

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**LTG GARY BRITO
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, G-1
UNITED STATES ARMY**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE**

SECOND SESSION, 117TH CONGRESS

ON ARMY ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROGRAMS

APRIL 27, 2022

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, distinguished members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the men and women of the United States Army.

The Army's number one priority is our people—our soldiers, Army civilians, families, and veteran Soldiers for Life—and their contribution to combat readiness. All of the Army's personnel programs and initiatives are focused on taking care of our people. Every individual can serve honorably and advance professionally, within a culture that promotes cohesiveness, dignity and respect, within a safe environment for those serving and their families. There is no better investment to ensure the readiness of the Army. We continue to focus on the Army People Strategy's mission and vision to acquire, develop, employ, and retain the diversity of soldier and civilian talent needed to achieve Total Army readiness.

Taking Care of Our People

For the Army, "People First" means we develop and implement programs designed to keep our people safe and provide them with the quality of life they deserve. It also means we foster positive command climates and a culture that values trust, diversity, and inclusion, and that we work to reduce harmful behaviors in our ranks.

The People First Task Force

The People First Task Force (PFTF) continues to assess organizational culture through the employment of the Cohesion Assessment Team (CAT) in order to further build disciplined, cohesive, lethal, and fit teams at brigade and below level. To date, the CAT has conducted five active duty unit assessments and an additional two survey-only assessments. This intensive in-person assessment team analyzes existing Army metrics, digital survey results, focus groups, extensive leader interviews and observations in order to provide leaders actionable results that empower them to operationalize People First within their formation. On March 9th, the Under Secretary of the Army made the decision to institutionalize the capability for the Army and assigned it

within the Training and Doctrine Command. This move enables the Army to capture lessons learned and incorporate them into our leadership doctrine.

Equity and Inclusion Efforts

The Army continues to advance the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Annex to the Army People Strategy, which includes five goals, 25 objectives, and 126 action tasks that serve as the core of the Army's Project Inclusion initiatives and fulfill the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), section 529 mandate for the military services to develop a diversity and inclusion strategic plan. The Annex's five goals center on Leader Commitment, Talent Management, Organizational Structure, Training and Education, and Equitable and Inclusive Environment.

One of the Army's major initiatives is the *Your Voice Matters* listening sessions where the Army sends diversity and inclusion professionals to installations to discuss race, racism, diversity and inclusion, and their impact on the force. As of March 28, 2022, the Army has conducted 204 listening sessions at 28 different locations, reaching more than 10,000 soldiers and Army civilians.

In accordance with Executive Order 14035, the Army Outreach and Engagement Strategy and Plan ensures viable collaboration and partnership with National Special Emphasis and Affinity Groups that represent underserved communities for access and opportunity in employment, training, professional development, recruitment and military service. Annually, the Army has partnered with several Non-Federal Agencies and has recently renewed its relationship with the League of United Latin American Citizens. This relationship similar to other groups will create opportunities for the Army to provide access and reach an important cohort of talent. These affinity groups are the foundation by which the Army will attain diversity and inclusion.

The Army has also infused diversity, equity, and inclusion training into Army Professional Military Education (PME). The Army's Training and Doctrine Command has updated Military Equal Opportunity training to include diversity, equity, and

inclusion, and the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army signed the Officer Diversity Plan on January 7, 2021. Plans for our enlisted, warrant officer, and civilian cohorts will be available by the end of FY 2022. These plans are designed to help the Army attract, acquire, develop, employ, and retain the diverse talent it needs to fight and win our Nation's wars. The Army has also assigned a Senior Diversity Advisor to the Secretary of the Army, in compliance with FY 2021 NDAA, section 913.

Quality of Life Programs

The Army remains committed to providing quality of life programs that support readiness by providing a positive experience for soldiers and families, to include: safe, well-maintained family and unaccompanied housing; quality, affordable childcare, and youth services programs; and meaningful employment and educational opportunities for spouses.

The Army continues to execute the Housing Campaign Plan to shape policies, processes, and procedures at every echelon. Based on our work with the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) companies that own and operate Army's privatized housing projects, we have fully implemented all 18 Tenant rights at our 44 Army installations with privatized housing, consistent with section 2890 of title 10, United States Code, and the revised MHPI Tenant Bill of Rights that the Department issued on August 1, 2021. Our progress implementing the Tenant Bill of Rights represents a foundational step in the Army's ongoing efforts to rebuilt trust and ensure a positive living experience for military members and their families, and increases their negotiating power with the MHPI companies. We expect to release the final results of the FY 2022 Tenant Satisfaction Survey for Army's privatized housing and government family housing units by early May 2022, which will help inform plans for near-term and future improvements to housing, and be considered as part of the performance criteria for the MHPI companies.

