's
4 active-duty combat power. If this idea ever saw its head
5 in the Pentagon from a non-Senate-confirmed DAS, I need
6 your commitment to me and this committee right now that you
7 would kill it.

8 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I commit, if confirmed, to
9 fight as hard as I can for the Army. As I said to your
10 colleague, the Army is at its lowest staffing since World
11 War II.

12 Senator Sullivan: Right, and do you think cutting 12
13 brigade combat teams worth of combat power is a good idea?

14 Mr. Driscoll: Without knowing the specifics Senator,
15 no.

16 Senator Sullivan: Well, come on. Just I need your
17 answer to say no.

18 Mr. Driscoll: No.

19 Senator Sullivan: Do you think cutting 12 brigade
20 combats -- this is Obama 2.0, right? Do you think cutting
21 12 brigade combat teams from the Army would implement
22 President Trump and Secretary Hegseth's policies of peace
23 through strength?

24 Mr. Driscoll: No.

25 Senator Sullivan: No, it would not. Do you think it

1 would deter Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin if this idea, and
2 maybe this idea has been discarded by this DAS who is there
3 right now, cutting 12 brigade combat teams would help with
4 deterrence?

5 Mr. Driscoll: No.

6 Senator Sullivan: I do not think so either. Well,
7 thank you on that, because very disturbing when I read
8 that, and I am glad you agree with me that we are not doing
9 Obama 2.0. We are doing Reagan and Trump 2.0, peace
10 through strength, and ideas of gutting the Army's act of
11 duty force, that is what I fought when I came here. And if
12 there is anyone who is trying to do that, we will fight it.

13 I will fight it.

14 Okay, let me go to another question. In addition to
15 the 11th Airborne Division in Alaska, we have the 49th
16 Missile Defense Battalion at Fort Greeley. A lot of people
17 do not know this but the cornerstone of missile defense for
18 America is in Alaska, and it is led by the U.S. Army. The
19 President put out his Iron Dome Executive Order recently
20 for layered missile defense. I fully support that.

21 Will you work with me and this committee, Senator
22 Cramer, we are going to be introducing legislation to
23 bolster what the President's trying to do, but a lot of it
24 will involve the Army. A lot of people do not know that.
25 The 49th Missile Defense Battalion at Fort Greeley, they

1 like to call themselves the 300 protecting the 300 million,
2 because they protect the whole country. Will you commit to
3 working with this committee and me on bolstering our
4 missile defenses, particularly as it relates to Fort
5 Greeley and our brave soldiers who are doing a great job
6 defending our nation, and come to Alaska with me to see
7 them in the 11th Airborne Division?

8 Mr. Driscoll: It would be an honor, Senator. As we
9 talked about in your office, I was stationed with 10th
10 Mountain Division in Fort Drum, New York.

11 Senator Sullivan: Where there are no mountains.

12 Mr. Driscoll: When you get there you assume 10th
13 Mountain Division would have mountains around and I think
14 the highest elevation on the entire base is 50 feet. So I
15 would be honored, Senator.

16 Chairman Wicker: Great, thank you. Thank you, Mr.
17 Driscoll.

18 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator
19 Warren.

20 Senator Warren: Thank you Mr. Chairman.
21 Congratulations on your nomination, Mr. Driscoll.

22 So what I would like to do is continue the
23 conversation that we started in my office. The Army buys a
24 lot of stuff, from tanks to helicopters. They buy a lot of
25 stuff from big defense contractors. But those giant

1 companies often sneak restrictions into the contracts.
2 They hog up the software rights or the technical data all
3 to prevent servicemembers from being able to repair their
4 own equipment.

5 So today I would like to talk through an example so we
6 can see the difference it makes when the Army is not
7 hamstrung by right-to-repair restrictions. Last year the
8 Army needed a new cover for a safety clip, but the
9 contractor told the Army they could not have it for months
10 and the safety clips would cost \$20 a pop. Now thankfully,
11 the Army had managed to keep right-to-repair restrictions
12 out of this contract and was able to 3D print the part in
13 less than an hour for a total cost of 16 cents.

14 Now, Mr. Driscoll, does being able to get the parts we
15 need in hours, maybe minutes instead of months, and for
16 nickels instead of dollars, help U.S. readiness and
17 national security?

18 Mr. Driscoll: Unequivocally, Senator.

19 Senator Warren: Good. When right-to-repair
20 restrictions are in place, it is bigger profits for giant
21 defense contractors, but also higher prices for DoD and
22 longer wait times for servicemembers who need to get their
23 equipment repaired so they are ready to go. Chairman
24 Wicker has an Acquisition Reform Agenda which calls for a
25 complete review of data rights across the Department of

1 Defense. I think that is exactly right because it would
2 help put the Army fully in command of the equipment that it
3 has paid so much for.

4 So Mr. Driscoll, let me ask you, if confirmed, will
5 you work with this committee to identify more opportunities
6 where the Army can save money and time by making their own
7 parts and fixing their own equipment?

8 Mr. Driscoll: If confirmed, unequivocally, Senator.

9 Senator Warren: Would you like to expand on that at
10 all?

11 Mr. Driscoll: This type of innovation that is
12 happening in the private sector at scale in a lot of ways
13 seems to have not trickled into the Army as much. And if
14 we think about engagement with a peer like China, being
15 able to repair our parts in areas around the world will be
16 crucial to that. And if we are having 6-month delays in
17 CONUS and paying 100x the rate, that is not scalable in an
18 actual conflict. And so I am totally supportive, Senator.

19 Senator Warren: Good.

20 Chairman Wicker: That was a very good answer, Mr.
21 Driscoll.

22 Senator Warren: It was an excellent answer. Thank
23 you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Right-to-repair restrictions have truly gotten out of
25 control and they threaten our national security. In some

1 cases, the Army cannot even write its own training manual
2 without a sign-off from the contractor. My Service Member
3 Right-to-Repair Act would help fix this problem.

4 But a root cause of this defense contractor
5 profiteering is the revolving door between senior Pentagon
6 officials and big defense contractors. Last year I
7 released a report that found 700 instances of top-20 DoD
8 contractors hiring former high-ranking officials. Do you
9 think this is a problem, Mr. Driscoll?

10 Mr. Driscoll: I do, Senator.

11 Senator Warren: When government officials cash in on
12 their public service by lobbying, advising, or serving as
13 board members and executives for the companies that they
14 used to regulate, it undermines public officials' integrity
15 and it casts doubt on the fairness of government
16 contracting, and it costs DoD a lot of money. We owe it to
17 our taxpayers and we owe it to our men and women in uniform
18 to fix this broken system. I look forward to working with
19 you on this, Mr. Driscoll.

20 Mr. Driscoll: Thank you, Senator.

21 Senator Warren: Thank you, I yield back.

22 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator
23 Cramer.

24 Senator Cramer: Thank you, Chairman, and Senator
25 Reed, and thank you Mr. Driscoll for your service and your

1 willingness to step in the gap again in this important
2 position.

3 I am going to, first of all, thanks for all your
4 answers to the previous questions, particularly on
5 acquisition reform. It is a high priority for the
6 chairman. It is a high priority for all of us. And quite
7 honestly, I worry less about witnesses' answers to
8 questions and promises that come from people at the
9 Pentagon than I do the culture. To me, that is the big
10 thing that all the policies in the world, in fact, I
11 appreciated you answering earlier to the question that I
12 think it was Senator Fischer asked when you said you have
13 some of the authorities already that you need. We just
14 have to go faster. And the Army does it quite well by the
15 way. But just know that I am on the encouragement side.
16 Go faster, as I have said from this roster many, many times
17 to witnesses.

18 If people go faster and innovate more and encourage
19 innovation, particularly from smaller companies, I promise
20 not to be the person that sits up here and says, "I got
21 you," when something bad happens, but I promise you I will
22 be your worst nightmare if you fail to go fast because you
23 are worried about your backside and some DoD lawyer or
24 leader that does not have the guts to do what needs to be
25 done to keep up with the pace of China. Having said all

1 that, great answers.

2 So I am going to go a whole different direction and
3 talk to you about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A
4 number of us, including the Chairman, Senator Sullivan, and
5 at least the three of us and maybe a couple of others up
6 here, are also on the Environment and Public Works
7 Committee so we have jurisdiction over the Corps of
8 Engineers in two committees. In the last Congress, in the
9 Water Resources Development Act, WRDA, that was signed into
10 law December of 2022, I authored some bipartisan language
11 with Senator Merkley requiring the Army Corps to establish
12 the Western Water Cooperative Committee. Now, the Corps
13 hates advisory committees, but this was a committee of
14 Western states, at the encouragement of Western states,
15 every governor from Washington State to California to the
16 Dakotas and in between supported it, and every attorney
17 general, in other words a pretty diverse group of leaders
18 in this country, supported this Western Water Cooperative
19 Committee. And it was to be implemented no later than 90
20 days after enactment.

21 So here we are more than 2 years later, after it has
22 been authorized and fully funded, it still has not been
23 stood up. Now, that is not your fault. But Senator
24 Merkley and I sent the Corps a letter in October of last
25 year asking for an update. After a whole bunch of back and

1 forth leading up to this hearing, I finally got a little
2 bit of clarity the other day on the process -- process, by
3 the way, is a word I am growing to hate; process is what
4 DoD officials use to kill good people and good ideas. Just
5 my opinion. Thanks for listening. But I finally have a
6 bit of clarity on the process and what the Army's working
7 through.

