

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR
2015 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE
PROGRAM**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2014

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

**TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE ACTIVE,
GUARD, RESERVE, AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PRO-
GRAMS**

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:56 a.m. in room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Gillibrand, Hirono, Kaine, King, Ayotte, and Graham.

Majority staff members present: Jonathan D. Clark, counsel; and Gerald J. Leeling, general counsel.

Minority staff members present: Steven M. Barney, minority counsel; Samantha L. Clark, minority associate counsel; and Allen M. Edwards, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Daniel J. Harder and Brendan J. Sawyer.

Committee members' assistants present: Moran Banal, Brooke Jamison, and Kathryn E. Parker, assistants to Senator Gillibrand; Karen E. Courington, assistant to Senator Kaine; Stephen M. Smith, assistant to Senator King; Brandon H. Bell, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Bradley L. Bowman, assistant to Senator Ayotte; and Craig R. Abele, assistant to Senator Graham.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND,
CHAIRMAN**

Senator GILLIBRAND. The subcommittee meets today to receive testimony from the military services on military and civilian personnel programs contained in the administration's National Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

Before we begin, I want to acknowledge the services being held today at Fort Hood, TX. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the tragedy that occurred there last week and their families. We send our soldiers, airmen, sailors, and marines into harm's

way, but we do not expect the harm to come from their brothers and sisters in arms here in America. And so it is always shocking and saddening when a tragedy like this happens at home.

And I thank all the witnesses for being here today.

Today we have two panels. The first panel consists of the uniformed personnel chiefs responsible for military and civilian personnel matters within the services. We will discuss not only their plans and programs for fiscal year 2015, but specific budget items in furtherance of the subcommittee's oversight. The markup of the 2015 defense bill is not far away, and your statements and testimony today are extremely important as we prepare for the legislative year ahead.

Our witnesses are Lieutenant General Howard Bromberg, U.S. Army, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1; Vice Admiral William F. Moran, U.S. Navy, Chief of Naval Personnel; Lieutenant General Samuel D. Cox, U.S. Air Force, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services, A-1; and Lieutenant General Robert E. Milstead, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

The second panel consists of senior enlisted members of the Services. I will introduce them after the first panel concludes.

As I stated 2 weeks ago at our hearing with senior DOD leaders, I have grave concerns about this budget, which the Department submitted at a time of tremendous challenge and uncertainty for the Nation and the military. Military personnel funding, including funding for health care for servicemembers, their families, and retirees, school and commissary benefits, totals \$176.6 billion in the fiscal year 2015 request. While this represents a slight decline over last year's total, the portion of the total budget devoted to personnel has risen. In fact, this year's budget supports 36,000 fewer active duty servicemembers than last year's.

The Department's budget request contains numerous proposals intended to slow the growth of personnel costs, which would yield over \$2 billion in savings in fiscal year 2015. These savings have been reallocated to the operating and modernization accounts. I hope that today we will learn more about the details of these proposals. Although we have yet to see all the details, we know that each proposal will have significant impact in and of itself. Yet, I am especially concerned about their cumulative effect on servicemembers, especially on junior members of the force and their families. As our hearing with DOD revealed, it will be difficult for many of us to support these proposals.

I hope our witnesses today will tell us why these compensation proposals are needed, what will have to be cut if Congress does not support them, and why they cannot wait for the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission to report next February, which is tasked with looking at these very issues in a comprehensive way. I am particularly interested in hearing from the senior enlisted members on the second panel about how these proposals will impact the enlisted force and what implications they foresee if we do not make all of these changes.

The Department and services continue the process of removing barriers to service by women, an effort I strongly endorse. While the Army and Marine Corps are opening positions in occupations

already open to women, the real challenge moving forward will be opening occupations such as infantry, that are currently closed. A little more than a year ago, Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey rescinded the ground combat exclusion policy and gave the services and the Special Operations Command until January 2016 to open all positions to service by women or to request an exception to keep certain positions closed. At the time, Secretary Panetta said: “Our purpose is to ensure that the mission is carried by the best qualified and the most capable servicemembers, regardless of gender and regardless of creed and beliefs. If members of our military can meet the qualifications for a job—and let me be clear, I am not talking about reducing the qualifications for the job—then they should have the right to serve.” I strongly endorse this principle that the best qualified servicemember, regardless of gender, should be able to compete for even the most difficult jobs.

I hope that the services, particularly the Army and Marine Corps, are taking a deliberate and measured approach to validating occupational standards. I believe that a scientifically rigorous process that creates gender-neutral standards will best serve our military and our servicemembers, both men and women. I hope our witnesses today can tell us where they are in implementing the Secretary’s directive to open all military occupations to women, how they are validating occupational requirements, and whether they believe this will be done on time.

I remain concerned about sexual assaults in the military. I was disappointed that despite the support of the majority of my colleagues, we were not given the opportunity to vote on passage of my proposal to make sure that decisions to prosecute serious offenses are made by trained, professional, and independent lawyers rather than commanders who do not have the training or perspective to make these decisions. But I have not given up on making this change that our survivors have told us will make a difference when it comes to reporting the crime.

I will also continue my efforts to make sure that the changes that have been legislated are implemented in an effective manner and will continue to work toward initiatives to better address this scourge in our military.

Senator Graham?

STATEMENT OF SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

I will join with the chairman, the chairlady of the committee, to report to the full committee a personnel markup that defers to the commission. I think it is very important that we allow this commission to work and that we not make any structural changes to personnel until the committee report is back.

Having said that, personnel costs are about half the budget of the Department of Defense, and there will have to be reforms in retirement. They just need to be prospective.

We will have to look at the sustainability of TRICARE. On the Reserve side, I am very much interested in what we can do to not only manage personnel costs but make sure that our Guard and Reserve members are benefiting from programs that already exist like TRICARE. One of the more significant accomplishments I have

been involved in is making TRICARE available to guard and reservists for a fee and their families. I hope that is helping with recruiting and retention and readiness.

Before Senator Clinton and I were able to come together on legislation, guard and reservists were not eligible for TRICARE. If you were called to active duty, you would have to get out of your network if you had one, and your family would have to change doctors. And when you got demobilized, you would have to switch back if you had a health care provider. And that created a lot of disconcerting events for families. So now TRICARE is available to all guard and reservists, and I think that has been a good step toward readiness.

I am very proud of the reforms that Senator Ayotte and others have made to the way we report sexual assaults in the military. We are trying to have the most victim-friendly reporting system of any jurisdiction in the country. A judge advocate in the future will be assigned to every victim. When a commander makes a decision regarding the four major sexual assault crimes in the military, if the judge advocate recommends prosecution and the commander says no, that is automatically taken up with the Service Chief to review the case, which I think is a good way to let the commanders know how seriously we take these allegations. Also if the commander and the JAG recommend not to prosecute where there is unanimity between the lawyer and the commander, that has to be reviewed by the commander's next chain of command, which I think is appropriate.

I could not disagree with Senator Gillibrand's solution to this problem more. She is going to continue. I am certainly going to continue to stop what I think would be an incredibly bad thing for the military to remove commanders from having responsibility, not just over sexual assaults but about 40 percent of the UCMJ.

I believe we have the finest military in the world and it is for a reason, because our commanders are responsible for delivering well trained, ready troops, and they have to make incredible decisions of life and death. And at the end of the day, they have the ability. They need the ability to discipline the force. I never want a situation to occur in the military where there was a sexual assault or an alleged sexual assault in the barracks and the commander says that is no longer my problem. That would be devastating for any unit in the Marine Corps, Army, Navy, and Air Force. I think those who are in the military understand exactly what I am saying. I will never give into that because I think it will destroy that continuity of command.

Finally, about military justice. No matter who recommends the case to go forward, I do hope that Members of the Senate and the House will understand that we have an independent judicial system, and verdicts are not designed to please me or anyone else. They are designed to render justice, and I hope we will respect the integrity of the court martial system, which is patterned after the Federal Rules of Evidence, and that when somebody is tried in the military, that the presumption of innocence will continue, that the victim will have their say, that they will have legal advice that will be consistent with allowing them to come forward, that we are changing the Article 32 process so the victim does not have to be

called in the Article 32 hearing, which I think, working with Senator Boxer, is a good change. But at the end of the day, everybody accused of a crime anywhere needs to make sure they have a fair trial.

So thank you very much. I look forward to the hearing.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Senator Graham.

I now invite your opening statements. Lieutenant General Bromberg?

**STATEMENT OF LTG HOWARD B. BROMBERG, USA, DEPUTY
CHIEF OF STAFF, G-1, U.S. ARMY**

General BROMBERG. Good morning, Chairman Gillibrand, Senator Graham, distinguished members of this subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of America's Army.

As we begin our 13th straight year of war with over 151,000 deployed or forward stationed today, we stand at a pivotal moment in our history. Due to budgetary reductions, we are executing an historic drawdown of both our military and civilian personnel while in an unpredictable global security environment. It is imperative our drawdown efforts be conducted in a careful and responsible manner that maintains the highest quality All-Volunteer Force while ensuring the readiness of our Army for today and for the future.

Our abilities to meet the challenges of the current and future operational environment depends upon our efforts to recruit and retain the All-Volunteer Force. As we draw down the Army, we continue to bring in high quality men and women into the force to grow our future leaders or retain the most talented soldiers with the experience and skills necessary to meet our future needs. Our recruiting operations will face greater challenges as the percentage of America's youth become ineligible for military service.

As the Army looks to the future, we must take advantage of all of America's diverse talents. We are expanding opportunities for women by opening up previously closed positions and career paths, while ensuring all soldiers can meet the required physical and professional standards.

The Army is committed to helping soldiers, veterans, and families transition to a civilian life, career ready, with established networks of enablers connecting them with employment, education, and health care. We recognize these soldiers as soldiers for life and in many cases want to encourage their continued service in the Reserve component.

We have made significant strides in this past year eliminating backlogs in the integrated disability evaluation system and ensuring that soldiers receive the benefits they deserve. We successfully partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs to streamline the disability system and improve coordination for health care, compensation, and benefits for our medically separated or retired soldiers.

Response to and prevention of sexual assault and harassment continue to be the Army's top priority with a goal to change our culture and reduce and ultimately eliminate this crime from our ranks. We have implemented an unprecedented number of pro-

grams and policy initiatives designed to improve our sexual harassment and assault response program, and I am confident that our efforts are putting the right processes and procedures in place to ensure a climate of safety, trust, and respect for every member of the Army family, while enhancing accountability of every member of the Army team.

Our efforts to increase individual and collective resilience and improve readiness have made significant strides in the fight against substance abuse, suicide, and stigma reduction.

As the Army becomes stronger, your support is essential to our efforts as we draw down thoughtfully, accurately, and efficiently while maintaining readiness and caring for all of the members of the Army team.

Chairman Gillibrand, Senator Graham, members of the subcommittee, thank you for your continued support.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Bromberg follows:]

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Lieutenant General.

Next is Vice Admiral William F. Moran, U.S. Navy, Chief of Naval Personnel.

STATEMENT OF VADM WILLIAM F. MORAN, USN, CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL/DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS FOR MANPOWER, PERSONNEL, TRAINING AND EDUCATION, N-1, U.S. NAVY

Admiral MORAN. Good morning, Chairman Gillibrand and Ranking Member Graham and distinguished members of the committee.