The Army has completed a pilot third-party inspection of 90 percent (1,879) of Fort Belvoir's 2,078 privatized family homes. At least one maintenance requirement was

identified in 92.7% of homes inspected. The results of this pilot inspection helped inform the Department of Defense (DoD) Uniform Housing Standard and inspection requirement that was issued in January 2021. We also have implemented a Housing Environmental Hazard Response Registry for military members and their families living in privatized or government-owned or leased housing, with 507 families registered as of 31 March 2022. This count is for the Army and sister Services. In addition, the Army has hired 114 additional government personnel to provide increased quality assurance oversight of our privatized and government-owned housing and serve as resident advocates. We are currently conducting a manpower study with an estimated completion date for end of 3rd Quarter, FY 2022 to assess and determine Army housing personnel requirements and ensure correct authorizations are determined. Further, in FY 2022, the Army implemented the Housing Certificate Program for 900 housing professionals to create a highly-skilled, multi-dimensional workforce recognized as housing management experts by the people they serve and within the housing industry at large.

Child development center projects are a quality of life investment priority. We appreciate Congress funding three child development centers in FY 2021 (in Hawaii and Alaska) and two centers in FY 2022 (in Kansas and Kentucky). We evaluated the additional need and locations for child care and are planning for seven child development center projects by FY 2027—a potential \$120 million investment. We are also making significant investment in facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization to ensure child development center continuity of service. Additionally, we continue to invest in Army fee assistance to buy down the cost of off-post care when on-post care is unavailable or there is an extended wait for care. Child care staffing continues to be a challenge and we face tremendous competition with a public labor market, such as warehousing and fast food, offering higher wages and substantial recruitment benefits without the requirements related to providing child care. To help with recruitment and retention, we have increased compensation, are offering recruitment and retention bonuses adjusted for the cost of living, and are hosting enterprise-wide virtual hiring events.

There are more than 420,000 Army spouses who play an essential role in readiness and retention. When spouses are satisfied with their career, employment options, and overall quality of life, they are likely to support their soldier's continued service. We continue to strengthen efforts to support spouse employment including reimbursing up to \$1,000 for professional licensing and certification in a new state. More than 436 reimbursements have been paid since the inception of the program in May 2019, totaling more than \$177,000. We are also investing in the Employment Readiness Program to help spouses find and maintain employment by hiring 31 additional staff across Army installations. Finally, we continue to work with the DoD to improve state license reciprocity and professional license compacts.

Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program (SHARP)

The Army continues to prioritize the prevention and response to sexual harassment and assault. At the direction of the President, on February 26, 2021, the Secretary of Defense established the 90-Day Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Sexual Assault in the Military. The Commission conducted an independent, impartial assessment of the military's policies and programs to prevent and respond to sexual violence. The IRC made more than 80 recommendations across four lines of effort: accountability, prevention, climate and culture, and victim care and support. The DoD and the Army are using a tiered approach to implementation and many of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 recommendations are already ongoing or will begin this calendar year. Our initial focus will be to build on our existing foundations to improve training, leader development, and program infrastructure. Not only will these efforts transform the SHARP program, they will transform the Army.

Major undertakings include establishing a full-time prevention workforce; providing additional independence from the chain of command for Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) and Victim Advocates; and eliminating most collateral duty SARCs and Victim Advocates. We will further professionalize, strengthen, and resource the SHARP workforce by establishing career development tracks, as well as improved

training for culturally competent victim care for men, communities of color, LGBTQ+ soldiers, and religious minorities.

Several of the IRC recommendations align with current Army SHARP initiatives and programs. The Army already provides SARC and Victim Advocates services to victims of sexual harassment, which the IRC recommended be a practice extended across all Services. The Army is the only Service that has a SHARP Academy to train SHARP professionals and develop standardized training and curriculum materials to educate the force about sexual harassment and sexual assault within the context of our core values.

In addition to our efforts to thoughtfully work through the IRC recommendations to ensure effective execution and competent, compassionate victim-centric services, we have implemented several other changes to enhance our support to soldiers, Army civilians, and family members.

Building on these efforts, the Army is well under way to implementing the most significant change to military justice in 70 years, as directed in the FY 2022 NDAA, with the establishment of the new Office of Special Trial Counsel. This office, staffed by experienced criminal litigators and led by a general officer, will replace commanders as the disposition authority for all sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, homicide and related offenses. Complementing these efforts, the Army will establish a criminal litigation career model increasing our ability to grow, identify, and staff experienced criminal litigation positions in both the prosecution and defense.