8 So yesterday I was told that the committee's charter
9 currently sits before the DoD's Advisory Committee
10 Management Office, really, and will be approved within 30
11 days. It is a law. It has been approved by the only
12 people that matter, the people in Congress and the
13 President of the United States. So 30 days to approve
14 something that they are required to do by law seems a
15 little outrageous to me, but I am going to be generous
16 today.

17 After that, quote, "30 days," which we will see -- I
18 will believe it when I see it -- it goes back to the Army
19 for action, okay? Now that does not give me a lot of
20 solace because I have history. Again, it is a law. It has
21 been a law for over 2 years.

22 Now I know you are not in your role yet, Mr. Driscoll,
23 and I did not plan on using my time on this topic
24 necessarily, but my colleagues have done a great job on the
25 priorities of the day. Can I get your commitment that it

1 does not have to take 30 days to get something going that
2 is been the law for over 2 years, that DoD officials, who
3 do not like this idea, have just tried to kill by stalling?
4 Do I have your commitment to get to it and get it done in
5 quick order?

6 Mr. Driscoll: Unequivocally, Senator. And just to
7 highlight, I hope it is illustrative and I would hold
8 myself accountable to this next statement, having two of
9 your colleagues here from each side, I intend to, if
10 confirmed, work with this committee and follow the law.
11 And so I would absolutely commit to looking into that.

12 Senator Cramer: Thank you. I yield.

13 Chairman Wicker: Senator Cramer, thank you for your
14 question, which is well taken and applies to the issue that
15 I rose about the increased floor of junior ROTC units, for
16 which there are 300 applications and only 15 have been
17 created in response to a statute passed by the Congress and
18 signed by the President of the United States.

19 Senator Kaine, you are next.

20 Senator Kaine: 1:05:11 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank
21 you, Mr. Driscoll. Congratulations on your nomination.

22 Thanks to all my colleagues who offered thoughts about
23 the crash, the three soldiers from Belvoir, we do not have
24 their identities yet, but that is something I know the Army
25 family feels and this region feels, all my colleagues do

1 actually, because all my colleagues have staffers who work
2 in this area and we are all kind of awaiting with dread the
3 manifest and the passenger list of those who died.

4 Here is a topic that this committee has really
5 grappled with, and I will say that none of us are happy
6 with it in a bipartisan basis, and that is the efforts of
7 our DoD to figure out strategies to counter UAS incursions
8 into our bases. A well-publicized one occurred at the
9 Langley base in Hampton, Virginia, but there have been
10 other sightings, New Jersey and other bases have been
11 subject to these. Langley as an example, the incursions
12 occurred over a period of 17 days in December of 2023, and
13 we are 14 months later and we still have not been given
14 good answers about what, in fact, happened. And I think we
15 are really frustrated by this because if it was just a one-
16 day thing, well maybe you could not track it, could not
17 figure it out, but if it happened for 17 days and we still
18 do not have answers, that is problematic.

19 And the reason I raised this with you, Mr. Driscoll,
20 is that the Army has been tasked with being the DoD's
21 executive agent on this topic. All the stakeholders are at
22 the table, but the Army is tasked with being the lead in
23 countering small UASs. The Army is charged with leading
24 and directing relevant doctrine requirements, materiel
25 training standards and capabilities to establish joint

1 solutions, not just Army solutions, but joint solutions for
2 addressing current and future emerging small UAS threats.

3 Should you be confirmed, what will you do to ensure
4 coordination between the services in developing a joint
5 counter small UAS doctrine?

6 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I think these drone incursions
7 highlight kind of a core problem with how we have thought
8 of our nation's defense. We have not thought about it in a
9 while. And I got to speak with your colleague kind of in-
10 depth about this specific incursion and it seems to be the
11 buck falls between a lot of different agencies and no one
12 is empowered to act quickly. And that is at scale even
13 when it continues to show up day after day, night after
14 night.

15 And I think a lot of the first steps are building a
16 network of communication and identifying an SOP for how do
17 you engage with these things? Who owns what? Who is
18 calling and what is an acceptable timeframe for this kind
19 of communication to occur? That would just be the people
20 side of the thing.

21 And then from a technology side, I think if you look
22 at a lot of the tools like directed energy, we need to
23 empower our agencies to protect our homeland from these
24 types of incursions so that we can shoot them down and
25 learn from specifically who sent it, what was it doing,

1 what was it collecting? My understanding of this situation
2 in particular is we just do not know, and that is not good
3 enough for the American people.

4 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Driscoll. I know that
5 Senator Fischer asked you some questions about recruiting
6 when I was at another hearing, but I want to come back to
7 it. I am on the Health, Education, Labor, Pension
8 Committee too so workforce issues, you know, economy-wide
9 in the military, in the civilian space are very important
10 to me.

11 What innovative approaches have you either seen in the
12 Army or do you foresee trying so that we can have the size
13 of the force that we need to defend this country?

14 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, from what I have heard of the
15 Future Soldier Program out of Fort Jackson, which is
16 actually where I did basic training, it is working really
17 well. It is helping future soldiers prep for the ASVAB,
18 which, in and of itself, might have some complications of
19 how valuable is a test when you are prepping everybody for
20 it.

21 But the fitness side of things is obviously helping.
22 Those soldiers are doing really well in basic training.
23 Those are the types of solutions that I think are going
24 well.

25 If you look at things like waivers, I had mentioned to

1 your colleague, I think we need to relook at the waiver
2 process. Currently, the physicians in charge of giving
3 waivers, their incentive structure, as I understand it, is
4 they are punished when somebody they waive does not make it
5 to basic training, but there is no feedback loop to reward
6 them for somebody that needed a waiver, that got through
7 basic training. So I think we need to start to look at
8 things like that, which could have some pretty meaningful
9 impacts on the pipeline.

10 Senator Kaine: Finally, one last question. At his
11 confirmation hearing before us 8 years ago, Former SECDEF
12 General Mattis noted, and I quote, "If you don't fund the
13 State Department fully then I need to buy more ammunition."
14 He was talking about the fact that you needed a whole-of-
15 government approach to promote national security. Do you
16 agree with that sentiment?

17 Mr. Driscoll: Unequivocally.

18 Senator Kaine: That is why I am really, really
19 troubled by the Trump order pausing all foreign assistance.
20 I think when an order goes out pausing foreign assistance
21 to other nations, except for arms transfers to Israel and
22 Egypt, China and our adversaries hear that and then they
23 rub their hands together, because they are not pausing.
24 And they look at us pausing as an opening for them to build
25 deeper and deeper ties into the hearts and minds of nations

1 that should be our allies. I am glad you agree with what
2 General Mattis said, and I hope we might move forward in
3 budgets and in policy to express that as a bipartisan
4 priority. Thank you very much.

5 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Kaine. Senator
6 Kaine, do you recall which member of the committee asked
7 that question of General Mattis?

8 Senator Kaine: I am going to guess it was the Senator
9 from Mississippi.

10 Chairman Wicker: You are absolutely correct. You got
11 it right the first time. Senator Tuberville.

12 Senator Tuberville: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks
13 for being here. Thanks for your service.

14 I want to echo the thoughts about what happened last
15 night here in our home territory. It is devastating. It
16 just so happens to coincide a little bit, not that it has
17 anything to do with this, but Fort Novosel in my state of
18 Alabama, you know, we train all the vertical lift Army
19 pilots, as you well know.

20 And my first question for several weeks has been, I
21 want to get your thoughts on what you think about the new
22 curriculum for flight school that the Army has proposed.
23 This affects all the pilots in the Army. And I want to get
24 your commitment to continue an open dialogue about the
25 Army's intent on how best to leverage existing resources.

1 You know, we are cutting back on sorties. We are not
2 putting the money in training like we used to, that we need
3 to do. We are undertrained in some areas.

4 So I would like to get your thoughts on the curriculum
5 and your thoughts about the future of vertical lift,
6 especially with the new vertical lift that the Army is
7 purchasing for the future fights that we might have.

8 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, to your comment on what
9 occurred last night, I think we are all collectively going
10 to have to take a deep dive --

11 Senator Tuberville: Oh yeah.

12 Mr. Driscoll: -- and figure out what occurred there.

13 The early indicators, from what I have seen on television
14 -- I have no other access to information -- is that it
15 might have been a training exercise gone wrong, that had
16 catastrophic outcomes. So we are going to have to work
17 together to make sure that never occurs again, or at least
18 to mitigate the odds that it could ever occur again.

19 And then specifically to future vertical flight, if
20 you look at the contested airspace with our peer, China,
21 and what we will have to do, our vertical assets are going
22 to have to be able to get further and faster with lower
23 signature than they do today. That being said, if you look
24 at FARA, the push for the Army, it is early in its
25 development, it is incredibly expensive, and we are likely

1 going to have to work with the Blackhawks and the Chinooks
2 and the assets that we have today.

3 And so, if confirmed, I would want to get briefed on
4 this and do a deep dive with the team to figure out how are
5 we going to position ourselves and what training do we need
6 for the next one day to five years until we can get to a
7 better state.