Allow me to add my thanks for what you have done and continue to do for the welfare of our sailors, Navy civilians, families, and retirees.

Today more than one-third of our Navy is under way, a significant accomplishment given the fiscal challenges we face in 2013. As we took on this budget, certainly we understood the imperative of reducing national debt in order to sustain our national security. But many of the financial levers we pulled last year to mitigate operational impacts were simply no longer available this year. And if sequestration were to continue, we would experience irreversible consequences to our long-term combat readiness and jeopardize our ability to retain high quality sailors. As our CNO recently stated, it would be much tougher to maintain a Navy where it matters and when it matters.

Right now, sailors from the Bush Strike Group are in the Arabian Sea. The *Harry S. Truman* is returning after a 9-month deployment. USS *Donald Cook* is headed into the Black Sea to reassure allies and to build partner capacity. And as we have all seen, our men and women forward in the Pacific are contributing to search efforts along with 26 other nations for Malaysian Airline flight 370.

All of what American sea power means today and might become is due to the selfless service of the men and women who make it so. And they stand directly at the center of the budget now before you.

Every tough choice we made in this budget was in favor of maintaining quality of service for our sailors. Our objectives were to

maintain and improve manning at sea, retain our best and brightest sailors, increase the readiness of our sailors and their families. We owe them the tools, the parts, the training, and the professional work environment they need to succeed in their mission. That is what they tell us they need and that is what this budget delivers. Fortunately, as this committee has agreed to time and time again, that is what our people deserve and nothing less. So on behalf of them, thank you for what you have done and continue to do for our Navy and the security of our Nation.

With that, I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Moran follows:]

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Next is Lieutenant General Samuel D. Cox, U.S. Air Force, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services, A-1.

STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. SAMUEL D. COX, USAF, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR MANPOWER, PERSONNEL AND SERVICES, A-1, U.S. AIR FORCE

General COX. Chairman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Graham, distinguished members of the committee, it is my honor to appear before you today representing our total force airmen.

As I look back to when I came into the Air Force 3 decades ago, we had nearly 600,000 airmen serving on active duty during the height of the Cold War. So much has transpired since that time. We have evolved into an effective and capable active force of just 328,000 airmen today.

As I look down the road at the future state of the Air Force, it will require us to be more efficient and more agile while getting smaller in order to support the demands of the 21st century Air Force.

The Air Force remains committed to providing the highest quality airmen to combatant commanders. We have been actively engaged in combat operations for more than 23 consecutive years, and our airmen remain at the forefront of today's conflicts and other contingency operations around the globe. Serving proudly alongside our sister servicemembers, last year total force airmen filled over 900,000 deployment requirements to over 600 different locations. We are out there and we are getting the job done. I am extremely proud to be a part of this team.

Moving forward, given the current environment, the Air Force will size and shape our force to meet Department of Defense strategic guidance with a leaner force. To do this, we are using a wide variety of force management tools which will maximize voluntary programs first, offer incentives where needed, and employ involuntary programs when required. As we get smaller, we will continue to integrate our total force by leveraging the flexibility of our regular Air Force with our Guard and Reserve partners, balancing full-time and part-time airmen where and when it makes sense. Our airmen, a combined team of total force officers, enlisted and civilians, have and will be the foundation of the success of our Air Force. As we continue to meet the budget challenges, it is their commitment, ingenuity, and hard work that will help us navigate our future. We are committed to train and equip the highest quality airmen to ensure our Air Force remains capable of supporting

any contingency around the world and overcoming any future adversary.

I appreciate your support and concern for our Nation's great and professional airmen.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Cox follows:]

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Lieutenant General.

Last, Lieutenant General Robert E. Milstead, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

**STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. ROBERT E. MILSTEAD, JR., USMC,
DEPUTY COMMANDANT, MANPOWER AND RESERVE AF-
FAIRS, U.S. MARINE CORPS**

General MILSTEAD. Good morning. Chairman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Graham, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today.

Before I proceed, though, I would like to briefly address the shooting last night at Camp Lejeune. What we know so far is that while on duty at the Guard shack, two lance corporals—one shot the other one in the chest with his M-4. The wounded was transported to the base hospital and was subsequently pronounced deceased. The incident is believed to be a negligent discharge, but it is under investigation by NCIS to determine if there is evidence to the contrary. And once we have further facts, we will provide those to you and this subcommittee.

I have previously submitted my written statement for the record, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Milstead follows:]

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, gentlemen.

General Milstead, I know the Marines are taking a different approach than the other services, and that part of your process includes forming what the Marines call the Ground Combat Element Experimental Task Force. And this experimental task force consists of a battalion-sized equipment ground combat unit and will include a control group of an all-male squad, with another squad integrated, a third women, two-thirds men, and a third squad, two-thirds women, one-third men. These units will be put through a training and evaluation cycle that mirrors an infantry's unit predeployment training cycle.

What is the ultimate purpose behind this experimental task force?

General MILSTEAD. Well, the primary purpose of the experimental task force is to look at collective standards. We are going after this in basically four levels of effort, if you will. The first one is to extend our ETP where we put officers and staff noncommissioned officers in open MOSs down to closed units.

The second one is where we expanded our entry level training. And you are aware that we have had 45 women successfully complete the infantry training in ITB and some more will continue. That has been so successful that we are expanding that to the other infantry MOSs like machine guns, mortars. We are going to send them to artillery school. We are going to put them into armor. But those are individual. Those are individual standards. Those are individual tasks.

So this experimental task force is to get at the collective tasks, how everybody works together because we do not know what we do not know. It will be conducted at Camp Lejeune, at Twentynine Palms, and again up at Bridgeport, and it will mirror training that we do prior to deployment. So the primary focus is on collective standards vice individual standards.

Senator GILLIBRAND. The only concern that I had is that your term, "control group," is being used for the all-male squad. And so I wanted to know what you mean by that because the other two squads with women are being measured against the control group. Would it not be preferable to have them just actually be measured against some performance standard, what your goal of the group to accomplish is?

General MILSTEAD. I believe they are all going to be—as they are evaluated, they will be evaluated by this control group, if you will. It happens to be all male, as you say, because it comes from MOSs that we do not have any women in. So we have no choice.

Senator GILLIBRAND. It is a subtle difference. So, for example, if you have a control group that the mission is to perform A, B, and C, the control group should not be judged on do you perform A, B, and C as if an all-male unit would perform A, B, and C because if you are creating a standard that is what is perfectly accomplished, it may well be perfectly accomplished in a different way or measured against a very different set of standards, as opposed to just measuring how would an all-male group accomplish A, B, and C. So I guess my point is if your control group is how an all-male force performs it as opposed to the actual mission of things you want accomplished, it may align differently is what I am telling you.

General MILSTEAD. I understand that, and I will tell you that what we are looking at is not whether the women—we are looking to include the women, not preclude them. So they will not be evaluated whether they can do the job like men do it. They will be evaluated as to whether they can do the job.

Senator GILLIBRAND. The job. Correct. That is all I wanted to ensure.

General MILSTEAD. And it will not only be uniform. I think it is important to emphasize that we have got the University of Pittsburgh. We have got the Center for Naval Analysis. We have the RAND Corporation. We have a number of non-uniform external agencies that will be involved in the evaluation.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Lieutenant General Bromberg and Vice Admiral Moran, I understand that the Army and Navy just recently relieved soldiers and sailors of positions of trust after various checks to their records showed they had a disqualifying offense. I am very grateful that you took the time to do that review and removed these individuals to improve trust within the system.

Can you tell me if these individuals retired from the military or whether they were allowed to remain in the services? And if so, what types of positions do they currently hold?

General BROMBERG. Yes, ma'am. Thank you for the question.

Of the individuals removed from those positions, of course, we removed them for a wide variety of reasons. We went back and

looked at everything for about 10 categories, everything from a previous domestic violence or sexual assault to maybe a previous driving while intoxicated from 15 years ago, even down to maybe where somebody was not suitable for appearance. So there is a wide variety within that number.

Now, the actual numbers will be coming back over because we have a formal request from Congress to answer those questions. So we will answer those back formally.

I can tell you some of those folks—they are no longer in that position of trust, and they are back in their primary MOS if they were maybe detailed in that job. For example, maybe a recruiter who might have been an artillery man or an infantryman before that and maybe they had a DUI 15–20 years ago. We took them out of recruiting, put them back in their primary MOS. So that is an example for you, but I cannot give you the—

Senator GILLIBRAND. But you will send the full report to our office once you—

General BROMBERG. Oh, yes. We are consolidating all of that together.

Senator GILLIBRAND. And exactly what they were removed for.

General BROMBERG. There were 10 categories we looked at, a very, very detailed scrub of several thousand across the force. We feel pretty comfortable that that was the right thing to do, obviously.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Also in your prepared statement, you informed us that the Army implemented a new policy to ensure that any final decision to retain a member convicted of sexual offense is fully informed and determined at the secretary level. This same policy also prohibits the overseas assignment or deployment of any soldier convicted of sexual offense.

Under what circumstances would the Army retain a soldier convicted of a sexual offense?

General BROMBERG. I think that is a case-by-case answer. But the intent there again is to make sure that we are fully informed, so if a lower level organization decides to retain that servicemember, they have to forward that up to the Secretary's level so we can then review that case and then make a final decision. In many, many cases that I have looked at already, some of these people are already in the process. We are tracking them very, very closely. But this gives us full information to include preventing someone from being assigned overseas. We will pull them back where we have a larger support network to do that.

Senator GILLIBRAND. So we do have convicted sexual offenders retained within the force?

General BROMBERG. Well, for example, somebody who is in jail, is incarcerated who may not be full due processed yet—they are still on our rolls. That counts as somebody who is convicted. They could be sitting at Fort Leavenworth. They could be sitting in a—

Senator GILLIBRAND. They are not just taking a different job.

General BROMBERG. No. No. These are people that they have been convicted but because the due process is not finished yet, they could still be on our rolls. But I can guarantee you we look at every one of those. We track those. We know where they are at.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you so much.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

One thing I want to restate is I support the chairman's decision to send out of the subcommittee a basically let us let the commission in February decide how to cut—you know, their recommendations.

On that, the benefit package. About 50 percent of the military budget is personnel costs. Is that accurate?

General BROMBERG. Very close, sir.

General MILSTEAD. 64 percent of the Marine Corps budget.

Senator GRAHAM. Air Force?

General COX. I am sure that is close.

Admiral MORAN. It is very close. Yes, sir.

General BROMBERG. Sir, 48 percent plus or minus.

Senator GRAHAM. So benefits include pay. Right? Retirement, medical and dental, commissary, BX. Any other benefits that we can think of?

General BROMBERG. There are probably several that are indirect benefits.

Senator GRAHAM. That makes the core group I think of what we are going to have to be looking at.

Does everybody on the panel agree that any retirement changes need to be prospective and that we grandfather the current system enrollees?

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir. The Army's position is everybody should be grandfathered.

Admiral MORAN. The Navy, same.

General COX. Same for the Air Force.

Senator GRAHAM. Do any of you envision reducing pay as a reform?

General BROMBERG. No, sir. The Army does not.