New Prevention Initiatives

Findings from the IRC on Sexual Assault in the Military demonstrated a lack of true primary prevention capability within the DoD. In accordance with the IRC recommendations, the Services are required to determine the full-time prevention workforce needed to ensure a dedicated primary prevention capability. To prevent harmful behaviors, the Army is focusing on upstream approaches, such as bolstering

the social determinants of health and cultivating protective environments, while connecting individuals with appropriate Army resources and services.

In accordance with DoD guidance, a dedicated Integrated Prevention Workforce will implement and evaluate evidence-based primary prevention activities across the socio-ecological model. Using research from academia and industry, we intend to establish an ongoing, iterative process to seek input from internal and external prevention experts on the Army's prevention system and activities.

The DoD released the report on the findings of the Army's participation in the Secretary of Defense's On-Site Installation Evaluation (OSIE) initiative visits on March 31, 2022. The OSIE visits were conducted from June 2021-January 2022. The visits were a part of a pilot of new evaluation process and metrics to improve prevention efforts.

The OSIE evaluation process is designed to impart a better understanding of both risk and protective factors on the ground, such as command climate. Army units selected for the DoD OSIE evaluation included: Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson; Ft. Bliss; Ft. Polk; Germany (various locations); and Fraser, Michigan (U.S. Army Reserve (USAR)). The units were selected for site visits based on their policy compliance self-assessments, Defense Organizational Climate Survey results, and the ability to effectively address risk for sexual assault, harassment, suicide, and other harmful behaviors.

The report generally found compliance with sexual assault and sexual harassment reporting and response requirements, but identified gaps for some units in prevention capabilities at the ground level to include elevated protective or risk factors for each unit evaluated. As a result, U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach, Germany; Fort Polk, Louisiana; and U.S. Army Garrison Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany, were identified as installations with the highest risk factors.

To address issues identified from the report, senior commanders at each installation are formulating action plans, to include prevention training, tailored for their locations.

Additionally, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has recommended follow-up site visits for U.S. Army Garrison Germany locations to assess implementation of recommendations from the OSIE site visits. Future OSIE reports will be released on a biennial basis.

In addition, the Secretary of the Army published a directive that requires all Army leaders at the squad level and above—to include Army civilians—to receive additional training on newly-published DoD policies and other information they need to know to effectively execute their responsibilities with regard to the SHARP Program. The Army SHARP Academy also revised the Army's SHARP Annual Refresher Training to better enable unit leaders to deliver the training in small groups. The Academy is currently revising the Basic Leader's Course SHARP lesson to include new prevention-focused content. In this way, we enable soldiers' first-line leaders to help our youngest at-risk soldiers. The completed lesson is projected for release in 3rd Quarter, FY 2022.

Ready and Resilient Program

The Army's Ready and Resilient, or R2, program provides training and education resources to soldiers, family members, and Army civilians through the Army's 32 R2 Performance Centers.

Through the R2 program, we establish the foundation for individuals to build and sustain personal readiness and resilience. Resilience is a key element in the Army's primary prevention efforts as military and civilian studies show it is a protective factor against harmful behaviors.

In addition to the numerous resilience-focused offerings through our 32 Ready and Resilient Performance Centers (R2PCs) across the Army, we have conducted multiple pilots of mindfulness training to examine the effects of mindfulness practice for soldiers, teams, and spouses. We are developing mindfulness curriculum and implementation plans to ensure this impactful practice is available to unit commanders and soldiers throughout our Total Army. Our vision is for mindfulness to not only be a stand-alone

practice, but also integrated into our current portfolio of resilience skills. Along these lines, we intend to embed the training and education into the existing structure provided by the R2PCs. We will further operationalize mindfulness through integration into PME.

We continue to enhance leader visibility of their soldiers by expanding access to the Commander's Risk Reduction Toolkit (CRRT). The toolkit is a web-based application, populated from 26 authoritative data sources and displays up to 40 risk factors to give Command Teams a consolidated history of each soldier's personal information and potential risk. Only Battalion Commanders, Command Sergeants Major, Company Commanders, and First Sergeants are able to view individual soldier risk related to Personal Identifying Information and limited Protected Health Information. This tool provides leaders with a common operating picture consisting of high-risk event trends with relationship to operational events. During the past year, we completed fielding CRRT to the Active Component (AC) and USAR, and began rolling out the capability to the Army National Guard (ARNG).

Suicide

Despite our increased focus on suicide prevention through clinical and non-clinical initiatives, we have yet to see the results we hoped for with regard to preventing these tragic deaths. During the past year, we continued to experience record high deaths by suicide. However, we remain undaunted in our efforts to enhance leader engagement, training, and awareness to mitigate stressors that may lead someone to choose suicide.