8 Senator Tuberville: Thank you. I want to discuss an
9 issue that affects many of our installations, including
10 mine in Huntsville Redstone Arsenal. The issue is military
11 construction, MILCON, as we know it. We need to move fast
12 and the traditional military construction process is far
13 too slow. Back at Redstone Arsenal, there are two
14 warehouses as we speak that are being constructed, one for
15 military by the Corps of Engineers and one by the FBI.
16 These warehouses are roughly the same size, regarding to
17 the size, but the FBI has got a huge amount of bells and
18 whistles, more than the military warehouse.

19 The military warehouse is going to cost almost \$56
20 million and it is going to take 48 months, 4 years, to
21 build this, where the FBI facility is going to cost \$40
22 million and take only basically a year and a half. We have
23 got a problem. How on the earth does this make any sense?

24
25 The Army is currently running a repair-by-replacement

1 pilot program that is being tested at a couple of
2 installations to demolish older barracks and replace them
3 with new modern facilities. The key part of this program
4 is that it is using operations and maintenance dollars
5 versus traditional MILCON dollars. Are you familiar with
6 this?

7 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I had the opportunity to talk
8 with you about it in your office. This is the type of
9 thing that makes my blood boil on behalf of soldiers. The
10 Army has a limited budget to begin with. We have to be
11 good stewards of the American taxpayers' dollars, and when
12 we are not, it is both the taxpayer and the soldier, and
13 these soldiers are my friends. It is my friends that live
14 in these barracks and raise their families there, and we
15 need to stretch these dollars as far as we can.

16 Senator Tuberville: Yeah. And the other small point
17 I want to bring up, we talked about recruiting, I will not
18 get into that. The new recruit in the Army makes \$25,000 a
19 year before taxes. We just gave a raise, but we cannot
20 expect to attract the best and the brightest young men and
21 women in the military unless we do something else, we got
22 to continue. I know we give them a lot of perks at the end
23 of the day, but we have got to understand \$25,000, I mean,
24 most of them can make that in a two months' time in some
25 kind of big tech or whatever. So just keep that in mind as

1 you get into recruiting. We have got to start taking care
2 of these young men and women if we are going to build the
3 fighting force that we need. Thank you.

4 Mr. Driscoll: Yes, Senator.

5 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Tuberville.
6 Senator Slotkin.

7 Senator Slotkin: Sorry, apologies. I am not used to
8 going anything but last, Chairman, so shocked me. Thank
9 you for being here and congratulations on your nomination,
10 as I said when we met.

11 And I was glad to hear so many people talking about
12 the collision that happened last night, you will have an
13 important role in that investigation, if confirmed. And it
14 does sound like it is a training mission, but it is just
15 important that we lead a thorough process. people across
16 the country are mourning watching that, and everyone on
17 this panel here flies in and out of there. I mean, it is
18 hard not to think about it, so thank you for your attention
19 to that.

20 I think the thing we talked about in my office is I am
21 a Democrat who won on the same ballot as Donald Trump. I
22 absolutely understand that Donald Trump has the right to
23 nominate his own people, put forward his own policies. I
24 have seen that now in many transitions, Democrat and
25 Republican. But the thing that I keep coming back to is

1 the core constitutional responsibility. You will swear an
2 oath to the Constitution, not to any one President. Many
3 of us have worked alongside or in the military for a long
4 time and care deeply about it remaining apolitical. And we
5 are seeing now active-duty military Army being sent to the
6 border, being sent on missions right now to support DHS,
7 but according to our Constitution, the U.S. military active
8 duty cannot perform law enforcement roles.

9 When you were trained in the military, were you
10 trained on basic law enforcement techniques?

11 Mr. Driscoll: I was not, Senator.

12 Senator Slotkin: And can we agree that searching a
13 building in Iraq or Afghanistan when you are in a combat
14 zone as an Army officer is fundamentally different than
15 performing those kinds of search and activities inside the
16 United States with American citizens?

17 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, this is not meant to be
18 evasive. I have never been trained on it, and so I could
19 not answer what would be different about it from my
20 training.

21 Senator Slotkin: Yeah, I think the issue is not just
22 the Constitution, although that should be enough. I am
23 deeply concerned that active-duty troops are going to be
24 forced into law enforcement roles, and we are already
25 hearing stories that really, really touch right on the

1 line. They are not properly trained. There is going to be
2 an incident. Someone is going to get hurt. There is going
3 to be some sort of blow-up, and suddenly we are going to
4 have a community deeply, deeply angry at uniformed military
5 who were just told to go and drive those DHS vehicles,
6 clear that building, perform support to something.

7 So I have to ask you again that if the U.S. was asked,
8 active duty, was asked to do something that contravenes the
9 Constitution, can you say clearly that you will push back
10 on anyone, whether it is the Secretary of Defense or the
11 commander in chief, and stand up on behalf of the Army
12 instead of just doing whatever you are told?

13 Mr. Driscoll: Just to answer the beginning part of
14 the question, Senator, I reject the premise that the
15 President or Secretary of Defense would ask for an order
16 like that.

17 Senator Slotkin: Fine.

18 Mr. Driscoll: But I will always follow the law.

19 Senator Slotkin: Okay. I mean, your predecessor,
20 Secretary of the Army, Secretary Esper, had this exact
21 thing that he wrote about in his book. The 82nd Airborne,
22 Army, was asked to come in and clean up peaceful protests
23 in Washington D.C. So I reject your rejection that this is
24 theoretical, that this is hypothetical. It is not. And a
25 nominee and confirmed Secretary under Trump, I know they

1 have removed his portrait, but I just have to say this is
2 not a hypothetical. So we are counting on you to protect
3 the integrity of a non-political military that is not
4 trained in law enforcement roles.

5 Next, do you support revoking the pension that comes
6 with anyone who is honorably discharged from the Army?

7 Mr. Driscoll: It is hard to deal on a hypothetical,
8 Senator.

9 Senator Slotkin: It is not hypothetical. There is
10 now focus on Mark Milley, the former Chairman of the Joint
11 Chiefs. And I know there is lots of controversy around
12 Mark Milley, but you cannot debate that he served many more
13 years than anyone on this panel. Can you tell me that you
14 support the seemingly political reprisal of removing
15 someone's pension when they have already been honorably
16 discharged?

17 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, without knowing the specific
18 details, I do support the President's right to execute law
19 for order.

20 Senator Slotkin: Because you see the pattern this
21 starts. So then another administration comes in and
22 suddenly people who supported Donald Trump are having their
23 pensions removed. You can see how this politicizes the
24 institution that should be apolitical. And for the January
25 6th guys and all these folks, there was not a question

1 about their pensions, and I have deep concerns about it. I
2 know my time is up and I yield back.

3 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Senator Ernst,
4 you are next.

5 Senator Ernst: Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman, and I
6 will also add my condolences to the families who lost loved
7 ones near DCA last night.

8 Good morning, Mr. Driscoll, and thank you for your
9 testimony today and for being with us, and I appreciate the
10 time you took to meet with me in my office and just dive
11 into everything Army. Very important to me obviously, my
12 time in service, my family's time in service, and your time
13 in service, so thank you.

14 Once confirmed, you will be facing a challenging path
15 ahead, and you have already talked a little bit about
16 recruiting. I will add some thoughts to that. We also have
17 to build upon the current modernization efforts, and of
18 course we have very complex geopolitical landscapes out
19 there.

20 So I am going to start with recruitment and I just
21 want to give you some of my thoughts on this. Recruiting
22 remains a really critical issue for the armed forces. Army
23 is on track to meet its recruiting goals for the second
24 consecutive year. That is an encouraging sign. We have to
25 maintain the momentum.

1 But a key concern that is been brought to my attention
2 is ensuring our recruiters have meaningful access to
3 schools, to be able to get into high schools and talk to
4 young men and women. I plan to introduce my SERVE Act to
5 enhance military recruiters' access to schools and mandate
6 regular visits to improve information sharing with the
7 students and their administrators, and I would love to work
8 with you on this particular issue, once confirmed.

9 And additionally, the military has faced challenges
10 reaching potential recruits via social media, and we have
11 seen a recent flurry of activities when it comes to Meta
12 and regarding reports that U.S. Army posts were being
13 shadow-banned or removed for alleged violations. I did
14 send a letter to Meta about this last month.

15 So Mr. Driscoll, given the challenges, do you commit
16 to working with us on these recruiting challenges, on
17 making sure that we are able to spread our good message to
18 young men and women?

19 Mr. Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator, it would be an
20 honor, if confirmed.

21 Senator Ernst: Thank you. So very briefly, I am also
22 the chair of the DOGE caucus in the United States Senate,
23 and Iowans sent me here to make them squeal. And I have
24 made it my mission to find ways to identify waste, fraud,
25 eliminate it, get more efficient, more accountable to our

1 taxpayers. The Department of Defense, and, of course, our
2 great Army should not be exempt from this effort.

3 So Mr. Driscoll, can I count on your commitment to
4 collaborate on strategies for reducing waste in the Army?

5 Mr. Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator. And as I told
6 your colleague earlier, the dollars are limited, as they
7 should be, and we are beholden to this committee and the
8 Congress for how to use those dollars. But then once the
9 dollars come to us, it is our responsibility to use them as
10 effectively as we possibly can, and it would be an honor to
11 work with you on that, if confirmed.

12 Senator Ernst: Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Driscoll.
13 Another one of my top priorities remains addressing
14 traumatic brain injuries, or TBI, within our services, and
15 last year I successfully passed comprehensive TBI
16 legislation, and I intend to build on that progress in the
17 upcoming NDAA cycle. So can I get your commitment to
18 collaborate with the Defense Health Agency Army, SOF, and
19 acquisition personnel to prioritize TBI initiatives and
20 further enhance our Army's immediate and long-term health
21 and safety?