Admiral MORAN. Not at all.

General COX. No, sir.

General MILSTEAD. Our Commandant has testified that he does support the 1 percent vice the 1.8 percent, as well as—

Senator GRAHAM. That is a pay raise versus a pay cut.

General MILSTEAD. Exactly, and that is my point, Senator. Nobody is for reducing pay. We are slowing the growth.

Senator GRAHAM. What does an E-7—what does a gunnery sergeant in the Marine Corps make?

General MILSTEAD. I could not answer.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, we have got the pay scales. Will somebody find that? I do not want the public to believe that we are paying people elaborate salaries because we are not. We are paying them, I think, a decent salary maybe at best given what we ask of them.

So housing is another area. Right? If you are assigned to Washington, DC, and on-base housing is not available, what does the Army do for that soldier?

General BROMBERG. They get a housing allowance.

Senator GRAHAM. Is it 100 percent of the cost?

General BROMBERG. Pretty close in most areas.

Senator GRAHAM. And one of the reforms is maybe to have some cost sharing there.

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Why would you not be allowed housing? Why would somebody have to go off base? Just not availability?

General BROMBERG. Just not available. We do not build enough quarters.

Senator GRAHAM. Is that true in the Marine Corps?

General MILSTEAD. Or by choice. We do not have sufficient housing for everybody, but a lot of people do live in town. And that 100 percent is based on the average, the average cost, and it is done by area, as the Senator is well aware. So it is your choice. If you live in the Taj Mahal, your 100 percent of the average will not cover it as opposed to where you do live.

Senator GRAHAM. Right. So we are not going to subsidize a \$2 million home, but we are going to pay you the average.

And I think one of the proposals is to have some cost sharing. Is that correct?

General MILSTEAD. Well, it is. It is to take it from 100 percent of the average down to 95 percent of the average.

Senator GRAHAM. What will that mean to the average soldier here in the D.C. area? Does anybody know?

General MILSTEAD. Well, I would offer it would depend on where they live. Again, if they are living within the means of the 95 percent, some people actually have sufficient delta between their BAH and the rent they are paying, whereas other people choose to maybe have a larger home or a more elaborate home. Then they will pay some more.

Senator GRAHAM. From your point of view—each of you very quickly if you could—if you implemented that change of a 5 percent cost share, reducing it to 95 percent of the average, is that something the services could absorb, and is that fair given our budget problems?

General BROMBERG. Sir, I think when you look at it as a hard choice against readiness, I think it is something that we have to do as we go forward, and I think you have to do it over time.

Admiral MORAN. I would agree with that statement.

General COX. I would agree with the statement as well. And it is a phased-in approach, not taking effect till 2017.

General MILSTEAD. Again, the Commandant has said that if we do not arrest the growth of this, that it will eventually eat into our readiness.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I think the committee needs to—once the committee reports—I mean, that is something I am very open-minded to because you are going to have to affect personnel somehow.

From a TRICARE point of view—okay. An E-7 makes \$33,000 to \$50,000, 2 years, versus depending on how long you have been in. If you have been in 18 years, it is about \$50,000. That is probably base pay without benefits. It would be more than that, I am sure.

So TRICARE. Do you all support some type of premium adjustment over time for TRICARE?

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir.

Admiral MORAN. Yes, sir.

General COX. Yes, sir.

General MILSTEAD. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. We have not had a premium adjustment since 1995. Is that correct? Yes, I think it is.

So now we are talking about people basically are retired, and that comes out of DOD's budget. Right? TRICARE costs for retired personnel comes out of DOD's budget. So when you pay that out, I mean, you have less for the operational services. Is that correct?

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. TRICARE is competing against readiness, modernization, everything else. Is that true in all the services?

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir. All our benefits are competing against readiness.

Senator GRAHAM. When it comes to sexual assault, I think it would probably be good sometime down the road to have a hearing to see if some of these reforms are actually working.

Is the Army going to adopt the Air Force pilot program of providing a judge advocate to every victim?

General BROMBERG. Sir, we have a special victims capability, which we do have over 105 judge advocates trained now to provide special victims counsels, of which we actually have 52 serving today. Additionally—

Senator GRAHAM. Well, my question is would every—

General BROMBERG. It is available to every victim today. We have enough. Yes, sir.

Admiral MORAN. Yes, sir. We fully implemented that program this year.

Senator GRAHAM. The Marine Corps?

General MILSTEAD. The Marine Corps has the Victims Legal Counsel Organization. We have—

Senator GRAHAM. Let us know if you need more JAGs because I think we are all willing to supply what you need to deal with this problem.

Back to the Marine Corps and the experiment about integrating women into combat units. Do other marine, equivalent to the Marine Corps—the British marines. Do they do this? Do other services do this? And generally speaking, what is your initial impression of women going through the infantry school, the 45 that have come out? Do you think that we are on to something here that this is an untapped resource for the Marine Corps, using women in direct combat? Where do you see this going, General?

General MILSTEAD. Well, to the first part of your question, I mean, do the other nations, we are meeting with them. We just met with the Danes. The Danes are fully integrated, I mean, completely fully integrated and very enthusiastic about it. The British are not. We are talking to the Australians. We are talking to the Canadians. We are talking to the Israelis, the Koreans. So we are talking to other nations and seeing what they have done and looking at the path that it has taken them, how long it has taken them, and where they have made the mistakes and where they have not so we can avoid those.

As far as the 45 that have come through, they have been successful. It is what it is. They have done very, very well. Including the women and expanding the opportunity is that, expanding the opportunity and giving them the opportunity to do more. It has got nothing to do with the fact that we do not have enough men, if you

will, to fill the ranks. It is to expand the opportunity and allow them to do more. And we are very enthusiastic, and we are optimistic about what we have seen so far.

But again, I will end it the way I started. We do not know what we do not know, and that is why we are going at this in a very deliberate, measured, and responsible manner so that we can determine that and do it reasonably.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Senator Kaine?

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

And thank you to the witnesses.

Personnel issues raise definitely a whole series of questions. 13 years of war imposes a set of stresses that is really unique in the history of the Nation because of the length of the active duty engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. And we have imposed our own stresses with the budgetary uncertainty that the DOD and other Federal agencies have been under. That does not make it any easier on your people. And I appreciate your service in these difficult and challenging times.

Since Lieutenant General Milstead has talked a little bit about the Marine effort with respect to opening MOSs up to women on gender-neutral requirements, I would like to ask the other witnesses to talk about it in your own services. Just 1 year in this new policy, talk about what you are seeing.

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir. We are very excited about our program. We think we have got a lot of positive things going on right now. And, of course, our program is an incremental integrated and scientific approach to look at that with two foundational pieces to it.

One, we have cultural studies ongoing right now to look at how women integrate in organizations where women have not served before. We constantly survey the units where we have opened up positions today so we see how the women are integrating, what is the reaction of the men, what is the reaction of the females. We constantly assess. We have outside groups doing that. So we are looking at the cultural piece.

And the second piece we are looking at is the physical demands. In the physical demands piece, we are looking at the 31 most physically demanding tasks and we are doing this with a very scientific approach. In fact, right now we have 500 soldiers involved down at Fort Stewart, GA, and they are looking at those specific tasks and the measurements, scientific measurements, of how a person has to do a task, oxygen intake, certain body movements, to establish a very gender-neutral standard. And then it is about that task. How do you accomplish that task?

At the end of the day, we will apply that task in some easier manner, but it will apply against men and women. We expect to eliminate men in the future, just as well as it will bring women in.

So we think this is coming together very, very well. We have opened up more positions this year. We have just opened up over 33,000 more positions to women across the force, and we will continue to do that. And now we are starting to look at how do we build the cadre or the leadership because, as you know, like the Marine Corps, we do not have any serving infantry female officers.

How do you build that and how do you get those people there so you have the right leadership in place? We are very excited about what we are doing and we think we are on the right path with this integrated and scientific approach.

Senator Kaine. Admiral Moran?

Admiral Moran. Yes, Senator, as you know, the Navy is—we are practically entirely open now with the exception of the special forces SEALs and special boat team crewmembers. So that is really up to Admiral McRaven who is doing the study now with SOCOM, and whatever they give us is how we will adopt it.

Our most recent effort here has been women in submarines. It is very successful. And the officer is front and first. We started there to make sure we had leadership in place before we would bring in enlisted members of the service. So over the last couple years, we have brought females officers into the *Ohio*-class submarine class. That has done exceptionally well. Next year, we are going to start with *Virginia*-class, so the smaller submarines. And we will again bring officers in there. And about a year from now, there is a panel and a task force underway led by Admiral Ken Perry who is the submarine group commander today who is bringing recommendations forward to CNO and SecNav on how to—not when or not if, but how to bring enlisted females into the submarine force.

As you might imagine, it takes time to train these in the submarine community. Several of the rates are highly technical. It takes up to 2 years to train them. So we have to bring in laterally from other communities female enlisted at the chief petty officer and senior petty officer levels to populate those ships before we bring in junior enlisted.

So that is all going to happen over the next couple years, and so we are very, very positive on it. And I think across the Navy, we are experiencing the qualifications—the quality of young females in the enlisted force and the officer force is extremely good, and they are having a lot of success in those warfare specialties.

Senator Kaine. That is great. Secretary Mabus has spoken recently about the submarine project and has spoken of it in a very optimistic way, and I am glad to hear you echo that.

General Cox?

General Cox. Sir, I had the privilege of being the commandant of cadets at the Air Force Academy just a couple years ago. And if you look back when we first brought women into the Air Force Academy, it was single digits. So when I was there, a single digit percentage. Now it is over 20 percent. We have demonstrated that there is absolutely no issue with the integration of women across the board.

As we have moved forward now into what we have got across the board for the Air Force, there are less than 4,000 billets between the active, guard, and Reserve that are currently restricted to men. That we are working, along with SOCOM and Air Force Special Operations Command, to make sure that we have those gender-neutral standards and we will follow the lead with that as well. But we are well on track to make sure all this is squared away.

Senator Kaine. Great. Thank you. I think many of the members of this committee are very focused on this issue and probably annually we are going to be wanting to get status reports.

Let me just ask a question. I know, General Cox, the Air Force has been conducting force shaping and voluntary separation policies to allow servicemembers to leave before their service commitment as we are looking at reductions in end strength. Can any of you provide sort of any updates about force shaping and voluntary separation policies and how your service branches are approaching those questions?

General Cox. Sir, what we started with is the commitment from the Chief and the Secretary was that we will make sure that all airmen have 6 months' notification prior to any kind of an involuntary separation and that we would focus on making sure that it was a voluntary opportunity prior to any involuntary separation. Right now, we have processed and approved almost 5,000 voluntary separations, whether it is temporary early retirement authority, so that 15- to 20-year authorization or voluntary separation. So we are well on our way. We have all the appropriate authorities to be able to take advantage of all these programs. And so I think we are on track to make sure that is done. And then if there is an involuntary separation, we give at least 4 months prior to them separating.

Senator Kaine. Others of the witnesses on this question?