In addition to our efforts to strengthen resilience, enhance leader visibility, and improve our prevention and intervention capabilities, we initiated a Vice Chief of Staff of the Army-led chain teach to Army Commands in 1st Quarter, FY 2022. This initiative is designed to introduce the field to our new public health approach to prevention of suicide while ensuring consistent implementation across the force, down to the Army's most junior leaders.

We have also revamped our suicide prevention training, Ask, Care, Escort (ACE). The

curriculum now aligns with DoD Instruction 6490.16 and continues to support the promotion of suicide prevention and intervention concepts and practices intended to reduce stigma, increase awareness, and facilitate help-seeking behaviors.

In addition, another tool to help leaders better “see” their soldiers—the Behavioral Health (BH) Pulse Tool—was fielded in 2021 to provide leaders with visibility of a variety of BH problems, BH utilization, command climate, social relationships, and risky behaviors. Developed at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, in conjunction with psychiatrists from the Office of the Surgeon General, BH Pulse is a key tool in our efforts to prevent harmful behaviors and enhance well-being. Also, the Behavioral Health Readiness and Suicide Risk Reduction Review (R4) Tool is being fielded in April. The R4 tool provides leaders with practical knowledge for communicating with soldiers on suicide prevention.

The Army, as well as the DoD, remains committed to understanding and addressing factors that contribute to suicide. On March 22, 2022, the Secretary of Defense ordered the creation of an independent panel to review suicides in the military in accordance with the FY 2022 NDAA, section 738. Per the Secretary of Defense’s direction, the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC), will review relevant suicide prevention and response activities, immediate actions underway on sexual assault, and the IRC recommendations on sexual assault in the military. The intent is to ensure SPRIRC recommendations are synchronized and support ongoing sexual assault prevention activities and capabilities.

The SPRIRC will visit nine bases, interview soldiers and officials there, and conduct a confidential survey. Army bases included in the review are Fort Wainwright and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; Camp Humphreys, Korea; and Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The SPRIRC’s work is scheduled to begin in May, and the Committee will file an initial report to the Secretary of Defense by December 20, 2022. Findings and recommendations will be provided to Congress by February 18, 2023.

Alcohol and other Substance Use

The Army continues to address the misuse of alcohol and other substances that often serve as a facilitator to harmful behaviors. We continue to employ a multidisciplinary, holistic prevention approach to reduce substance use for our most at-risk population—junior enlisted males with co-occurring psychological or physical conditions. Also, we have developed a new awareness campaign: “Let’s Talk: I’m Listening” that’s scheduled for fielding later this year. The campaign emphasizes the importance of leader engagement and unit cohesion in identifying and supporting those who may be at risk of binge drinking or self-medicating through alcohol and prescribed or illicit drugs.

COVID-19

As the Army continues to operate on a global scale in a persistent COVID environment, our focus remains the readiness and well-being of our soldiers, civilians, contractors, and their family members. Leaders at all levels of command remain vigilant, as COVID remains a risk to the force. We continue to educate our personnel on the criticality of our vaccination program, and enforce the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and DoD force health protection measures to ensure we are ready and able to execute any mission. Currently, 97% of the AC is either fully vaccinated or have received at least one shot. The ARNG and USAR vaccination deadline is June 30th, and currently sit at 79% and 87% respectively.

Transition Assistance Program

It is in the Army's and our Nation's best interest to ensure soldiers transition successfully back into our communities after their military service. All soldiers are required to begin the transition process no later than 365 days before the date of their anticipated transition from active duty. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) remains available to all veterans for six months after transition, and to all retirees for life.

According to data from the Department of Labor, in FY 2021, the unemployment rate for all veterans decreased 1% from the FY 2020 high due to COVID-19. As a result of the Army TAP, the unemployment rate for recently transitioned veterans was 0.9% lower

than the national and non-veteran rates. Army TAP efforts, combined with the Nation's low veteran unemployment rate, have reduced the Army's annual unemployment reimbursement costs from a high of \$514.6 million in FY2011 to \$112.7 million in FY 2021—a 78.1% decrease.

As part of the Transition Assistance Program Career Skills Program (CSP), soldiers have the opportunity to take part in first-class apprenticeships, on-the-job training, employment skills training, and internships. During FY 2021, 6,083 soldiers successfully completed a CSP, and 5,463 (90%) were placed into careers following their CSP training, despite a pandemic that moved most CSP training for the Army to an online or virtual platform.