22 Mr. Driscoll: This issue, Senator, is deeply
23 personal. When we were deployed, we had mortars and IEDs,
24 and you never know how that impacts a soldier, but I know
25 when we got back, a lot of our guys struggled with a lot of

1 issues. And so I would be honored to do anything I possibly
2 can to lend a hand here. So if confirmed, absolutely, yes.

3 Senator Ernst: Excellent. No, I appreciate that.
4 Thank you. And I think both of us have had many friends
5 that have been impacted by TBI. It is very, very important
6 to them and their families.

7 Force structure, as well. I have limited time, but I
8 do chair the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and
9 Capabilities, and I prioritize the Special Operations
10 Community and the critical enablers that they provide. In
11 recent years, the Army implemented force reductions within
12 SOF. Despite these cuts, SOCOM has testified last year
13 that the demand for special operations forces remain high.

14 So Mr. Driscoll, will I get your commitment to work
15 with me to make sure that we are addressing these cuts and
16 how we can continue to provide for our special operations
17 community so that they may further support our conventional
18 forces?

19 Mr. Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator. Our special
20 operators are force multipliers. If you look at the
21 threats ahead, we have a pacing threat in China, but that
22 certainly does not mean that other threats would not take
23 advantage of us being in engagement with China. And
24 special forces are incredibly well suited to both lend a
25 hand in that fight, and also, with all of our innovation,

1 they are innovation laboratories that can test things more
2 quickly, they can learn and get their procurement lessons
3 and actual lessons learned to the larger force. So I am
4 incredibly supportive, Senator.

5 Senator Ernst: Well, thank you, Mr. Driscoll. And
6 Mr. Chair, I was going to ask him to sing the Army song,
7 but I will submit that for the record.

8 Chairman Wicker: Your time is expired, regrettably,
9 Senator, but thank you for your questions. Senator
10 Gillibrand,

11 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.
12 I know you served your active duty tour with the Army at
13 Fort Drum. Climb to glory. A little over a year ago, Fort
14 Drum was selected to host the Army's second multi-domain
15 task force. If confirmed, your tenure as Secretary will
16 align with the Army's target for the full MDTF
17 implementation by fiscal year '28. What challenges do you
18 see in this timeline, and do you believe the split
19 structure of the second MDTF between Germany and Fort Drum
20 is sustainable? And can the structure be leveraged in other
21 theaters such as the Pacific?

22 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I have not been specifically
23 briefed on that unit and its bifurcation of location, but
24 the multidomain rollout across the Army is the future of
25 warfare. If you think of things like cyber and space, how

1 war has been fought up until this point will no longer look
2 the same. Those issues require networked abilities that in
3 near real time or real time allow for a communication
4 across a lot of assets and sensing tools and human beings.

5 And so I look forward to both learning more, working with
6 your office and specifically returning to Fort Drum, if
7 confirmed.

8 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. A recurring challenge
9 that you and I talked about in our meeting for the military
10 has been the recruitment and retention of skilled cyber
11 operators, both military and civilian. As of November, the
12 military reported about 28,000 unfilled military and
13 civilian cyber roles. To help address this, I created the
14 Cyber Service Academy Scholarship Program and secured
15 language in the most recent NDAA to study the advisability
16 of a cyber military service. Army Cyber is the largest of
17 our cyber service components, placing a significant portion
18 of this burden on you. How will you approach the cyber
19 personnel challenge, and how do you see things like the
20 Cyber Service Academy supporting your efforts?

21 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, very sincerely, thank you for
22 your work on this. We are going to have to figure out and
23 work together to create unique pathways for the cyber
24 experts among us to be the most lethal cyber person or
25 soldier. That pathway may look very different from going

1 to ranger school and ending up in ranger battalion. And we
2 need to work with the feeders and the pipelines in the
3 civilian sector to empower those candidates who want to
4 join the Army, those future soldiers, to come in, and I
5 think pathways, like what you were describing, are
6 incredibly valuable.

7 Senator Gillibrand: You will need a capable and
8 qualified principal cyber advisor, but that role has been
9 vacant for nearly 6 months. Will you commit to me to
10 quickly fill that role if you are confirmed?

11 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, that would be, if confirmed,
12 one of the roles I would be most excited to fill. I do not
13 know what has led to the delay in filling it, so I cannot
14 speak to that, but I can commit to very early on trying to
15 prioritize that because, as stated earlier, with the way
16 that multidomain is going and our wars are going to be
17 fought in the future, that will be a critical role.

18 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. One of the issues
19 that this committee has spent at least a decade working on
20 is the scourge of sexual assault in the military. We put
21 in place bipartisan reforms that had the support of 65
22 Senators. It was overwhelmingly supported. And the
23 reforms are geared towards more transparency, more
24 accountability, more training, and having the decision-
25 maker of whether a crime has been committed be given to a

1 trained military prosecutor who is not in the chain of
2 command, who arguably has more precise and applicable
3 training to reach better decisions.

4 Are you aware of these reforms and do you commit to me
5 that you will do everything to make sure these reforms are
6 fully implemented so that our military can be a functioning
7 place for everyone to work and that certain people are not
8 unfortunately disregarded or devalued because of the system
9 in place?

10 Mr. Driscoll: Very sincerely, Senator, I thank you
11 and your colleagues for the work on this. I mentioned in
12 my opening statement that my 8-year-old son is planning to
13 join the Army. It is hard to know if my 6-year-old
14 daughter wants to join. My wife and I have been nudging
15 her that way, as much as you can nudge a 6-year-old. I
16 want her to join an Army that the sky is the limit, the
17 standards of excellence are hard, but she is able to
18 achieve them, she faces absolutely zero instances of sexual
19 harassment during her time in. And it would be an absolute
20 honor, Senator, to work with you in this committee to, from
21 the top, ensure we are both rolling out the law and setting
22 a culture where that is not tolerated in any way.

23 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. With my last 20
24 seconds, you mentioned in the questions you gave to the
25 committee that you wanted to appoint a high-level position

1 dedicated to ensuring a focus on ending sexual assault in
2 the military. Do you have any thoughts about what your
3 thinking is there or what you would do for that position?

4 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I would want to work with you
5 in your office and with your colleague, Senator Ernst. I
6 know you have done a deep dive on this. I want to commit
7 publicly to commit the resources, the time, the energy, and
8 the focus to scorching it from the United States Army, and
9 I think that that could be a powerful first step.

10 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Driscoll. Thank
11 you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.
13 Senator Scott.

14 Senator Scott: Good morning, Mr. Driscoll.
15 Congratulations on your nomination, and thanks for your
16 willingness to do this. I think I told you my father was
17 one of 3,000 people who did all four combat jumps with the
18 82nd Airborne in the Second World War. He was crazy.
19 After that, he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. My whole
20 childhood he told me the Germans were horrible, the food
21 was horrible, and the foxholes was horrible, so after high
22 school I joined the Navy, which, the food was not bad, but
23 no Germans, no foxholes.

24 So first, tell me what is your experience in the Army,
25 and thank you for your service as calvary scout platoon

1 leader. What lessons did you learn that is going to make
2 you a better Secretary of the Army?

3 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, Secretary Hegseth mentioned it
4 in his hearing that the dust on the boots model, I had not
5 thought of that in a long time, but the experiences of
6 being able to think through when a decision from the top
7 comes down, how does it actually impact the soldier. I can
8 think back to our COP outside Baghdad, Iraq, that had 40 of
9 us, and we had these amazing vehicles, which I think
10 probably this committee had a lot of help in getting these
11 MRAPs out. When our soldiers first deployed, the bottom of
12 these Humvees was thin and it basically perfectly absorbed
13 a blast. And so these MRAPs were created, which saved a
14 lot of lives. But one of the problems with the MRAPs is
15 they were very heavy, very tall, and very prone to roll
16 over.

17 And so I can remember for the entire 9 or 10 months we
18 were at the COP, every couple of weeks you would send a
19 soldier out there, they would start up the MRAP, turn it on
20 and run the engine for a couple of minutes and then turn it
21 back off, and then the process would repeat itself. And it
22 was not for any sort of malintention, and the actions by
23 those creating it were for good purposes, which is
24 fundamentally the MRAP did not work in a lot of areas in
25 Iraq because it is muddy, dusty roads that just cannot

1 support a lot of weight.

2 And so I think those types of experiences of saying
3 this may be the right answer some of the time, but what is
4 it actually going to look like for the actual soldier on
5 the ground where we need this? I think that that will be a
6 very impactful, or I hope if confirmed, that will be a very
7 impactful vision.

8 Senator Scott: So I became governor of Florida in
9 January 2011. I had no earthly idea that the Army Corps of
10 Engineers was going to control every bit of development in
11 my state. You could not do anything at their ports, you
12 could not do anything in our rivers, there was so much the
13 Army Corps of Engineers controlled. And my experience is
14 it is just an absolute black hole. They are wonderful
15 people, but you could never get an answer -- never get an
16 answer about their timeline, never get an answer about why
17 they make the decisions. It was just an absolute black
18 hole. And it has been consistent for my 8 years as governor
19 and my 6 years up here.