General Bromberg. Yes, sir. With the magnitude of the cuts in the Army over this time period, we have reduced our recruiting and we have also encouraged attrition, natural attrition. But that is not going to be enough. We are going to have to use involuntary measures. This year we have already conducted one—selected an early retirement board for lieutenant colonels and colonels and asked 236 of those officers to depart. We are in the process right now of conducting officer separation boards that will affect approximately 1,800 captains and majors that will be asked to leave the service this year as well. And additionally, we have also done the same with the senior non-commissioned officers, asked them to retire early, and we will also go down all the way to the staff sergeant level. We just cannot get there to balance our readiness with our future needs without doing involuntary separations.

Senator Kaine. Madam Chairman, my time is up, but could the other two witnesses answer briefly this question?

General Cox. Senator, we are not doing any involuntary right now. As you know, our manpower projections through the FYDP are steady. So we do not see the need at this point to do any involuntary. All of it is through natural attrition.

General Milstead. That is the same with us. Our measured and gradual glide slope, if you will, is focused primarily on natural and voluntary measures.

And I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for those force shaping authorities that you have given us, measures such as TARA, VSP, time in grade waivers. We are making use of these, and they are helping us maintain faith as we draw down.

Senator Kaine. Thank you.

Senator Gillibrand. Senator Ayotte.

Senator Ayotte. I want to thank the chairman.

I want to thank all of our witnesses who are here for their service and leadership for our country.

I just wanted to follow up on this issue of the proposed benefit changes. Number one, let me add my support for what the chair and ranking member want to do with regard to the commission. But as I understand it, just to correct the record, just to make sure it is clear, in fact in 2012 we did authorize TRICARE premium increases and as well pharmacy co-pays in 2013 for active duty family members and retirees. So am I wrong on that on TRICARE?

General COX. We will have to come back to you, Senator. I do not know exactly what date it was.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, I think I remember this coming up before the Armed Services Committee and I have before me the provisions of the defense authorization. So I just want to make sure that that is understood for the record because I believe we have already given authority and it has been implemented with TRICARE premium increases for 2012 for retirees and as well for pharmacy co-pays in 2013.

And one thing that I think is just an overall question that all of us need to think about—and I mean us collectively as the Congress—is that when we are facing in the overall fiscal picture that two-thirds of our spending is focused on mandatory entitlement programs that need significant reforms—and if we do not address them, ultimately you are going to eat up all discretionary spending, including defense spending—then here we are standing, asking—I understand why you are asking it and I understand the challenges you are facing on a budgetary level with regard to readiness. But basically I see us again asking our men and women in uniform, who have sacrificed the most, to take these kinds of cuts first, whether it is to their health care, whether it is to their housing, whether it is to their commissary.

And I think a question we should ask ourselves here in the Congress, is this the right thing to do when we are not willing to take on some of the bigger, harder questions? And again, we are putting you in the situation where you have to say to us, well, our personnel costs have risen. We all know that the greatest asset we have in our military are our people.

I am not asking you to answer that. I am just making that as a statement. And I think it is a question for all of us that we should look in the mirror and answer for ourselves before we ask our men and women to make these kinds of sacrifices.

But I do have one question that I am very worried about with regard to these proposals. Regardless, we have got the commission. We are waiting for what the commission is going to say. And that is the impact on our junior enlisted because it seems to me that if we are going to increase commissary costs or reduce the percentage of basic allowance for housing, that the group that could get hit the most are the junior enlisted because of the amount that they make. And I do not know. And I have asked this in prior panels. But I think it is important for us to understand what does that do to your average junior enlisted. So I would like to know what diminishes their pay overall and their package because in terms of what they make because I think we need to understand that from an average perspective of a junior enlisted, not that I want to see

any of you more senior members to be put in a position, given the sacrifices you have made. But I am thinking about our junior enlisted men and women who really make the least amount. And some of them, unfortunately, have been on food stamps and things like that, which is shameful. So I think this is a consideration for us. So I would like to hear back on that of what the impact specifically is, how much a junior enlisted on average makes, what does this do in terms of their take-home.

General BROMBERG. Yes, ma'am. We will follow up with specifics on his actual pay.

Senator GILLIBRAND. That would be great because I think it is important for all of us to understand that with that category of individuals in particular.

General BROMBERG. If I could, ma'am. We have got to look at it as a holistic package because not all the junior enlisted are married. We have to look at married. We have to look at single, who is living in barracks. And we have got to put that together so you can understand the whole thing.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator GILLIBRAND. No. I think that would be great. I just want to know because we ask a lot from them, and I want to make sure because they are the ones that make the least.

The one issue I wanted to follow up, General Milstead, on the Marine Corps—so one thing that I want to praise you for and thank you for is I had the chance to have dinner with the Commandant recently. And as I understand, he is reaching out into the civilian sector, including to people like Sheryl Sandberg, to say how do we do a better job of actually keeping women in the Marine Corps so that they can go on and serve in more senior leadership positions. So can you tell us about that? Because I was very encouraged when I heard what he is trying to do to really keep women in the Marine Corps, not just enlistment but for the long haul to help lead the Marine Corps.

General MILSTEAD. We are about a year into a talent management task force effort that crosses the width and breadth of the Marine Corps, focused on primarily the officer ranks. I hesitate to use the word "diversity," but it is across the entire spectrum.

And one of the task forces focuses on women and how do we retain women because, many of them—they have to make this tough decision. You know, am I going to stay at this or am I going to do the things that I want to do? I want to be a mother. I want to have a house. I want to do these things. Can they do both or whatever? Just talking earlier today with one of our female colonels, and it came up. Often it is just somebody stopping and saying what do I have to keep you in the Marine Corps. What is it you need? What is it we can do?

And we are more attuned to this today. I am in my 40th year of this. I mean, it was night and day when I first began. And the Commandant has reached out. But it is tough because we have to grow. In industry, you can bring somebody in laterally. I can bring a female vice president in. I have to grow a colonel, and that takes 18–19 years. So we are working very hard at this.

But I will end with that we have been downsizing over the past 3 years, and in those 3 years, we have still managed, be it small, but we have increased our percentage of females within the U.S. Marine Corps.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, I think this is important, and I just want to make sure that people understand that you are reaching outside into the civilian sector to women leaders in the country to really—with a desire to keep women in leadership in the military. And I was very encouraged by what I heard, the efforts, affirmative efforts, that the Marine Corps is making, and I am sure the other services are trying to make similar efforts. So I thank you for that.

And I also very much appreciate what all of you are doing.

I am going to submit some questions for the record with regard to how things are going with the special victims counsel on the sexual assault issue, which I think has made a huge step forward in terms of providing support for victims and of seeing increased reporting of sexual assaults. So I will submit those for the record.

And I thank you all for being here.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

And when you respond to Senator Ayotte's questions on that specifically, I would be grateful for the response as well because it is an issue we are going to follow together to make sure it works as intended.

Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Gentlemen, I apologize for being late. I was meeting with a deputy secretary of the UN trying to make it so you do not have to do what it is you do any more than necessary. [Laughter.]

Admiral Moran, the CNO was recently talking about longer deployments, additions to ship manning in terms of the budget. We are going to talk about salary and some of the personnel challenges that you face. But what about the sort of non-financial? Are there morale issues in terms of multiple deployments, longer deployments? Is there a stress factor on your men and women?

Admiral MORAN. Thanks for the question, Senator.

Absolutely. I would say the thing that I hear most back from sailors out in the fleet is this notion of being very unpredictable the last several years, 13 years of combat, but especially the latter half of those 13 years for the Navy has been stressful in the sense that we have had back-to-back deployments, long deployments of carrier strike groups around the Fifth Fleet, Arabian Gulf area, out in the Pacific. And those unpredictable moments put a lot of stress on sailors and families in particular. When a spouse of a sailor kisses her husband or says goodbye to his wife and the comment is I will see you when I see you, it is a pretty good indicator that there is a sense of unpredictability about when they are going to see them again coming off deployment.

So we have had a lot of extended deployments to deal with international and national emergencies around the globe. You think Syria. You think Libya. You think all of those places where naval forces were in the area and were asked to extend to participate in providing deterrence or cover for our allies and friends.

So that is driving the discussion about how we can make deployments more predictable. And one way to do that is to go to a slight-

ly longer deployment schedule but stay committed to that deployment schedule. In other words, if you are going to sign up for 8-month deployments, then you better stick to 8-month deployments. So that is what the CNO is referring to in those longer deployment issues.

Senator KING. I will address this question to you, Admiral, but any of you can chime in. Sequestration raises its ugly head again in 2016. What are the impacts that you see there in terms of deployments and other kind of readiness, training, and those kinds of activities? I will start with you, Admiral, but I would like to hear from you guys as well.

Admiral MORAN. Yes, sir. Well, 2013 was a really tough year for all of us. In the Navy, we canceled deployments. We delayed the deployment of the Truman Strike Group. We brought air wings back and put them down to the tactical hard deck, which is essentially minimum flying that just keeps them safe as opposed to proficient. And those over time, the longer you stay at that level of training for aviators in particular, there is a cost on the back end.

Senator KING. You do not have to speculate on 2016 because you experienced it in 2013.

Admiral MORAN. Precisely, yes, sir. So I think we are back to something similar to that because, as you know, sequestration is—the rules under that law do not allow us to move money around in different colors of money and pots of money to make up for operational readiness accounts.

Senator KING. Well, it was designed to be stupid and it succeeded brilliantly.

Admiral MORAN. Yes, sir. We felt that pain.

Senator KING. You may not want to say that, but I can say that.

Admiral MORAN. So I think if we do not see some relief on sequestration, it is possible that 2016 and beyond could look a lot like what 2013 did.

Senator KING. Well, as a matter of fact, my impression is it may be worse because in 2013 there were some unused monies, there were funds that carried over that are not going to be there.

Admiral MORAN. In the Navy, that is true, yes, sir. We have used up the money that we were able to cobble together from accounts from different year and different colors of money in 2013 just to make up for some of the operational impacts.

Senator KING. Gentlemen, your view.

General BROMBERG. Sequestration drives the Army down to a far lower level than 450,000 that is being discussed today. So that will prevent us from being able to execute—

Senator KING. Full sequestration would take you to 420,000.

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir. And it will drive us to a level that we cannot support the national strategy as written today. That is our big concern.

To bring it back to your earlier question, sir, so if you talk about longer deployments or more deployments today, we do not see the demand changing. So if the demand for forces stays as high as it is with a smaller force, our ability to cycle those forces, give that break time in between, this cumulative effect is only going to get more challenging. Lump that with decreased ability pay for readi-

ness at the same time. It is going to put us in a really tight situation. It is very, very untenable for us.

Senator KING. And we talk about readiness. Readiness really involves risk.

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir, and that is where we are going to start taking unacceptable risk.

Senator KING. And risk equals young men and women's lives.

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. General, your thoughts.

General MILSTEAD. Well, first, most marines join the Marine Corps to deploy. That is why they join the U.S. Marine Corps. They want to deploy. So if you take us to sequestration, we have already said that is going to be 175,000. That is not a strategy-based number. That is a fiscally based number. That will be about a one to two dwell. And there will be risk, and I will codify risk in that if we have an MCO, a major contingency operation—the Marine Corps is going to war—there will be no dwell. We are all going. We will leave some folks in the back to—

Senator KING. You are all going for the duration.