Soldier for Life

The Army's Soldier for Life program continues to focus its efforts on influencing policies, programs, and services that support soldiers, veterans, and their families, while also conducting community outreach throughout the country. The program has maintained a consistent presence with Veteran Service Organizations and Non-Profits during the pandemic, with increasing engagements in FY 2022, now that organizations have started to welcome in-person presentations and visits. Furthermore, the Soldier for Life team has focused on supporting military spouse employment initiatives. By collaborating with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor, Soldier for Life is taking steps to help ensure states are aware of inbound transitioning military personnel and their families prior to their arrival in their new community. Ensuring that each state has advanced notice of each inbound soldier and their needs is critical to a successful transition. In addition, Soldier for Life has also taken steps to provide support to transitioning soldiers by informing them of the opportunity to be assigned sponsors, through a VA non-profit partner, in the communities in which they plan to reside after service. These sponsors are trained and certified by the VA and can help guide all soldiers, but especially the most junior, through the challenges associated with transitioning to civilian life.

The People of the Army

The men and women who serve in uniform and as Army civilians represent the best of our great country. We rely on their skills, commitment, and character to accomplish the Army's mission to fight and win our Nation's wars.

The Diversity of the Force

Over the last 14 years, the Army's Enlisted Force has become racially and ethnically more diverse, with Hispanic soldiers accounting for the biggest increase in minority representation. The Combat Arms Outreach program is a targeted effort to attract and commission a diverse officer talent pool reflective of the Nation we serve and the soldiers it leads. Combat Arms Outreach Engagement Teams will consist of diverse company grade and field grade officers from Combat Arms branches. Teams will conduct engagements at ROTC programs to encourage cadets to join Combat Arms branches.

For the Total Force Army, White, non-Hispanic representation in the Enlisted Force has decreased from 60% in 2007 to 51% in 2021. Meanwhile, Hispanic representation has increased from 11.7% to 18.7% over the same period. Asian and Pacific Islanders have also increased as a share of the Enlisted Force from 4% in 2007 to 6.3% in 2021. Female representation in the Enlisted Force has increased slightly over the last 14 years. In 2007, 13.4% of enlisted soldiers were women, whereas today, 14.8% of enlisted soldiers are women. The Army is finalizing its Enlisted Diversity Plan, which contains initiatives to address recruiting, developing, and retaining the diverse talent it needs to address sub-population underrepresentation.

Over the last 14 years, the Officer Corps has also become racially and ethnically more diverse, with Hispanics and Asians accounting for the biggest increase in minority representation. White, non-Hispanic representation in the Officer Corps has decreased from 74% in 2007 to 70% in 2021. Meanwhile, Hispanic and Asian representation has increased from 5% to 8% over the same period. Non-Hispanic Blacks have declined slightly as a share of the Officer Corps from 12% in 2007 to 11% in 2021. There has

also been an increase in females in the Officer Corps over the last 14 years. In 2007, 16.7% officers were women, whereas today, 19.8% of officers are women. In January 2021, the Army published its Expanding Diversity in the Officer Corps Plan, which included 25 initiatives to address diversity shortfalls in the Army Officer Corps.

Women in the Army

In 2011, 15.6% of soldiers in the Total Army were women. Today, 18.3% of soldiers are women. In addition to comprising an increased share of the Total Force, women continue to integrate into infantry, armor, and field artillery military occupational specialties at the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) level. As of the end of February 2022, 1,172 females were serving in infantry or armor roles within BCTs. BCT gender integration has progressed steadily, with all 31 BCTs integrated as of November 2021. The Army integrated its BCTs by cohort to ensure female soldiers arrive at a unit with at least one same-gendered battle buddy. Eight BCTs already have more than 50 female infantry and armor soldiers, and 20 BCTs have a dozen or more female infantry or armor soldiers. The Army will continue to address female recruitment and accession challenges to provide women multiple reasons to choose to serve in the Army. For example, a newly published directive mitigates two of the top reported causes of female soldier attrition: pregnancy and parenthood. This forward-leaning policy addressing multiple issues encountered by soldiers when growing their families, such as fertility treatments, postpartum body composition, and pregnancy loss, invests in the wellness and retention of all Army soldiers by normalizing parenthood for both mothers and fathers across the force.

Army Civilians

Comprising approximately 23% of the Total Force, over 287,000 Army civilians form the institutional backbone of the Army and are an integral part of the Army enterprise, providing mission-essential support to soldiers around the world. Civilians serve in more than 500 unique job series in technical, medical, engineering, science, logistics, finance, and administrative disciplines.