20 So I do not know if you have spent any time with the
21 Army Corps of Engineers, wonderful people, but for anybody
22 that wants to get anything accomplished in their state, it
23 is just a pain in the royal butt. Have you thought about
24 what you would do to change that?

25 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, one of the amazing parts of

1 the Army is that it does touch so many different parts of
2 both our countrymen's lives and the lives of those abroad.

3 When I talked to your colleague, Senator Warren, one of
4 the things we had talked about is, is it possible to do
5 something like an NPS score, which is a net promoter score.
6 It is pretty common in business. If you went to a Chick-
7 fil-A, you might get a questionnaire afterwards, zero to
8 10, how likely would you be to refer this to a friend? And
9 if we could start to do those in our communities where our
10 bases are, either abroad or in our communities locally, I
11 think what we would start to find is there are some low-
12 hanging areas that when our soldiers are touching those in
13 our civilian population, there are probably ways that we
14 can just be more responsive.

15 And so I would love, if confirmed, to work with this
16 committee to try to figure out what low-hanging fruit
17 exists to make the Army a better co-inhabitant of the world
18 and our country.

19 Senator Scott: In your private life, have you had to
20 recruit employees? Have you recruited people to work with
21 you, try to find how to work with people?

22 Mr. Driscoll: I have, Senator.

23 Senator Scott: So why do you think the Army has such
24 a horrible experience trying to recruit people?

25 Mr. Driscoll: I think that from my experience as a

1 third-generation soldier, what my grandfather would say he
2 joined for, and we all joined during times of war. I think
3 if you asked us, it would have been, we would have said the
4 reason we joined is we did not want to miss the opportunity
5 to serve our country when it needed us. And I think that
6 very specific story is what a lot of soldiers, women and
7 men, would say is the reason that they joined.

8 I think we have oftentimes lost focus on that and
9 started to focus on things like the benefits, which are all
10 important and they are very valuable reasons to join, but I
11 think for many of America's youth, it is the purpose of
12 getting to serve this amazing nation. And so, if
13 confirmed, I would love to work with this committee to
14 clarify that story and tell it more broadly.

15 Senator Scott. Thanks. You will do a great job.

16 Mr. Driscoll: Thank you, Senator.

17 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Driscoll. You have
18 made that point repeatedly during this hearing, and I think
19 it is got quite a bit of validity. Senator Rosen.

20 Senator Rosen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking
21 Member Reed, for holding this hearing. Mr. Driscoll, I
22 would like to thank you for your service, your willingness
23 to serve again, and for being here with us today.

24 I will take a moment of privilege, like the rest of my
25 colleagues and all Americans, today our heart is broken by

1 the events at DCA last night, and I just want to offer my
2 deepest condolences to the families, to the fellow
3 soldiers, to all of those who were lost. And I want to
4 thank our first responders for their immediate action,
5 running to the scene in the dark of night, in the iciest of
6 waters, to try to save lives. Thank you.

7 Now I am going to turn to my home state of Nevada and
8 talk a little bit about Hawthorne Army Depot. So Mr.
9 Driscoll, Nevada's Hawthorne Army Depot is the world's
10 largest ammunition depot and demilitarization facility,
11 depot stores and demilitarized munitions and ensures that
12 munitions readiness for all of DoD.

13 Despite its size and crucial role that Hawthorne
14 plays, again, the only one in the country, it is in need of
15 continued infrastructure upgrades. Investing more in our
16 munitions depots has only become more important in light of
17 our need to ramp up munitions productions, both to arm
18 Ukraine against Russian aggression and backfill our own
19 stockpiles for just a few examples.

20 So in recent years, Army's posture hearings, the
21 Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army made commitments
22 to me to consider new investments in Hawthorne, and I am
23 happy that the Army is doing so.

24 So Mr. Driscoll, if confirmed, can I have your
25 commitment to include Hawthorne in Army's future years

1 defense planning or unfunded priority list so that Congress
2 can fund these crucial and critical investments to ensure
3 our munitions' readiness?

4 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, our munitions readiness, as I
5 was referencing to your colleagues, is absolutely one of
6 the primary challenges facing us as a nation, as we face
7 the threat of a peer like China. I absolutely commit to,
8 if confirmed, taking a deep dive and look at this topic --

9 Senator Rosen: I invite you to come to Hawthorne and
10 see what they are doing there. How is that?

11 Mr. Driscoll: It would be an honor, ma'am.

12 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I want to move now to
13 women in combat because prior to women being able to serve
14 in combat arms, cultural support teams, largely from the
15 Army Reserve, embedded with special operations forces in
16 Iraq and Afghanistan to engage with female populations.
17 They fill critical gaps, significantly expanding operation
18 and intelligence collection capabilities.

19 However, in so many cases, their military records do
20 not reflect that they served in combat despite accompanying
21 SOF on raids and sustaining injuries, some even dying.
22 This is because their reserve units who oversaw them
23 administratively were not there to document their service
24 in combat. So in some instances, these women have no
25 record of ever having left the base despite having done so

1 as a job requirement.

2 As a result, they have all struggled to prove to the
3 VA that their injuries are service-related, they are
4 combat-connected, and since women have only been able to
5 serve in combat arms in the last decade.

6 So, if confirmed, will you commit to performing a
7 review of these combat veterans, these women who embed
8 overseas, to help us collect this important cultural
9 intelligence Army records? We must have them be accurate.

10 These women come home and they are denied their disability
11 claims because the lack of documentation. They really need
12 to receive the care and the benefits, their families as
13 well, and the recognition that they deserve. And it is the
14 least that we owe to our women in uniform.

15 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, we have a sacred duty to care
16 for our soldiers, and from my experience deploying, some of
17 the most competent, heroic people I deployed with were
18 women. They served incredibly important jobs, with bomb-
19 sniffing dogs, searching out IEDs. They were right beside
20 us every step of the way. And so I absolutely commit to
21 working with your office to make sure that that population
22 is not forgotten and gets the care and respect that they
23 deserve.

24 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I am proud to serve with
25 some women who showed their valor in times of need as well.

1 I just have another moment, so we will submit this for
2 the record, but it is about cyber workforce development.
3 It has been touched on here, the fiscal year 2024 NDAA, and
4 did include my bipartisan legislation authorizing the Army
5 to create a Civilian Cybersecurity Reserve to provide
6 CYBERCOM with qualified civilian personnel for surge
7 capacity in times of need, to ensure the U.S. government
8 has the cyber talent needed to respond to malicious
9 activities, secure DoD's information and systems. We are
10 trying so many ways to really build up that force.

11 I will take the answer off the record, but I would
12 like to speak with you about the implementation of the
13 Civilian Cyber Reserve Corps and have your commitment to
14 see this through as we know cyberattacks are on the rise.

15 Mr. Driscoll: If confirmed, it would be an honor to
16 speak about that, Senator.

17 Senator Rosen: Thank you.

18 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Rosen. Senator
19 Banks.

20 Senator Banks: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
21 Driscoll, welcome and congratulations on your important
22 nomination. You bring a unique background in business and
23 private equity, and one of the biggest things that we have
24 to accomplish in this moment is innovation at the Pentagon.

25 I wonder if you could talk about your background and how

1 that uniquely helps you help us create better innovation in
2 our national security.

3 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, after attending law school on
4 the GI Bill, I was fortunate enough to spend time as a CEO
5 at a venture capital firm where, for a couple of years, I
6 got to spend time working with and learning and seeing how
7 some of our country's most amazing innovators are building
8 their businesses. And some of the lessons that they have
9 learned in the private space over the last 10 to 20 years I
10 think are ripe for transferal to the United States Army.
11 Creating a feedback loop and a learning loop that gets
12 lessons learned from the actual soldiers in the field back
13 into the manufacturers or the software developers occurs in
14 the private space frequently, and I think it is a little
15 bit less frequent in the Army.

16 There are examples of this, I think, working
17 wonderfully in the Army, like the IVAS system as I
18 understand it. It is kind of a shining beacon of effective
19 development. And so what I am hoping to do, if confirmed,
20 Senator, is work with this committee and the Army's
21 existing leaders to figure out where can we tighten the
22 innovation loop and get the learnings from the field, and
23 the learnings from our friends in places like Ukraine. I
24 mean, that battlefield is ripe with lessons around drones
25 and cyber and how can we get those lessons into our

1 procurement processes and on the manufacturing floor as
2 quickly as possible.

3 Senator Banks: Part of working in venture capital and
4 when it comes to innovation is thinking outside of the box,
5 and we have a major crisis in the military right now,
6 especially with the United States Army, with a historic
7 recruitment crisis. I know you have already covered this,
8 but give us more specific ideas that we can use new
9 technologies and innovation to recruit the best and
10 brightest of the next generation to serve our country.

11 Mr. Driscoll: I think if you look, Senator, there are
12 a lot of tools used by some of our larger corporations in
13 the country to recruit at scale but give a very
14 individualized and personalized experience. What I have
15 heard with the recruiting processes, they are looking at
16 all sorts of different ways of creating a specialty where a
17 recruiter, if you are an incredible recruiter, perhaps that
18 can be how you serve your country for your entire time in
19 uniform. Things like that, that mimic the expertise that
20 can be developed in the private sector, applying those best
21 lessons and processes to the Army I think will continue to
22 unlock what has seemed to be, no doubt, a lot because of
23 the work of this committee, forward momentum in recruiting
24 in the Army right now.