General MILSTEAD. We are going to war and we will come home when it is done. That is your 175,000 force in the Marine Corps under full sequestration under an MCO.

Senator KING. General, what is happening in the Air Force?

General COX. Sir, we lived through this, obviously, in 2013. So 31 fighter squadrons were grounded. We need to have our entire CAF, combat air forces. 80 percent of that has to be ready in 30 days. We do not have tiered readiness. So when you ground squadrons like that, you cannot meet the MCO that the general is talking about.

Senator KING. And is there not a lag time. If you ground the squadron and you do not have the training, it is not like you can just turn it back on in a day. Is that not correct?

General COX. That is correct.

Senator KING. Let me ask a different kind of question because this is personnel and we are talking about compensation and those kinds of things. How are you doing on recruiting? Are you getting the people you need? I mean, that is the ultimate test of whether compensation is adequate. Just very quickly. I am out of time.

General BROMBERG. Sir, for this year, we have met our recruiting goals. We see our challenge in the future with more people having challenges with meeting our standards to recruit, and then we have to look at the compensation as you go forward and see how that plays to get this All-Volunteer Force. Today we are okay. The future is our concern.

Admiral MORAN. Recruiting. We just hit our 81st consecutive month of meeting goal. But we are seeing our attainment of that goal later in the month, which means it is getting harder to meet our goal. So that is something we are tracking very closely.

Senator KING. Does your recruiting relate to the economy? If the economy were stronger, would it be harder?

Admiral MORAN. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. So as the economy hopefully strengthens, that is going to create issues.

Admiral MORAN. Sir, we have to watch both recruiting and retention. Those two together will give us indicators in the health of the force going forward.

Senator KING. General?

General COX. Sir, right now we are meeting our recruiting goals. The same thing with the economy. We will see in the future. But we just need to make sure we have the right compensation package for an All-Volunteer Force.

Senator KING. Marines?

General MILSTEAD. We have been at war for 13 years, and if a young man walks into a recruiting office today and signs up, he is going to have to wait 6 to 8 months before he ships. They still want to join the Marine Corps. And so we are doing well.

Senator KING. So you, in effect, have a waiting list.

General MILSTEAD. We do. You know, a female will ship a little sooner, but the young men and women—and it is 99.7 percent tier one, which means high school graduates. The mental category 3 alphas are around 75 percent. They join the Marine Corps because they want to join the Marine Corps.

Senator KING. It speaks well of your organization I believe.

Madam Chair, thank you.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Senator King.

Thank you all for your testimony. This is extremely vital and important to the deliberations we will pursue in writing the next NDAA. Thank you so much.

Senator KING. Madam Chairman, can I ask one other question?

Senator GILLIBRAND. Go ahead.

Senator KING. I apologize.

We were talking about lowering the size of the services. Army—we hope it does not go to 420,000, but it is probably going to somewhere in the neighborhood of 450,000. I am interested in what you are doing for people who are leaving. The extent to which there is out-placement counseling—you know, you all were talking about recruiters. I want to know if you have people to help these young people going out into the job force. I think that is very important because, as the services do shrink somewhat, we want to be sure that these young people have the best opportunity.

General BROMBERG. Yes, sir. We have a very robust program, over 700 counselors worldwide to help people become career-ready. We are meeting the career-ready standards by the Veterans Opportunity to Work Act. We have great partnerships across the Nation and globally with large companies, small companies to help soldiers transition. We are in our first full year of all these. So we are getting better and better with compliance. We start 12 months out before a soldier leaves the Service so they have a full year to start getting ready. We have great examples of programs that are credentialing programs. We have over 12,000 people that are signed up, enrolled in credentialing programs today that give them a civilian credential for their military occupation. So we have a whole wealth of programs that we think we are supporting the soldiers with.

Senator KING. I presume you all are doing similar kinds of programs. I just think it is very important, and the credentialing thing—I would love to work with you on that because the idea that

you have an electrician in the military and they need an electrician's license in one of the other States—I mean, that ought to be automatic. I mean, to the extent we can do that, that to me would be a very high priority. Thank you. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Senator GILLIBRAND. We are expecting a vote around 11:00 but I am going to start the next panel, and we will take a break when the vote starts. So the second panel is welcome to come up. Please join us. Please be seated.

On the second panel, we have the senior enlisted advisors of the military services: Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Michael D. Stevens, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Michael P. Barrett. I now invite you to present your opening statements. Sergeant Major?

STATEMENT OF SGT RAYMOND F. CHANDLER III, U.S. ARMY

Sergeant CHANDLER. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Graham, and distinguished members of this committee, thanks for the invitation to speak today. Representing the Army that I love is a very humbling experience, and I appreciate the support this committee has given over the past several years.

This past year has brought some significant changes to the Army, including sequestration, a Government shutdown, furloughs, and an accelerated drawdown. As always, the Army team has risen to the challenge.

In this 13th year of our longest war, more than 35,000 soldiers, as you well know, are still in Afghanistan, and right now it is about 7 p.m. there and there are several young Army non-commissioned officers and soldiers who are working with our Afghan partners to conduct combat operations. Their focus, and rightly so, is helping the Afghans to get better so they can defend themselves into the future.

An additional 120,000 soldiers are forward stationed or deployed in nearly 150 countries.

And finally, lest we never forget, more than 5,000 men and women from the Army have given their lives on behalf of the Nation since September 11. Their service and sacrifice cannot be forgotten.

But even in the midst of these challenges, our mission has not changed, which is to prevent conflict, shape the environment, and when necessary, fight and win our Nation's wars.

As General Odierno has recently stated, it is essential that our total Army, active, guard, and Reserve, be ready to accomplish the range of military operations we are directed to perform. And we must also have a range of capabilities postured in the proper components in order to have a sustainable force mix both now and into the future.

This year, I have traveled tens of thousands of miles to visit our soldiers serving in harm's way and dozens of other locations across this Nation and around the world where soldiers, families, and our Department of the Army civilians are assigned. And my wife is

here with me today who is a travel partner with me and speaks with their family members and has a great perspective which she informs me of everywhere we go.

While there, I break bread with our soldiers, engage in conversations, and answer their questions. And I would like to take this opportunity to share our soldiers' top five concerns over this past year, but before I begin, you should know that I have never received a question or comment from anyone on our Army team about being unwilling or unable to follow through on their oath of service. They remain committed to do what the Nation asked of them. They recognize there are many threats on the horizon, and they want to be ready.

So the fifth most common concern is about the state of readiness of our Army. Our soldiers are concerned about the availability of the training and equipment that has allowed them to be successful and victorious over these past 13 years. They are concerned about the decreasing end strength which may embolden our potential enemies. But I tell them that the current drawdown is our only course of action to follow through on our commitment to them, the Army, and the American people, to be ready when the Nation calls.

The fourth top concern is uncertainty. During the furloughs of the last summer and the Government shutdown in the fall, our civilians shared their fears about continued employment, and soldiers and families told me about the ripple effects it has had on them. That uncertainty and unpredictability has become a major distraction for our Army. I would like to tell you thanks for passing the Bipartisan Budget Act which gives us some measure of predictability and the ability to rebuild readiness over the next 2 years. However, this is a short-term fix and sequestration, as you well know, looms in 2016 and beyond.

The third top concern is about indiscipline in our ranks, including sexual harassment and assault. During every town hall over the past 2 years, I have told soldiers about the cost of this threat to our Army, its victims, and ultimately the American people whom we serve. Over the past 8 months, however, the soldiers in the audience have been responding more positively with questions about their responsibility, suggestions on how the Army can do better, and several instances of soldiers sharing their experience as a survivor to educate others. I finish by telling them that there can be no bystanders in these issues and that as Army professionals, we have a duty to police our force and ensure every soldier, no matter what rank or position, is a person of character and commitment.

Their second top concern includes regulatory changes that have been ongoing within our Army for the past several years. These primarily focus around the Army uniform and personal appearance. Soldiers know the Army is based on discipline and standards. So they ask me how to continue to look and act like an Army professional. Related to this, I have received questions about new policies on tattoos, the uniform as they wear it, and how the Army will evaluate who can serve in a particular military career field.

And finally, the number one concern of our soldiers relates to the work of the Department of Defense and Congress on the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission. Some of their concerns seem to come and go. For instance, commissaries

has only recently become a focus of concern. Tuition assistance last year and TRICARE health coverage for family members. But the one issue that has never wavered is retirement reform. I tell soldiers that no one, including our military leaders, our Senators and Representatives, and the President, has stated that our current retirement pay will change for those who currently serve, but that it may, as a part of this commission, change in the future. I tell them that you and your colleagues have told us of your decisions and will honor their service and sacrifice.

As we work collectively on this issue, we must remain aware that proposed changes not only affect our ability to recruit future soldiers and their families but also retain our highly competent and battle-tested soldiers who are integral to our continued defense superiority. Today we have the best Army in the world. We are the best equipped, trained, and led. And although we may get leaner, we will still be the best Army in the world in 5 years, in 10 years, and as long as this Nation needs an Army.

Let me close by saying that as the Sergeant Major of the Army, the best part of my job is visiting our soldiers, families, and civilians around the world. Their professionalism, dedication, and sacrifice they display every day is the reason our Army is the envy of every other in the world. I leave our Army knowing that it is in great hands. Our future is assured because of the brave young men and women who still come forward today and will into the future saying, send me, I will defend the American people and our way of life.

Thank you for what you do. I appreciate this opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Sergeant Chandler follows:]

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Sergeant Major.

Before we hear from Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Michael Stevens, we are going to go vote. It should probably take me no more than 10 minutes to go there and come back. So we will resume in 10 minutes. Thank you. [Recess.]

Thank you, gentlemen.

Our next speaker. I am pleased to present Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Michael Stevens.

STATEMENT OF MCPO MICHAEL D. STEVENS, U.S. NAVY

Chief STEVENS. Good morning, Chairman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Graham, and distinguished members of this subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my thoughts on the tone of our Navy's enlisted force. The support that each of you have provided to our men and women in uniform has had an incredible impact on their quality of life and quality of work which, in turn, produces a healthy quality of service. Each of these elements are vital to our Navy's force and set the tone for effective warfighting and sustained operational readiness.

Today as we sit here, 108 of our 288 deployable ships are underway. More than 323,000 Active sailors and 61,000 Reserves are projecting U.S. naval sea power and forward presence worldwide. Over the past 18 months, I visited with thousands of these sailors who continue to stand the watch for the United States of America every day. I have also observed firsthand the quality of life our

sailors and their families enjoy. I have also witnessed the many challenges they face.

Areas that concern me with respect to the tone of the force include, but are not limited to, alcohol abuse, sexual assault, suicide, domestic violence, and potential impacts with regard to pay and benefits.

I understand the reasoning and the necessity in balancing our authorized military spending, and I agree it is vitally important that we balance quality of work with quality of life so that we can provide our sailors and families with the best quality of service. After all, our slice of the pie is only so big.

The Navy has been asked to slow growth, to look at those things which could be scaled back with regard to pay and benefits, and this we have done. In testimony earlier this year before the House Appropriations subcommittee, I mentioned one of the greatest weapons systems we can provide the U.S. Navy is unit morale. I made that comment with emphasis because I am concerned with the potential intensity in which slowing of growth may occur. Although I understand there may always be a little fat to trim, as I look into the future, I believe we are dangerously close to cutting into muscle, and we simply cannot afford to cut into bone. We cannot afford to cut into the weapons system I just mentioned.