In FY 2021, the Army civilian workforce greatly exceeded or mirrored the U.S. labor force in representation of individuals with disabilities and veterans, but had a lower proportion of female representation. The Army also lagged behind the U.S. workforce in median age, meaning that Army civilian ranks have a higher proportion of older employees than the overall working U.S. population.

Personnel Modernization

The foundation of Army Readiness is Personnel Readiness. Programs, policies, innovations, and management models are transforming the Army's Personnel Systems to meet future needs. These changes will provide our soldiers and civilians with more opportunities to excel; give our Army the enduring advantage of a transparent, data rich personnel environment; and improve our ability to compete for and retain talent.

The Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A)

The Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A) is the new, web-based personnel and pay system moving the Army towards 21st century data management at the enterprise level. Building on strong foundational priorities of people, modernization, and readiness, it delivers a secure, comprehensive, and data-rich Human Resources (HR) talent management system to the Total Force.

More than two years ago, the ARNG became the first component to implement IPPS-A, integrating modern personnel management and data analytics capabilities across all 54 states and territories. With the deployment of Release 3 by the end of 2022, all three components will begin to execute personnel, pay, and talent management functions in IPPS-A seamlessly across the Total Force. IPPS-A embraces emerging technologies and aligns with the Army's efforts to build a more effective and efficient force. With Release 3, the Army will achieve HR data cleanliness, clearly define authoritative data sources and services, and facilitate the decommissioning of numerous legacy HR applications and systems. These are all necessary for creating a data-rich environment as we continue to set the conditions for migrating all HR systems to a future cloud-

based system. The Army has responded with agility to the challenges associated with integrating its personnel and pay systems and will continue to do so going forward.

In support of the Army's effort to modernize Talent Management, work will continue to expand IPPS-A functionality and add additional capability through a series of improvements out to 2030 and beyond. Our HR IT modernization efforts support the talent management system we are designing to better recruit, retain, and reward the very best personnel essential to sustaining the all-volunteer force. Looking forward, IPPS-A will integrate the new Army global payroll system with Release 4, providing a congressionally-mandated fiscal audit capability and improved talent management functionality.

Talent Management

The 21st Century environment and the critical human experiences of Multi-Domain Operations will place unprecedented demands on soldiers and leaders. Continued investment in acquiring, developing, employing, and retaining talent will keep our Army at the forefront of human capital development and performance while providing the Nation with a multi-faceted team that can fight and win in unpredictable conditions. To maintain our competitive advantage, we must determine the critical human attributes—among those being technical proficiency—to operate in this environment. The Army must continue to build a talent management system capable of acquiring and leveraging critical talent data—the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and preferences of its soldiers, balanced with the needs of the Army.

FY19 NDAA Authorities

With the implementation of the FY 2019 NDAA authorities, the Army has placed special interest in the advancement of individuals with specific, high-demand technical skills. The Army is leveraging these authorities through direct commissioning to bring on candidates with special skills. Of note, since 2018, 18 Cyber officers, one Military Intelligence Officer, and one Functional Area 50 (Force Management) Officer received direct commissions, and another 56 candidates across multiple branches and functional

areas are currently in the appointment process. Additionally, the Army has identified 538 positions that can be used for Brevet promotions on the critical position list. Since 2020, 84 Officers have been Brevet-promoted and another 68 are currently in the process of Senate confirmation.

As part of the Army's 21st Century Talent Management System, we have developed alternatives to promotions based primarily on time in rank. Officers now have the option to opt-in or opt-out of promotion consideration. These options give Service members more flexibility to balance their professional, personal, and family priorities, while ensuring the Army has the right people with the right skills in the right jobs. Of the 6,874 officers eligible to opt-in to promotion boards based on date of rank in FY 2021, 2,544 opted-in to be considered early for promotion, and 167 were selected. In addition, 97% (176 of 181) of the officers who applied to opt-out of a promotion selection board have been approved.

Army Talent Alignment (ATAP)

The ATAP is a decentralized, regulated market-style hiring system that aligns officers with jobs based on preferences shaped by the unique knowledge, skills, and behaviors of each officer, as well as the talents desired by commanders for their available positions. To date, 60,000 officers and warrant officers have been assigned using the Talent Marketplace. During the most recent marketplace cycle, 69% of officers participating in the market obtained a Top 3 preference while 80% of officers obtained a Top 10 preference. Talent markets also enable the Army to experiment with monetary and non-monetary incentives to fill critical positions and retain talent. Monetary incentives have included Selective Retention Bonuses, Assignment Incentive Pay, and Special Duty Assignment Pay to remain highly competitive among other governmental agencies and private industry. Non-monetary incentives such as advanced specialty training, stabilization, credentialing, and broadening assignments are also available.