25 Senator Banks: Secretary Hegseth has talked at length

1 about restoring the meritocracy to our military, and I
2 happen to believe that the recruitment crisis faced in the
3 military today has a lot to do with taking merit out of the
4 military. Young men and women say, why would I join the
5 military if it is no longer the great meritocracy that it
6 used to be? So I think restoring that would be important
7 to the Army.

8 And on that note, last year the Army argued that
9 affirmative action at our service academies was, quote,
10 "critical to mission success and national security." And
11 when I asked Secretary of the Army Wormuth last year in the
12 House Armed Services Committee, where I previously served,
13 whether the Supreme Court harmed national security when it
14 banned affirmative action at schools with ROTC programs,
15 she admitted she was, quote, "a little puzzled" why
16 affirmative action at West Point was not also banned.

17 Mr. Driscoll, do racial admission preferences at
18 service academies like West Point help our national
19 security?

20 Mr. Driscoll: I do not believe so.

21 Senator Banks: And you would support efforts, as
22 Secretary Hegseth has talked about as well, to end
23 affirmative action at our service academies, especially at
24 West Point?

25 Mr. Driscoll: I think one of the most amazing parts

1 of my time in service is the Army, in my experience, was an
2 incredible meritocracy. I cannot remember a single time
3 being in where anyone thought that this system was against
4 them. And when I have told our kids, Daniel and Lila,
5 about what we hope that they will do after high school, I
6 have told my daughter it would be the proudest day of my
7 life, and I do not think she understands the nuance of what
8 I am saying, to pin a ranger tab on her if she can complete
9 ranger school, with the incredibly difficult standards
10 being the exact same as when I went through.

11 And so I think that those standards and excellence
12 that the Secretary of Defense has talked about are
13 important. It is what makes our Army great. It is what
14 has made our Army the greatest land fighting force in the
15 last 249 years on the Planet Earth, and I hope that we are
16 able to hold those standards going forward.

17 Senator Banks: You bring a lot to the table. I am
18 excited to work with you to make the Army as strong as it
19 can possibly be, fix the recruitment crisis, and modernize
20 the Army for the future. Thank you for agreeing to serve
21 our country. You have my full support.

22 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much, Senator Banks.
23 Mr. Driscoll, I have said that the United States military
24 is the greatest civil rights organization in the history of
25 the world. What do you think about that?

1 Mr. Driscoll: My experience, Senator, is the exact
2 same.

3 Chairman Wicker: Yes. Having served in the Air
4 Force, that has been my experience and so I do appreciate
5 that. Senator Peters.

6 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
7 Driscoll, congratulations on your nomination to serve as
8 the Secretary of the Army, and I want to thank you for your
9 service to our nation as well as thank you for the time
10 that we spent in my office earlier. We addressed a number
11 of concerns and I think we had a very fruitful discussion,
12 so I appreciate that.

13 As you know, senior officials and combatant commands
14 have testified before this committee on the severe threat
15 that is posed by PRC-sponsored cyber actors. The threat is
16 evidenced by the Salt Typhoon, the recent infiltration of
17 U.S. telecommunication companies that left civilians,
18 servicemembers, and installations vulnerable to these
19 attacks. The attack is part of a broader pattern of PRC
20 cyber aggression targeting U.S. infrastructure across the
21 country.

22 The U.S. Army plays a critical role in deterring these
23 threats through defensive cyber operations, through
24 intelligence, integration with U.S. Cyber Command, as well,
25 to protect us.

1 So my question for you, sir, is do you agree with the
2 Army's current cyber strategy?

3 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I think the cyber threat to
4 this country -- I was actually beside one of our elected
5 officials when we found out our phones were hacked, and I
6 was reflecting with them that all that we do to protect our
7 information and keep it classified, if things like our
8 Verizon cell phone network are going to be compromised, we
9 have to think through a lot of the ways that we have
10 designed our information protection systems.

11 I think cyber with the changes occurring with quantum
12 computing, the changes with generative AI, these are
13 fundamentally going to alter how soldiers fight wars, how
14 information is exchanged on the battlefield, how we
15 prepare, and then the kind of gray zone activities that our
16 peers like China are able to do through cyber are scary.

17 I have not received a formal brief, but my
18 understanding is that the Army actually is taking steps in
19 the right direction. I look forward to learning more and
20 working with your office, as I know this is close to your
21 heart, to make the Army as effective as I can both on
22 offense and defense in cyber.

23 Senator Peters: So specifically about the strategy
24 because certainly we are in total agreement with the
25 statement that you made. But as far as the strategy that

1 the Army is using now, what is your assessment and would
2 you change anything to support operations with what you
3 know of the strategy now?

4 Mr. Driscoll: My understanding now, Senator, is that
5 our offensive capabilities are perhaps not where they
6 should be, and I think our adversaries are being much more
7 aggressive with us than we are with them. And I would want
8 to take a deep look at that.

9 Senator Peters: The intelligence systems play a
10 pivotal role in informing commanders' decisions, and the
11 adoption of AI is changing that dramatically. Question to
12 you is about the AI implementation strategy that the Army
13 currently has. Do you have any changes or do you believe
14 the Army is adequately evaluating this threat and adapting
15 accordingly?

16 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, my understanding of how AI
17 implementation is occurring is that it is siloed right now.
18 I think that this is the type of work that should occur
19 across the different services. Our lessons learned for the
20 Army will apply to the Air Force and apply the Navy. And
21 so I think we need to be focusing on this AI threat,
22 because the speed and the pace of the growth here is
23 unbelievable. I do not know if you read the article about
24 the Chinese startup that basically was able to, I think it
25 was between 4 and \$10 million, 1/10000th of the cost, or

1 1/1000th of the cost of what some of our American companies
2 were able to develop, 6 months trailing. The pacing and
3 the timeline on this, is not going to allow us to be slow,
4 and so we are going to need to be at the front curve of it.

5 Senator Peters: So that leads the question that how
6 do we stay at that front curve, because you are right,
7 things are changing dramatically. Traditionally in the
8 Army or any of the services, innovation has not moved as
9 quickly as it has in the civilian side, and civilian side
10 innovations are only accelerating, including our
11 adversaries, as you mentioned.

12 So how would you engage with small businesses and
13 other innovators to shake up the procurement process and
14 make sure we are on the forefront of AI development, for
15 example?

16 Mr. Driscoll: I am optimistic, Senator. I think from
17 what I have seen since being the President's nominee we
18 have had a lot of interest from Silicon Valley and other
19 places in the country for innovators at small companies,
20 medium companies, and some of the big ones that want to get
21 in the game on behalf of our country. I think having very
22 deliberate conversations with them about how do we get into
23 their R&D pipeline, how do we partner with them early on,
24 so as they are training these models, the Army as I
25 understand it today is getting access to these models once

1 they go public. China and our other threats are also
2 getting access to those models. There is no reason that,
3 from my understanding, we could not be getting access
4 earlier, and so instead of having a 6-month lead, perhaps
5 there are ways we could have a 9- or 12-month lead on these
6 things.

7 And so I think those conversations could be important
8 and I would look forward to working with your office to
9 have them.

10 Senator Peters: Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
11 Chairman.

12 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator
13 Duckworth.

14 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, like
15 everyone else, am praying for all the family members and
16 thinking about the crew of the Black Hawk and all the
17 people that we lost last night. I would like to caution
18 that before we start calling it a training accident that we
19 have better idea of what exactly happened because a
20 training accident has very specific definitions, so please
21 be careful about that. It tends to then start to blame the
22 pilots and frankly, our military pilots are some of the
23 best trained in the world.

24 Earlier this week the Trump administration imposed a
25 funding freeze on all Federal grants and loans. Even

1 though the OMB memo was rescinded yesterday, the freeze has
2 not been rescinded. Mr. Driscoll, what is your position on
3 the legality of that funding freeze?

4 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, before answering your
5 question, I very sincerely, last night I was sitting
6 watching what occurred on TV with a friend from 10th
7 Mountain who was the downed chopper, one of the platoons
8 that had to deal with that in Afghanistan, and watching
9 this struggle and heartbreak as he had to relive those
10 moments. We actually reflected in the moment. I want to
11 take a quick moment to say, very sincerely, thank you for
12 your service. I know it is an immense sacrifice. Soldier
13 to soldier, I am sorry for what you had go through.

14 To your question, the legality of -- would you mind
15 repeating it?

16 Senator Duckworth: Was the order from President
17 Trump, his current order to pause all grant funding, legal?

18 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I have not been able to take a
19 good deep enough look to know whether it was legal or not,
20 but I would not believe that the President would issue an
21 illegal order.

22 Senator Duckworth: You do not believe that the
23 President of the United States can issue an illegal order?

24 Mr. Driscoll: I do not believe President Trump would
25 do that, Senator.

1 Senator Duckworth: Okay. That leads me to my next
2 question. If President Trump directed you to do something
3 illegal, would you refuse to obey?

4 Mr. Driscoll: I reject the premise of the question,
5 Senator, that he would, but I would only follow lawful
6 orders.

7 Senator Duckworth: And constitutional ones?

8 Mr. Driscoll: And constitutional ones.

9 Senator Duckworth: Okay. If confirmed, will you
10 commit to disbursing all obligated grant funding from the
11 Department of the Army on time and without delay?