I am also concerned that this year's budget may become the new standard. My sailors ask me will this become the new norm. We must provide the same level of care and commitment that we expect our sailors to offer their country. Our military family and support programs should not—I repeat should not—become a casualty of budgetary uncertainty. The Chief of Naval Operations and I understand nothing comes second to combat readiness, and we are committed to preserving our people and our free programs to the fullest extent possible. Under the current fiscal constraints, budget uncertainty will likely continue to place emotional and economic strain on our sailors and their families.

As we navigate through these challenges, I have no doubt that you will do your very best to ensure our sailors and their families have what is necessary to carry out our Navy's mission. The current fiscal situation, I will be perfectly clear with you, is not a topic I intend to sell our sailors. I will, however, find a way to explain this to them because I am committed to giving them nothing less than the truth. Together, we will manage, work through, and solve these difficult challenges.

On behalf of our sailors and their families serving around the world, I sincerely thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to taking your questions.

[The prepared statement of Chief Stevens follows:]

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody.

STATEMENT OF CMSGT JAMES A. CODY, U.S. AIR FORCE

Sergeant CODY. Chairman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Graham, although I know he had to step out, and certainly distinguished members of the subcommittee, I thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. It is my absolute honor to be here with my fellow service senior enlisted advisors as we represent the fine men

and women who serve our great Nation. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to share with you the concerns of not just the enlisted force but the 690,000 total force airmen and their families serving in the active duty, the Air National Guard, the Air Force Reserve, and our civilian workforce.

America's airmen continue to generate the greatest Air Force the world has ever known. They are innovative, dedicated, and passionate men and women who understand freedom does not come without a cost. It must be fought for and won.

Throughout the last 20-plus years of sustained operations, they have continued to dominate in the multidimensional battlefield of air space and cyber space. They have never wavered from their commitment to serve our Nation, and they have continuously demonstrated our core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do.

Even as they confront one challenge after another, this past year our Air Force has faced challenges on multiple fronts. We pushed through a period of sequestration, which forced us to stand down flying squadrons, furlough civilians, limit morale, welfare, and recreation services, and reduce and in some cases eliminate important education and training opportunities. We have endured a Government shutdown and significant uncertainty in turn with respect to mission capability, compensation, and the meaning of service in the world's greatest Air Force. There is no question the past year has been extremely stressful on all members of our Air Force.

This year brings continued stress and continued uncertainty as we move toward a new normal operational tempo and fiscal reality. We are currently taking action to reduce, significantly reduce, the size of the Air Force by more than 16,000 airmen who have proudly dedicated their lives in service of our great Nation. Our airmen continue to move forward without answers to many questions on future compensation and benefits. While these actions and compensations are absolutely necessary to ensure critical modernization and to restore force readiness, the combined impact brings continued uncertainty and stress on our airmen.

Transparency and communication amongst our airmen and families will be critical as we move forward. We cannot forget that our Air Force is powered by people, airmen who clearly give us the advantage.

Throughout the past year, I have traveled to multiple bases to visit tens of thousands of airmen and their families, and I can tell you candidly the challenges and continued uncertainty are not lost on the force. However, regardless of the uncertainty, you will be proud to know the first concern of our airmen is mission accomplishment. They are truly doing amazing work around the world every day.

In 2013 alone, U.S. airmen flew over 27,000 intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions, removing 1,500 enemy combatants from the fight. They flew more than 27,000 air support air sorties, launched 8 national security space missions, dropped 11 million pounds of combat-enabling sustainment to coalition forces on the ground in Afghanistan, and airlifted 5,133 wounded soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines and injured civilians around the globe. Additionally, they maintained a continued presence of nearly

23,000 airmen in the CENTCOM region and supported combatant commanders in all corners of the globe with more than 217,000 airmen.

Tragically, the commitment to preserve freedom comes at a cost. In 2013, we lost 176 young men and women who proudly answered the call to serve. Today we have more than 3,000 wounded warrior airmen enrolled in our recovery care program, 240 of those airmen still serving on active duty. Our airmen have faced and overcome challenges at every turn and continue to serve honorably and proudly in defense of our Nation. They count on your leadership to ensure they can continue to win the fight for America.

Our Air Force families are also a critical component of our success. My wife Athena who joins me today—she has visited with thousands of these families over the last year, and I would tell you she has witnessed firsthand their passion and commitment to support their member who serves. The commitment to our Nation is not lost on any of them, but we cannot forget it is who generates us every day. They serve alongside each and every one of us. They see loved ones deployed to war zones and foreign countries. Their faith and support is critical to our airmen and enable the force to focus and maintain a dedicated mission accomplishment. Our airmen and families are our most important resource.

We must remain committed to fostering a culture of dignity and respect and to ensuring an environment where all airmen have the opportunity to excel. In order for airmen to continue to serve as leaders and warriors for America, we must also remain focused on recruiting, retaining, and training and developing supporting a world-class All-Volunteer Force.

I thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Sergeant Cody follows:]

Senator GILLIBRAND. Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Michael P. Barrett.

STATEMENT OF SGT MAJ MICHAEL P. BARRETT, U.S. MARINE CORPS

Sergeant BARRETT. Chairman Gillibrand, Senator Kaine, good afternoon. This is my fourth opportunity to address Congress and discuss important quality of life issues, personnel issues, and our commitment to our marines and their families. It is my privilege to appear before you today.

The last 12 years have been most challenging. We are profoundly grateful for your fidelity and support.

As you are well aware, the global environment is not getting any nicer. Clever enemies are searching for windows of vulnerability and to exploit our liberties and our security. And with the fiscal constraints we are enduring, we must, more than ever, stay committed to our recruiting and our retention, making marines. Our warfighter readiness, being most ready when our Nation is least ready. Care for our wounded, ill, and injured, and our family care programs, preserving strong families. Transition readiness, returning quality citizens after their selfless service. Combating social ills, prevention, accountability, treatment, and resiliency. And

maintaining our facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization for our billions of dollars worth of infrastructure.

Today I report more than 37,000 marines are forward deployed, forward engaged, shaping, training, and deterring aggression around the globe, supporting all 6 geographical combatant commanders. We are providing our Nation the capability to contain crisis, fill the gap, or hold the line. We may be done with Afghanistan this year, but those that we have been fighting are not done with us.

At our core, the Marine Corps is the Nation's crisis response force, and fulfilling this role is our top priority. We have met and continue to meet our obligations in current conflicts, emerging crises, and steady state operations. To that point and most recently, your marines' efforts have saved lives, provided much needed relief, and evacuated over 19,000 victims ravaged by Typhoon Haiyan. Our special purpose marine air ground task force crisis response successfully executed a non-combat evacuation operation in South Sudan and provided reinforcements to other U.S. embassies. We have participated in hundreds of theater security cooperation activities with the armed forces of more than 50 partner nations. The 13th, 22nd, and 31st Marine Expeditionary Units are afloat, and they stand ready as a rapid response force capability providing stability in their area of responsibility. And we continue to stand alongside the Afghan National Security Forces engaged in combat, conducting counter-insurgency and security force assistance advisory missions.

Marines can face America's adversaries on the front line or respond to any emerging crisis because of the care and support we provide our families on the homefront. With the progress that we have made in our warfighting capabilities and marine family readiness programs over this past decade-plus and as we draw to move to a post-OEF environment, the Corps remains committed to building the most ready force our Nation can afford, balanced across our pillars of readiness: high quality people, unit readiness, the capability and capacity to meet the combatant command requirements, the infrastructure sustainment and equipment modernization.

We are proud of our reputation for frugality and remain a best value for our country's defense. In these times of budget austerity, you can hold high expectations for your Corps to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

The Marine Corps will continue to meet the needs of the combatant commanders as a strategically mobile force optimized for forward presence and be the crisis response force of choice for our leadership. We may have less, but it does mean we will be doing less nor will we do it any less than best.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

[The prepared statement of Sergeant Barrett follows:]

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thanks to each of you.

The Department has proposed a number of compensation and benefit-related proposals, although we have not seen the full details. They are basically a 1 percent pay raise for most military personnel rather than the 1.8 percent that would take effect under current law, 1-year pay freeze for general and flag officers, a slight reduction in the growth of housing allowances over time. Essen-

tially servicemembers would pay 5 percent of their housing costs out of pocket. A phased reduction by \$1 billion of the annual direct subsidy provided by military commissaries, down from the current subsidy of \$1.4 billion. An increase in TRICARE enrollment fees and pharmacy co-pays and consolidation of the TRICARE health programs.

Secretary Hagel testified a few weeks ago that the savings from these proposals would be reallocated to address readiness and modernization shortfalls. As I said in my opening statement, these proposals will be difficult for many of us on this committee to support. I am particularly concerned that we are not waiting for the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, which is tasked with taking a comprehensive look at these benefits.

And this is for each of you to answer as you see fit. What will the impact of the changes be on our servicemembers, especially our lower enlisted troops and families? What are you currently hearing from the enlisted ranks? What are the biggest concerns about these cuts? How important is the commissary benefit, in particular to our most junior servicemembers? Is there another way to deal with the commissaries? And will the enactment of these proposals harm recruiting and retention?

Sergeant CHANDLER. Yes, ma'am. So you wanted to spend some time with commissaries. To be quite honest, the commissaries have not been in the narrative until just recently, comparatively speaking to, for instance, retirement reform. So there is a bit of conversation. I will tell you, like I said in my oral statement, it is not the most important issue from soldiers. We do hear more from family members. A lot of it was, in our case anyway, the publication called the "Army Times" which ran an article that said, you know, closing commissaries. That has never been the intention. I am sure that the Chief of Staff of the Army has already spoken to that fact for the Army.

But there is, obviously, going to be an impact for everyone, including our junior servicemembers, if we do roll back the cost savings from on average 30 percent to, say, 20 percent. It is going to have an impact, and cumulatively each one of these things will have an impact on our soldiers and families. I mean, I think that is fairly obvious.

Our concern is there are things within the current DECA, legislative issues and also policy issues, that I believe we can find some efficiencies which may offset some of the reduction in cost savings. For instance, the ability to use or sell generic items are a challenge. We cannot do that in the commissary. So if I am a young soldier and I choose to go the commissary and the only thing I can buy is Green Giant or Hunt's brands, but I can go to Walmart and get Great Value and that is 30 cents less for a can of corn than it is in the commissary, there is a perception in some places where the value is not as high as we say in the Army—or in the commissary.

So each of us sits on the DECA BOD. There is a strategy in place to do a holistic review and to make some legislative proposals which will free up their ability to actually create a business model. I think many of us may not understand that the commissary is not in competition with anyone. And so you got to recognize how do you

draw the folks that you serve into the commissary. I think one of those is to offer like items which may be generics which generate the similar cost savings.

So I think we have got some work to do, both legislatively and policy-wise. I understand because for the Army, this is truly about readiness. You know, we pay about \$400 million into the commissary to sustain the benefit, and that is \$400 million we can apply to some other readiness need because frankly, for the Army, the most important thing is to have ready soldiers to do what we need to do and not send someone in harm's way untrained. And you have got to find that balance. And we are in that position where we have got to look at everything to find the savings we need.