While the "marketplace" is currently the principal element of ATAP, gathering data throughout a soldier's career is critical. Innovations on objective assessments are

providing the Army with valuable information about its people's talents. These assessments—administered at various stages throughout a career—complement subjective evaluations to integrate talent data into selection and assignment practices.

Similar to ATAP, we have begun to implement the Assignment Satisfaction Key-Enlisted Module (ASK-EM) to support Active Duty Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) being considered for Staff Sergeant (SSG) through Master Sergeant (MSG) assignments. On average, 7,000 to 9,000 NCOs participate in the market each cycle with approximately 30,000 NCOs receiving their assignments through this process each year. Unlike Assignment Incentive Marketplace 2.0, ASK-EM does not provide the unit the ability to vote on NCOs. However, we are working to implement a two-sided market for the MSG and First Sergeant population once IPPS-A goes live. A pilot of this capability is expected by the end of FY 2023.

Command Assessment Program (CAP)

The Command Assessment Program (CAP) continues to expand and improve the Army's ability to select more capable leaders at the battalion and brigade levels. In November 2021, the Army completed the third iteration of CAP. Nearly 3,600 leaders at LTC, COL, GS-14, GS-15, and E-9 levels have assessed through CAP over the last three years. CAP has also expanded to include Acquisition Corps Leaders and Program Executives, Medical Corps Commanders, Brigade Command Sergeants Major, Division Chaplains, and candidates from the U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard, as well as the U.S. Air Force. During CAP, participants are offered the opportunity to utilize Executive Coaching under the Army Coaching Program. This program provides professional feedback to support the development of leaders and their understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses. When compared to the legacy Command Selection List system, CAP assesses and identifies leaders who are more cognitively capable, better written and verbal communicators, more physically fit, more self-aware, and less likely to exhibit counterproductive or ineffective leader traits. The Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military recognized CAP as a promising

practice for identifying leaders who are committed to the well-being of those under their command, as well as screening for leaders who do not show similar commitment.

While it is too early to draw definitive longitudinal trends, recent results from the Command Assessment Programs are as follows:

- **Battalion Commander Assessment Program (BCAP)** – To date, 2,178 Army Competitive Category Lieutenant Colonels competed for battalion-level commands and key staff positions in BCAP. Of those, 1900 (87.2%) were found ready for command.
- **Colonel Command Assessment Program (CCAP)** – To date, 603 Army Competitive Category Colonels competed for brigade-level commands and key staff positions in CCAP. Of those, 511 (84.7%) were found ready for command. The majority of these officers will take command in the summer of 2022.
- **Sergeant Major Assessment Program (SMAP)** – To date, 334 Sergeants Major competed for brigade-level Command Sergeant Major (CSM) positions. Of those, 287 (86%) were found ready and will fill approximately 130 brigade-level CSM openings in the near future.

Building and Maintaining a Quality Force

Our recruiting and retention efforts for both soldiers and civilians are focused on building and maintaining a diverse and talented force from across the Nation.

Recruiting

The Army enlisted 57,606 recruits in the AC, 34,658 recruits in the ARNG, and 11,690 recruits in the USAR in FY 2021.

As of the end of February, the AC achieved more than 23% of its FY 2022 recruiting mission of 60,000. Recruiting productivity will remain challenging with the overall low

propensity and shrinking Qualified Military Applicant pool. The Army remains focused on quality over quantity, continuing to emphasize recruitment for military occupational specialties that are critical to future force modernization. The Army has implemented several initiatives to improve recruiting efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity including revisions in incentives, accessions policies, and marketing efforts. We continue to adapt the way we recruit talent into the Army to sustain the all-volunteer force. The Army will modestly reduce its end strength in FY 2022 and FY 2023 as we put the force on a sustainable strategic path. The Regular Army expects to meet an end strength of 476,000 in FY 2022. At the end of FY 2023, the AC will be at 473,000, the ARNG will be at 336,000 and the USAR will be at 189,500. Looking at the force and the recruiting outlook, we are confident we can maintain the quality of recruits we need at this level as the Army rebalances its portfolio by investing in modernization, infrastructure, and personnel support programs.

The ARNG achieved more than 29% of its FY 2022 recruiting mission of 38,430, as of the end of February. The ARNG will continue to see an impact to accessions due to COVID-19 restrictions in some states. With an aggressive emphasis on retention and attrition management, combined with an improved recruiting strategy, the ARNG expects to achieve its FY 2022 NDAA end strength of 336,000.