12 Mr. Driscoll: I would follow all lawful requirements
13 of my job if confirmed, Senator.

14 Senator Duckworth: Okay. I would like to follow up on
15 our meeting last week. To be candid, you performed very
16 poorly in your conversation with me. I asked you, for
17 example, how many personnel are in a division and you told
18 35,000. You just recently, when I came, were answering my
19 colleague from Alaska's questions about brigade combat
20 teams. How many personnel are in an average brigade combat
21 team?

22 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I imagine the purpose of this
23 question is to get to my qualifications as a leader.

24 Senator Duckworth: No, no. I want you to answer the
25 question.

1 Mr. Driscoll: Senator --

2 Senator Duckworth: What is the -- d o you not know?

3 If you do not know, that is okay.

4 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I assume --

5 Senator Duckworth: Answer my question. How many
6 personnel in a -- because you have performed very well
7 today and I have been impressed because it looks like you
8 actually did some homework. But you spoke with conviction
9 about the number of brigade combat teams that the Army
10 needs to be effective. Can you tell me how many soldiers
11 are in a brigade combat team on average?

12 Mr. Driscoll: 3,500.

13 Senator Duckworth: Great. Thank you. See, I would
14 have been so much easier, but I know you are filibustering.
15 I get it. What is FM 3-0?

16 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I believe all of these
17 questions are going to be --

18 Senator Duckworth: What is FM 3-0?

19 Mr. Driscoll: I actually was reading it last night,
20 Senator.

21 Senator Duckworth: Excellent.

22 Mr. Driscoll: It is the Army's Training Manual.

23 Senator Duckworth: Operations.

24 Mr. Driscoll: Operations Manual.

25 Senator Duckworth: Fantastic. I am glad you are

1 doing your homework. See, this is working because you are
2 doing your homework, which you did not do because you could
3 not name a country in Africa where we have troops, when I
4 asked you.

5 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I believe --

6 Senator Duckworth: What are your views on force
7 posture generally and the components and elements of force
8 posture as well as your understanding of the Army's current
9 force posture?

10 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I believe that the President
11 of the United States chose me specifically because of my
12 experience set that your colleagues --

13 Senator Duckworth: You are not answering. Does that
14 mean that you do not have an opinion on the Army's current
15 force posture? It is my job to advise and consent on the
16 nominees that the President puts forward. Just because a
17 President puts forward a nominee does not mean that person
18 is automatically qualified to do the job.

19 My question to you is, sir, as someone who will become
20 Secretary of Army, if confirmed, what is your current
21 opinion of the Army's force posture and can you describe
22 the elements of that force posture?

23 Mr. Driscoll: Absolutely. Senator, and to your Africa
24 comment, West Africa and Horn of Africa. I did study after
25 you asked me that question, so I am grateful for the

1 question.

2 Senator Duckworth: Answer my question on force
3 posture.

4 Mr. Driscoll: We need to be prepared, Senator, for a
5 threat from China, a peer that we have not --

6 Senator Duckworth: I am not asking you about near-
7 peer threats. I am asking you about the force posture.

8 Mr. Driscoll: We need our forces postured all over
9 the world to respond --

10 Senator Duckworth: What are the components of the
11 force posture?

12 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I believe that the question --

13 Senator Duckworth: The answer is military
14 disposition, strength, and condition and readiness of the
15 military. It is in FM 3-0 Operations which you were
16 reading last night. Can you outline for me the key
17 capabilities that the Army is supposed to provide the
18 combatant command?

19 Chairman Wicker: Senator, you can ask that question
20 for the record. Your time has expired.

21 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Rescued
22 by the chairman.

23 Chairman Wicker: Senator Budd.

24 Senator Budd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Senator Duckworth: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. Can I

1 add FM 3-0, the Army's Operations Manual, for the record?
2 Include in the record?

3 Chairman Wicker: Well, without objection.

4 Senator Duckworth: Thank you.

5 Chairman Wicker: But let me ask you this. How many
6 pages does that consist of?

7 Senator Duckworth: It is quite a few pages actually,
8 but it is a basic reading for anybody who has gone through
9 the officer's basic course, which I believe you have
10 completed. Have you not, Mr. Driscoll?

11 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, it is 350 pages approximately.

12 Senator Duckworth: There you go.

13 Chairman Wicker: So you really do want us to go to
14 the expense of reprinting something that is widely
15 available? Could we just refer to it?

16 Senator Duckworth: That is acceptable to me, Mr.
17 Chairman.

18 Chairman Wicker: All right, thank you very much.
19 Senator Budd.

20 Senator Budd: Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. And
21 again, welcome, Mr. Driscoll. It is good to see you. As a
22 fellow North Carolinian, I know, and as you are someone who
23 served in the Army, I know our hearts are broken with the
24 recent flight, with the aircrew, the Black Hawk. Having a
25 family of Army aviation and Army aviators, my hearts are

1 especially broken.

2 You know, I want to congratulate you as a friend. It
3 has been good to know you for several years, and this is a
4 great role that you have been nominated to. And I am proud
5 to see someone born and raised in North Carolina,
6 particularly western North Carolina, to serve in this role.
7 So many from the Army were serving there in days following
8 recent Hurricane Helene.

9 Mr. Driscoll, in your advanced policy questions, you
10 identify recruiting as one of the most significant
11 challenges facing the Army. So if confirmed, how would you
12 recommend the Army fix this recruiting challenge?

13 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I had mentioned to your
14 colleagues a couple of things that the Army has done really
15 well as it seems from the outside.

16 Senator Budd: Right.

17 Mr. Driscoll: The Future Soldier training course at
18 Fort Jackson where I did basic training that prepares
19 soldiers to take their ASVAB test and get more prepared
20 from their fitness, get more fit before they go to basic
21 training, has seemed to pay dividends. That type of thing,
22 that type of innovation I think could be spread farther
23 around the country to continue to increase the pipeline of
24 the population that is qualified.

25 But more specifically, I think telling this story of

1 the United States Army with its 250th anniversary coming up
2 this summer is an incredible time through our JRTCs,
3 through our communities across the country, to build up the
4 pipeline of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors in
5 high school who can join. This is the year to tell the
6 story of the women and the men in uniform who have done
7 amazing things on behalf of our country and who I think
8 would say, like me, had their lives changed by this
9 experience.

10 So Senator, I look forward to working with you and
11 this committee, if confirmed, to make this year the Army's
12 best recruiting year in history.

13 Senator Budd: I look forward to that as well. Thank
14 you.

15 As you know, special operations forces, and I think
16 you spoke about this with some of my colleagues prior to
17 me, but they are essential in responding to irregular
18 warfare. North Carolina is home, and for the purpose of
19 this morning, maybe we will call it Fort Bragg, and special
20 operations forces, special operations are now playing a
21 larger role in the cyber and the space domains. Yet the
22 Army recently decided to cut significant number of Army
23 special operations forces.

24 So in your advanced policy questions, you state that
25 Army special forces play a critical role in supporting the

1 joint force and accomplishing the objectives of the
2 National Defense Strategy. Do you believe that SOF is
3 still relevant today?

4 Mr. Driscoll: Wholeheartedly, Senator. Just from my
5 qualitative experience, the special operators that I was
6 fortunate enough to serve alongside of were some of the
7 most incredible soldiers that I ever saw. They were
8 innovation laboratories, testing out all sorts of new
9 things, from new weapons to backpacks to whatever it was.
10 And a lot of the lessons that they learned, even if it was
11 not formal, trickled down to the larger force. And so,
12 Senator, I think unequivocally on a go-forward basis, they
13 are a crucial force multiplier for our Army.

14 Senator Budd: Well, thank you. In my recent visits
15 there to Fort Liberty, Fort Bragg, I have seen the same
16 thing continuing today and I know you will see that very
17 soon, if confirmed.

18 As you work to address recruiting more broadly, what
19 strategies will you pursue to increase the pool of recruits
20 so that they are eligible and have qualifications to serve
21 in Army special operations forces positions?

22 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, my understanding, which I had
23 covered with one of your colleagues, was one of the
24 problems with what we have done by digitizing medical
25 records is accidentally we have taken people who have

1 broken arms but have been an ultra-marathoner or who have
2 had an inhaler prescribed when they were 13 and a day.
3 These were the types of things that for 249 years, or 244
4 of those years, just would have never come up. Either you
5 would not have remembered to put it down or your recruiter
6 would told you it was not relevant. And right now it is
7 blocking a lot of possible soldiers who I believe would be
8 incredible future soldiers.

9 And so I think taking a deep dive on the incentive
10 structure for how we do waivers and maybe working with this
11 committee to look back at -- should some of these things,
12 should flat feet still be preventative of joining? I do
13 not have an opinion on the matter, but I think it is worth
14 a fresh look.

15 Senator Budd: Thank you. And again, I appreciate
16 your willingness to serve our country and I wish you the
17 best.

18 Mr. Driscoll: Thank you, Senator.

19 Chairman Wicker: Thank you very much. Mr. Driscoll,
20 before I recognize Senator Hirono, I want to make sure I
21 get this straight. As a Mississippi young man, I joined
22 the Air Force and was stationed at Seymour Johnson Air
23 Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina. You would agree,
24 would you not, that eastern North Carolina barbecue is far
25 superior to Lexington-type of barbecue?

1 Senator Budd: I would ask you not to answer the
2 question, sir.

3 Mr. Driscoll: So as someone from western North
4 Carolina, Senator, my heart bleeds the thick, ketchup-based
5 barbecue that I grew up with, but I can concede that
6 Lexington barbecue is exceptional.