Chief STEVENS. Senator, I think it is important that we first understand that the decisions to slow growth is not something, if we were given a choice, that we want to do. Given the fact that the slice of the pie is only so big, this is what we must do in order to maintain readiness. So we are making some tough decisions and tough recommendations with regard to slowing of growth.

How will that impact our people? I think it is fair to say that if it is all said and done or when it is all said and done, that their buying power will not be as good tomorrow as it is today. So it will have some impact on their quality of life.

We also recognize that there will have to be some slowing of growth in quality of life so we can hopefully recapitalize those monies into what we call quality of work areas because our sailors want to have a good quality of work. They want the people, the parts, the training, the things that they need day to day to do their job. In order for the Navy to be able to provide that to them, there is going to have to be some offset somewhere. And so we recognize that that is difficult, but we owe it to them to make sure that they have a good quality of life, a good quality of work, and in turn, they and their families will have, we hope, a positive and good quality of service.

How will it affect—I have been asked many times how do you think it will affect retention and enlistment. And what I say is I do not know because every generation of sailor has their own reason for serving. Much of it is the same, but generation to generation there are some differences. Will it have a negative impact on recruiting and retention? It might but I could not say that because I do not know. Will it have a positive impact? Probably not. It may stay the same. It may get a little bit worse, but it certainly is not going to increase retention or increase enlistment. And so we are going to have to shoulder that with our recruiting commands and with command leadership to encourage our people to come in and to stay.

I agree with what Sergeant Major Chandler said with the commissaries. His comments are something that we have all talked about, and I can speak for myself when I say that I agree exactly with what he said on commissaries.

Sergeant BARRETT. And I will not belabor exactly both remarks that the Sergeant Major of the Army and the MCPON have said.

Ma'am, to go right to the very heart of your question, first of all, marines do not run around and asking—what is on their mind is

compensation benefits or retirement modernization. That is not on their minds. As I walk around and talk to the thousands of audiences, they want to know into whose neck do we put a boot next. They want to know about what new equipment are we getting. Are we continuing to modernize? You know, just because the budget sucks, does that mean we are not going to get any more gear? Are we going to stay ahead of our competitors?

And the other thing they always ask about is they want to know about training. We are a force that has a bias for action, and we are a happy lot when we are deployed. Idle hands are not good in the Marine Corps. Keep us out there forward deployed just like our moniker tells us that is where we need to be. So that is what is on their mind actually.

And I will tell you promotion and retention and money does eventually come up, but it is not in the top three. It is normally four, five, six, or seven.

And to get to the point about what the Sergeant Major and the MCPON already said, if we do not get a hold of slowing the growth, if we do not pay a little bit more attention to the health care that we so generously have received wonderful packages—in my 33 years, I have never seen this level of quality of life ever. We have never had it so good. And I say that point because if we do not get a hold of slowing the growth, we will become an entitlements-based, a health care provider-based Corps and not a warfighting organization. If we do not step back and take a look at a 1 percent pay, that makes sense because our quality of life is good. Hey, you know what? Out-of-pocket? You know what? I truly believe it will raise discipline and it will raise it because you will have better spending habits. You will not be so wasteful.

I do believe in the one TRICARE model because there will be savings, and there will be less admin burden on those who have to perform all those things.

And, you know, should there be some type of subsidy reduction to the commissary? Well, you already heard the Sergeant Major of the Army talk about it. I am sure there is a better model out there, but in the grand scheme of things, if we do not get a hold of this, it is going to impact our warfighting capability. It is going to impact our investment for the next challenge.

Like I said, we might be done in Afghanistan, the people we are fighting, but they are not done with us, and we need to be more prepared for what is around the corner.

Sergeant CODY. Ma'am, I think first I would kind of set the stage for my comments because I certainly agree with all my fellow service senior enlisted advisors, and believe me, we all do talk about this collectively as we think about the impacts.

But I want to be real clear that our airmen are not overpaid. So this discussion we are having about compensation in the military is not because we feel they are overpaid. They have earned everything that they receive today, all service men and women and their families have. They have sacrificed for what they served for.

But I fully support our budget because at the end of the day, I would tell you if you want the real feedback from our airmen and their families of what they want, they do not want to have a conversation about compensation. They just want you to give us more

money so we do not have to. I mean, that is the clear text if you want to hear what they would say.

You know, when Athena meets with their families, they are a little bit more vocal about this than the great men and women that actually put the uniform on only because they understand the commitment to serve and everything that you had articulated. They are going to fight in their Nation's war. They will go it regardless. That is what makes them so special.

But make no mistake about it. This has impact. But we have to do it. We have to slow the growth. It has to be constrained somehow.

I will throw some demographics so you can put it in perspective. For our Air Force, about 70 percent of them have served 13 or less years. That is important to note because this is their whole life. 70 percent of our force. And when you think about it, about 50 percent of our entire force is married with children or is single with a child. That is important too when you talk about compensation and how you think about these things.

Just to throw a demographic at you so you know, an E-6 average makes about \$54,000 a year. That includes their BAS, which is a basic allowance for substance, their housing, and their basic pay. And then you can take that all the way down to an E-1, which is about \$23,000 a year. That is important to kind of put in the spectrum of their lifestyle.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Senator KAINE.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

And thank you for your testimony. Thank God for our enlisted. It is what we have asked you to do for the last 13 years. You have done it with a great spirit. But it is unlike anything, really, that we have had a precedent for in the country, and that means there are consequences to it, some of which we know, some of which we do not. But we have to be good stewards in meeting the consequences.

I wanted to ask you a question. I think Senator King asked a question of the first panel when I was gone about credentialing of folks in active service for their skills as they obtain them. This is something I am really interested in. I worry about the unemployment rate of the Iraq and Afghan era veteran, particularly the enlisted. Officers with college degrees have a little bit easier time. Some enlisteds have degrees, but generally the enlisted unemployment rate is the one that is a little bit higher.

I continue to believe that part of the way we get at that—there are some reasons for it that are in the health care side. So we have to honor our responsibilities there. But I continue to believe that part of the way we get at the unemployment rate is to get people credentialed for the skills they attain when they attain them with a credential that a civilian hiring officer understands. And recognizing that that civilian hiring officer—there is only a 1 percent chance that individual would have been in the military. I think we appreciate military service but often may not understand what it is that somebody brings to the table in terms of technical skill or leadership skill.

And so programs like the Solider for Life program in the Army and others—and I know different branches are tackling it in different ways—that are trying to make sure that people get these civilian credentials are important.

And I just would like to hear you talk about efforts within your branches on this or more broadly, the unemployment issues that are faced by enlisteds departing into a tough job market. Especially as we are drawing down in force, more will be departing, and we want to make sure that they get traction right away in a civilian workforce. So offer thoughts on that challenge please.

Chief STEVENS. Senator, for the Navy, we have what is called Credentialing Opportunities Online. It is where you can go and sign up and begin to take advantage of these credentials that the civilian world offers and provides the Navy. So you would take your skill set that you have. My example would be as an aviation structural mechanic. There are certain certifications that you need to do work on aircraft in the civilian world. And you could go to this credentialing online opportunity and you could begin the sign-up process and start to get your hours that you need and the signatures that you need and eventually get this credential. And it transfers over into the civilian world. And we have had that in place for a while.

We also recently implemented a process where a sailor, with the permission of their commanding officer prior to separation, if they know they are going to get out, can go to a vocational or trade school and start working on the certificates that they may need to work in that civilian sector job that would be equivalent to what they are doing in the Navy.

So that, in conjunction with our Transition Assistance Program, as well as the Chief of Naval Operations and I have talked about with our tuition assistance, when we look at how we can best use that, we want to encourage our sailors to take college classes that equate to what their job is in the Navy so that it not only makes them better at their job in the Navy but also makes them more competitive, should they decide to get out of the Navy at some point.

So we have got some good programs in place, and I am happy with them. And I believe we will continue to work on them.

Sergeant BARRETT. In addition, we have a transition readiness seminar, and we have touch points along the way. As a matter of fact, every young marine—the rank of lance corporal—is required to do this Marine Corps Institute book. It is a marine online course, and it is called Leading Marines. And attached to that course is a course called Your Readiness, and it was developed by our personal and professional development personnel that work at our Marine Corps University. And that course teaches you how to start preparing yourself to leave the service if that is what it is you decide to do.

And then we have touch points along the way in the lifecycle of a marine, and as we get closer towards whether or not we are going to decide to stay in the uniform or get out of the uniform, within a 12-month period, you will go to a transition readiness seminar where you will have core training. And the core training is conducted by those from the Department of Labor, from the

Small Business Administration, and from the VA. As a matter of fact, the Troop Talent Act of Credentialing is part of the core training that is given to every single marine before they leave. That way they can present and address what credentials they have that are equivalent to what is going on in the outside world.

Also part of that course is they have the career technical training track which assists marines with the certifications. Along with that, you have pathway training. You are going to decide whether you are going to go get a job when you get out of the service, you want to go to college, you want to get a voc tech or entrepreneurship. Well, you got an opportunity now to go down that particular path you want to go down, and they will prepare you. And you have personal and professional developing counselors that you can meet with before, during, or after all this training to ensure that you are completely set up for being prepared for when you decide to take off the uniform.

Sergeant CHANDLER. Senator, I think all of our approaches are very similar. So we have different programs within the Army and the Navy and the Marine Corps. Speaking for the Army, we put a lot of focus on the same COOL program, Credentialing Opportunities Online.

A success story for us what we have going on at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in the State of Washington where we have partnered with trade unions. With the commitment of the soldier actually before they leave the service, the union will have a job for them when they leave the service. We have done a lot of work in pipefitting, in plumbing, in HVAC. We are expanding that at other installations really trying to leverage both the community college and vocational and technical schools, along with like the unions, to try and help young men and women who may not have made the decision to go back to college, that they can find a skill with the guarantee of employment upon graduation. So in the Army's case, I think that is a part of the credentialing.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much.

Sergeant CODY. I would only add we also do the credentialing online, but what we do a little unique in the Air Force too is we have what is called the Community College of the Air Force, and every career field is lined up to be able earn a 2-year degree, technical degree associated with that career field. And they can do that within their first enlistment. So that means they do walk out with a tangible that we have already kind of done the work to show that. And we also have a partner program where they can take that with just over 50 universities. It is an associate to bachelor program where they take full credit—give them—and they walk in as a junior into that college, and they can continue to pursue their undergraduate degree. So, again, it kind of helps. We have the credentialing programs. We are also working to make sure they have that ability to walk out with at least a 2-year degree and then potentially a 4-year degree.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Senator King?

Senator KING. Thank you.

Each of you heard the chair list the personnel changes. As you well know what they are, the 1 percent, commissaries. Do each of you support that proposal?

Sergeant BARRETT. The Marine Corps does, sir.

Chief STEVENS. Yes, sir, the Navy does.

Sergeant CHANDLER. The Army does, sir.

Sergeant CODY. The Air Force does.

Senator KING. Thank you. I think it is important.

Sergeant Major, your answer to Senator Kaine's question is one of the best answers I have ever heard to any question since I have been here. You were crisp and really, I thought, captured the essence of the dilemma.

Nobody here wants to vote to cut pay or do anything else. The problem is we are in a zero sum world. And the testimony we had from the Department 2 weeks ago was that this is a \$2.1 billion a year proposition, \$30 billion over 5 years, and that money will come right out of readiness if we do not make these changes. Is that your understanding?

Sergeant BARRETT. It absolutely will. And not only that, we are going to also have to start taking risk in infrastructure sustainment, facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization, furniture, fixture, equipment, personnel support equipment. We do not want to go back to where we were in the 1990s and Y2K when we had to find \$2.8 billion because we were living in poor facilities. We do not want to go back to those days.

Senator KING. Sergeant Major?

Sergeant CHANDLER. Yes, sir. At the end of the day, I do not like this and it is a challenge. But it is what is necessary. We have got to make sure as an Army that at the end of the day, the one thing we have got to make sure, that our soldiers are trained and ready to answer what the Nation is going to ask us to do is going to trump the rest of the things we are going to do.

We got the same challenges as the Marine Corps. We have got these beautiful facilities that BRAC 2005 gave us. They are now going to be transitioning into the sustainment phase of their lifecycle. We made tremendous investments in modernization. We have got to cut a lot of those programs or push them to the right so that we can build sustained readiness in the Army.

A day lost of readiness of training is usually going to take you 2 days to gain it back. And so we have had a readiness deficit in the Army. Obviously, the Bipartisan Budget Agreement has given us some very limited—2 years is not a lot of time to rebuild some level of readiness, but in 2016, again with sequestration, we go right back in the tank. And the only way to provide a ready force is to find those and make those difficult decisions that have to be made in order to get our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines trained.

Senator KING. I hope if we have to make those decisions, you will stand behind us.

Sergeant CHANDLER. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. As far as 2016, I think it is really important to realize that what we have is a breathing space not a solution, and that it is incumbent upon us to be thinking about 2016 and how we mitigate the impacts of the sequester now rather than waiting

until it hits us about a year and a half from now. So I look forward to working with you.

Let me change the subject for a minute. We hear the term “keeping faith” with our troops and “keeping faith” with the people that are joining up. What does a young recruit understand about what they are signing up for? Do they think about retirement? Do they understand? Are they told? Is there anything in writing about here is what the benefits are?

Myself, I feel that once somebody is in the service, they have earned what they are entitled to and that any changes we should make should be prospective for people that have not signed up yet. And if we had made some of those changes in the early 1990s, we would be bearing the benefits of them now instead of trying to make them midstream. But talk to me about what a recruit thinks about when they are signing that paper.

Sergeant CHANDLER. Well, I can only speak for my own experience when I was 19 years old and joined the Army, and I was not thinking about compensation. I was actually thinking about going to Germany and being a tanker for a couple years and then leaving the Army and coming back to Massachusetts where I grew up.

Senator KING. My condolences on that.

Sergeant CHANDLER. Well, sir, you know. [Laughter.]

We provide information to soldiers. They get a lot of information. They will get pamphlets. They will get brochures. Their recruiter will talk to them about the benefits of service.

Now, if you take into fact that an average 19-year-old male—they are really not thinking, I think, in a long-term beyond what do I need to do in order to be able to get out of here and go do something else. We have some limited education on finances while they are in basic training, and we have got opportunities for soldiers to learn about investments and so on while they are at their first duty location. So there is a level of education about what you have earned. I mean, that is the best I have for you right now.

Senator KING. I want to get other thoughts. Is there a problem of recruiters making representations that are not in the documents? Is that an issue, Sergeant Major?

Sergeant BARRETT. Sir, we tell our recruiters whatever you do when you go out there on the street with all those wonderful skills you have just been taught, do not think like a recruiter because the second you start thinking like a recruiter, you are going to try to qualify them. And that is the wrong way to go about it. What you want to do is you just want to go out there and talk about it.

And I made some notes while the Sergeant Major of the Army was talking. You know, .4 percent of the Nation wears the cloth, wears the cloth of one of these services right here. And this has been told to me time and time again when I have met with young marines. They do not want an easy life. They want to be tougher people. It is about pride of belonging and being part of something bigger than self. And I hear that more than I hear anything else when I talk to a young person who, for the first time, was handed the eagle globe and anchor in their dirty little hand, and they grab that thing and they hold it tight. And you see the tears just running down their face. They have just transformed. They just be-

came part of that .4 percent of the Nation that is willing to put it on the line. That is what they talk about, the young people.

Chief STEVENS. I would say that there are many different reasons why young men and women enlist, but primarily that reason is a call to service. They think about, to some degree, the benefits, the pay, those sorts of things, but it is really about service more than anything else.

But I was in San Antonio, Texas at the hospital corps school not too long ago, and I thought I would ask a group of young men and women that were sitting in the room that question, and I was really surprised by the response. I said to them how many of you, when you enlisted, thought that maybe you would make the Navy your career. And two-thirds of their hands went up.

And I look back to the time I came in—I will say it, 1983. If I had been asked that same question and you would have raised your hand, you would have probably been laughed at because most of us that came in then were just thinking 4 years and we are out.

So there is a little bit of a different thought process. I can just speak for this generation because I never asked that question to the two generations before me. But it really is about a call to service more than anything else. But we should not misunderstand the fact that they do appreciate the benefits that they do earn.

Senator KING. Thank you very much, gentlemen. You honor us by your presence here today. I appreciate it.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

And I add my thanks to all of you for testifying and for your service.

It is good to know that the men and women who enlist and who want to serve our country do so out of patriotism and a deep sense of wanting to make a difference in what they do. And I realize—we all realize—it is just a small percentage of our population who answers that call. I like to think that we all do our part to make a difference, but the men and women who do serve need to be treated fairly. So I know that that is what you are all about.

I have a question for Master Chief Stevens. I understand that the Navy already evaluates its servicemembers on whether they foster an environment or atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion per your equal employment opportunity policy. I would like your opinion on adding the criteria to evaluate an individual's ability and efforts at maintaining a command climate which will not tolerate or condone hazing, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and ensures all members of the unit are treated with dignity and respect.

Chief STEVENS. Senator, thank you for the question.

The section of our evaluation performance that you mentioned where talk about command climate and command culture really does fold in what you just mentioned. We expect our leaders at every level to foster the very environment that you talk about, and they are graded on that. And the expectations are that they do create that culture within the organization. We believe that, one, everybody deserves an opportunity or actually that we should set the conditions where everybody has the opportunity to be successful and that everybody is treated with dignity and respect.

But we also recognize that we have work to do, and we are and have been and will continue to work on this very hard. But it is a part of our performance evaluation. You cannot be a commander out there and not foster a climate where people are treated with dignity and respect and expect that command to be successful. And the success of that command is a large part of what they are evaluated on.

Senator HIRONO. So the Navy already does that in its evaluations and for promotions and other decisions with respect to the individual. So do the other services also use the command climate surveys or questionnaires for those purposes? Would anyone else like to respond?

Sergeant CHANDLER. Yes, ma'am. We have a similar approach to the Navy, whether it is at the individual level through an evaluation report or through a unit level activity called a command climate survey that not only does the commander get those results, but now, as an the Army, we have made that a requirement for the senior commander above the unit that has gotten the command climate survey to, in fact, be out-briefed on those results also. And they set up an action plan from there.

Senator HIRONO. So do these surveys or these evaluations—are they part of the commander's files, personnel files?

Sergeant CHANDLER. Well, from an Army perspective, the individual evaluation, whether that is an E-5 sergeant all the way up to the Sergeant Major of the Army like myself—those evaluations are a part of their official record. That applies to our officer population through their officer evaluation report.

The command climate survey—obviously, that has got to be maintained on file for a certain specific period of time. But it is really, from my perspective, the relationship between the senior commander and that commander who had gone through the survey to determine what is the plan of action to either improve or strengthen where the unit has reported there may have been some weaknesses or limitations within the chain of command.

Sergeant BARRETT. And in the Marine Corps, ma'am, yes. First of all, the commanding officer is singularly responsible for everything that happens and fails to happen inside that unit. He or her sergeant major are responsible for the command climate. In the Marine Corps, you have the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, and every single one of the DEOMI command climates will be seen by the next level chain above that commanding officer. And the Commandant of the Marine Corps also has a command climate survey that is also done that the next commander will see exactly how well or how poor that you are doing inside the command.

Sergeant CODY. The Air Force, ma'am, is a part. So the actual evaluation part is part of the initial feedback and follow-on feedback and in the report. So they are monitored. And the survey itself is used up and down. Everybody has visibility to that. So anybody that reports goes back to that report, and if you fell into that report, meaning your activities influenced it, it will then be documented in your official record.

Senator HIRONO. And your surveys do cover the command climate with regard to areas such as sexual harassment, hazing. The factors or the areas that I mentioned.

Sergeant CODY. Yes, ma'am.

Sergeant BARRETT. Yes, ma'am.

Sergeant CHANDLER. There is a series of standard questions that all of the services have to have in every survey, and then the commander has a choice of other questions that they can insert for their specific need. But we all have a group of questions that are standardized that must be answered across the force, and they look at equal opportunity, sexual assault, command climate, those types of issues.

Senator HIRONO. And do those surveys undergo changes over time?

Sergeant CODY. Yes, ma'am, they do.

Senator HIRONO. Are they updated?

Sergeant CODY. They are. They are updated based on, in some cases, changes in the law of things that we need to consider. They are also updated based on the needs of the services of things that we are seeing that we need to continue.

Senator HIRONO. Madam Chairman, I would like to request that all of our services send to our committee the latest of standard surveys and any modifications that are made to the surveys.

Senator GILLIBRAND. If you could distribute that to each of the offices, that would be wonderful. Thank you.

Senator HIRONO. I only have a little bit of time left, but I want to focus on the educational opportunities for our soldiers. The 9/11 GI Bill has been an outstanding program. Many have taken advantage of this program. And my question is do any of you provide an assessment of how the program is performing. Do you track student success, school performance, where the 9/11 GI benefits are used?

Chief STEVENS. Senator, if I could answer that question because I would like to use a personal example. My son, Shane Stevens, enlisted in the Navy and he did 4 years as a cryptological technician. During that 4 years, he used the TA, the Tuition Assistance program, and he received his bachelor's degree. Then he decided to separate from the Navy, and he went to the University of Florida or actually Florida State. He would probably kill me if I said University of Florida, but Florida State University where he used the 9/11 GI Bill and received his master's degree while he was there and then subsequently went on to get hired by a very good company doing kind of the same work that he did in the Navy. So when I watched him go through that entire process with the education benefits that not just the Navy but that the military provides our young men and women, I saw it work firsthand and it worked very well for him.

Senator HIRONO. There have been some concerns particularly about for-profit colleges and universities that target veterans for high loan amounts and all that. So I hope that there is a way that we can better track the experiences of our veterans.

Is my time up? I am not sure.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Your time has expired.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you. I could keep going.

Senator GILLIBRAND. We all could.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you all for your testimony. This has been invaluable in the deliberations we have to undergo in order to write the next national defense authorization bill. I am very grateful for your service and for your leadership and being a voice for the men and women who serve under each of you. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 12:15 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]