7 Chairman Wicker: Well, there is no accounting for
8 taste, but a pretty good answer. Senator Hirono.

9 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did want
10 to take a moment to extend my condolences to all those
11 affected by the tragic accident last night near Reagan
12 National Airport and the brave Army soldiers on board the
13 helicopter.

14 Mr. Driscoll, I ask the following two initial
15 questions of all nominees who come before any of the
16 committees on which I sit to ensure the fitness of the
17 nominees. Since you became a legal adult, have you ever
18 made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any
19 verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual
20 nature?

21 Mr. Driscoll: Never.

22 Senator Hirono: Have you ever faced discipline or
23 entered into a settlement relating to this kind of conduct?

24 Mr. Driscoll: Never.

25 Senator Hirono: Mr. Driscoll, several of the critical

1 training areas that the Army uses in Hawaii are leased from
2 the state, including Pohakuloa, and the leases are set to
3 expire in 2029. These leases are vital to ensuring
4 military forces can adequately train in the Pacific.
5 However, the land involved also holds cultural significance
6 to the Native Hawaiian community.

7 How do you plan to approach these important lease
8 renegotiations, and will you commit to engaging in good
9 faith with state officials and the community to ensure that
10 the leases are negotiated in a way that is fair to the
11 state, the people of Hawaii, and the military?

12 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, this is an incredibly
13 important issue, not just in Hawaii, but in all the places
14 we engage with the community and sign leases. I would
15 absolutely commit to wanting to work with your office and
16 then to engage with community members to ensure the Army is
17 being its best neighbor that it can be.

18 Earlier in the hearing I was referencing with your
19 colleague, Senator Warren and I were chatting about this,
20 both kind of abroad how the Army exists in its footprint,
21 but then specifically domestically, how the Army and its
22 soldiers and the civilians that work on the bases engage
23 with the community and the youth in that community is
24 directly correlated to who gets a taste of what the Army
25 has to offer and who gets to see what a life in the Army

1 can do for them. And so I think it is both the right thing
2 to do and the selfish thing to do to be the best neighbors
3 we can be.

4 Senator Hirono: Mr. Driscoll, I want to particularly
5 emphasize how important these negotiations are and how they
6 are conducted because the military of late has been
7 criticized for what happened at Red Hill basically
8 involving the Navy. But as far as the community is
9 concerned, what happens to one service is something that
10 impacts all of the other services. So it is really
11 critical that you engage with the community.

12 So going to modernizing DoD infrastructure is one of
13 my top priorities. And the Army has a deep backlog of
14 maintenance and modernization for its facilities. And
15 sadly, for example, in Hawaii, 50 percent of Army
16 facilities are classified as failing or failed, and the
17 cost to repair or replace them is over \$5 billion. This is
18 just involving Hawaii.

19 So we need to have a functioning infrastructure
20 critical to military readiness. How are you planning to
21 address the Army's infrastructure issue in Hawaii and in
22 the greater Indo-Pacific?

23 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, I have had many friends
24 stationed in Hawaii, and though the experience has been
25 good, I think that they might echo that some of the

1 maintenance issues exist. We owe a duty to our soldiers
2 and their families. My daughter, my 6-year-old Lila is
3 named after my E6's daughter, Lila. She lives on a
4 military --

5 Senator Hirono: So Mr. Driscoll, my time is running
6 out. And so what I am getting from you is that there is a
7 commitment to deal with the lagging infrastructure
8 throughout the military and the Army, so I will certainly
9 be holding you to that, should you be confirmed.

10 Let me get to mass deportations. President Trump has
11 already ordered thousands of additional Army soldiers to
12 the southern border. Experts have said deporting over 11
13 million people -- these are the people who are undocumented
14 -- will require tens of thousands of personnel, hundreds of
15 billions of dollars, and years to complete.

16 The Army is the primary military service who would be
17 called upon to support a mass deportation order. What
18 impact would deploying tens of thousands of troops have on
19 Army readiness?

20 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, my understanding from the
21 outside is that the Army stands by and stands ready to
22 support the President's mission to defend the border --

23 Senator Hirono: Well, if you have to deploy 10,000
24 people or more from the Army to do that, I would say that
25 it is going to impact Army readiness for the other purposes

1 for which the Army is stood up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Hirono. Senator
3 Schmitt.

4 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yeah, I
5 agree. Actually, Joe Biden letting in 15 million people
6 here necessitating the mass deportations is a problem. But
7 Bill Clinton deported 12 million people. Barack Obama
8 deported 8 million people. So deportations, they may have
9 been suspended over the last 4 years, but is exactly what
10 people voted for. They are tired of the lawlessness.

11 But for you, thanks for being here and thanks for your
12 willingness to serve. As you know, I am very supportive of
13 your nomination. I think you are going to do a great job,
14 and I think you are going to provide a great perspective
15 for what the Army really needs. And I think your energy
16 and your attitude and the way you explain why you served
17 and I think a way forward to improve recruiting is
18 actually, I have not heard that before. You hear it from
19 soldiers and you hear it from people who are actually
20 serving, but for somebody that is serving in your capacity
21 I think it is a great way to sort of frame the importance
22 of the recruitment challenges that we have and how we get
23 beyond it.

24 I do want to ask about Fort Leonard Wood. We talked
25 about it. In Missouri, we are really blessed to have Fort

1 Leonard Wood in our state. It is pretty uniquely situated
2 in that it is in a rural setting with the Mark Twain
3 Forest, you have got a lot of room. And I think that
4 maneuverability that you get and the versatility that you
5 get, including from other branches in law enforcement, to
6 train there is a pretty unique asset. So just a couple of
7 questions on that.

8 There has been some talk, and I mentioned this to you,
9 not really from the Army, but from the Defense Health
10 Agency, there is a hospital there that is really important,
11 not just to the base, but to the community there. And
12 there has been some discussion about downgrading that to
13 some sort of health clinic. Will you commit to working
14 with me to make sure that that does not happen? I think
15 they have sort of backtracked from that, but that would be
16 devastating for the Fort Leonard Wood community. Is that
17 something we can work on?

18 Mr. Driscoll: Senator, it would be an honor to work
19 with your office. And as somebody who grew up in the
20 mountains of North Carolina, and my wife is a physician,
21 access to health care is a real thing. If you take that
22 access away, it can completely change how a community is
23 able to function. And so this is an important issue and I
24 would look forward to working with you, if confirmed.

25 Senator Schmitt: And can you talk a little bit about

1 the benefits of having a sort of centrally located base
2 like that at Fort Leonard Wood? You have got all the real
3 estate you need. There have been significant upgrades
4 made, hundreds of millions of dollars pumped into the new
5 housing there, so for the long term, it is a great place
6 for us to kind of stage operations. A lot of people get
7 their early training there. But why that is important to
8 the Army to have a base like that?

9 Mr. Driscoll: My understanding, Senator, of your
10 description, and if confirmed I would be honored to visit
11 it with you, is the base can scale for future needs that we
12 just do not know about. In a lot of areas, the bases are
13 constrained by what is around them. This base seems to
14 have the ability that if we needed it in one day, 1 year,
15 or 10 years to scale for things. We do not quite know what
16 we need. We do not know where our soldiers need to be
17 positioned. We do not know what testing requirements will
18 be. Fort Leonard Wood seems like an amazing place to be
19 able to expand.

20 Senator Schmitt: Well, the folks back home would be
21 happy to hear that you want to come by. And Missouri
22 barbecue is the best in the country, so we will make sure
23 you get some of that. My Texas friends and Carolina
24 friends may disagree, but they are wrong. They are wrong.

25 I want to ask, we talked a little bit in my office and

1 others may have touched on this too, but clearly our chief
2 adversary is China, and so the Army is reorienting itself a
3 little bit for this challenge. And can you talk about how
4 you see it, and some things that if you were just talking
5 to somebody on the street about what the Army's
6 traditionally done and what it is going to need to do in
7 the future to prepare for what could potentially be this
8 struggle, of course, for the 21st century?

9 Mr. Driscoll: Absolutely, Senator. My time being
10 deployed, and I think my friends who deployed to
11 Afghanistan and my experience in Iraq, most of the
12 movements were squad level movements. So you would have,
13 call it, 15 to 25 men and women doing most actions. The
14 logistics, getting things in and out of the countries was
15 less contested. If you needed water or fuel, you could get
16 it from the continental United States to those theaters
17 quickly and relatively easily.

18 An engagement with a peer like China will be a
19 completely and totally different thing than I have seen in
20 my time on the Planet Earth. Everything can be contested.
21 It is a peer adversary who will do everything they can to
22 defeat us. And this requires, let's call it a pre-war time
23 footing for us as an Army and us as a people to get
24 ourselves ready to engage in a conflict that could
25 fundamentally alter our future way of life if we are not

1 ready for it.

2 Senator Schmitt: Thank you. And as you know, I
3 support you and I think you are going to do a great job.
4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Chairman Wicker: Thank you, Senator Schmitt. And
6 thank you, Mr. Driscoll. We appreciate your answers to the
7 questions today and we appreciate your willingness to
8 serve, and we will now close the hearing.

9 For the information of our members, questions for the
10 record will be due to the committee within two business
11 days of the conclusion of this hearing. And with that, if
12 there are no objection, we are adjourned.

13 [Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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