The USAR achieved more than 27% of its recruiting mission of 14,650, as of the end of February. The USAR continues to reduce attrition and increase prior service transfers from the AC and Individual Ready Reserve as a means to offset accessions shortfalls. The USAR is not projecting to achieve its FY 2022 NDAA end strength of 189,500.

Officer Accessions

The Army is on track to recruit and access more than 4,500 AC officers in FY 2022, with more than 10,000 officers accessed across all components. All sources of commission are expected to meet their FY 2022 accessions mission. The Army's primary commissioning sources (USMA, ROTC, and OCS) continue to advance processes to match talent and build diversity of race and gender across all Army officer branches.

Retention

The AC, USAR, and ARNG each achieved their FY 2021 retention missions. Over the last two years, the AC retained soldiers at historical rates. Soldiers were provided a COVID extension option to provide stability during this turbulent period, which increased retention rates for soldiers likely to move to a different duty station. The FY 2021 combined retention rate for eligible soldiers was approximately 80%. The FY 2021 Cohort combined mission was accomplished at a rate of nearly 99%, while the FY 2022 Cohort retained at a rate of 75%. These retention rates were the highest to date. The FY 2021 in-year retention rate was an increase of nearly 4% over FY 2020 and more than 6% over FY 2019. In FY 2022, the AC will accomplish its mission requirements, and is expected to exceed retention goals by 2,500 retention actions. These retention achievements support meeting our initial term, mid-term, and career soldier requirements. Army retention will maintain a competitive edge with the continued funding to support retention selective retention bonuses granted by Congress.

The Army saw consistent officer retention in FY 2021, retaining 90% of Army Competitive Category (ACC) captains and 94% of ACC majors, which is consistent over the last four fiscal years. Overall, the Army retained 92% of all officers and warrant officers in FY 2021. Approximately 74% of officers are staying at least one year past their initial Active Duty Service Obligation.

Non-Deployable Personnel

The Army's current non-deployable initiatives have positioned the Army to be at or near the 5% goal for non-deployable personnel.

As of March 1, 2022, the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) non-deployable population was 11,477, which is a reduction of 723 cases from last year at the same time. Additionally, the average processing time (from referral until separation) decreased from 272 days in March 2021 to 210 days in March 2022. We expect the IDES to remain at these levels—about 1.5% of the total Army non-deployable personnel—throughout the summer and fall. The Army will continue to work closely with the VA

and the DoD to ensure timely delivery of benefits for our Nation's wounded, ill, and injured soldiers. Efficient execution of the IDES process is critical to both readiness and taking care of our soldiers and families.

Recruiting and Retaining Talent in Underrepresented Demographics

The Army is developing a strategy to mitigate the obstacles of a challenging recruiting environment. This strategy will include advancement to marketing and media, leveraging community relationships, increasing connections to underrepresented demographics, and increasing outreach to previously un-tapped populations, such as college students. Additionally, in an effort to increase underrepresented demographics into the more competitive branches within the Army, the Army developed and implemented the Combat Arms Outreach—Engagement Team (CAO-ET) Pilot Program. CAO-ET focuses on increasing female and minority cadet interest in combat arms. This effort seeks to increase the pool of diverse, talented officers in combat arms career fields to build a bench of enterprise leaders for the future.

Civilian Workforce Recruiting Efforts

Reducing the time it takes to hire civilian employees remains a key initiative as the Army continuously strives for a modernized, 21st century approach to attract, recruit, and hire top civilian talent. Efforts specifically aimed at expediting the hiring of civilians are increasing personnel readiness and ensuring talented individuals fill critical vacancies.

The Army also encouraged the use of Schedule A hiring authority for Individuals with Disabilities, Veterans' Recruitment Appointment, and other authorities to build the Army bench with top civilian talent.

The Army has implemented several initiatives as part of a broader strategy to reduce civilian time-to-hire in support of the former Secretary of Defense's FY 2025 hiring goal of 45 days. The Civilian Implementation Plan to the Army People Strategy places specific emphasis and focus on reducing time to hire to ensure the Army is competitive for top talent with other employers. A multi-year strategy to execute tasks supporting the

Civilian Implementation Plan are in progress. These efforts will assess hiring quality, leverage Office of Personnel Management resources, and optimize Civilian Human Resources Agency and Command civilian hiring operations. A key component of this strategy is decreasing candidate screening time through consistency of initial forms, fingerprinting, initial background checks, medical evaluations, drug testing, and suitability determinations, as well as reducing processing time for security clearances. The time it takes the Army to fill civilian positions has fluctuated over the past several years as follows: the FY 2019 hiring time was 90.6 days; the FY 2020 time was 83.4 days; the FY 2021 time was 86.2 days; and currently, the FY 2022 hiring time is 90.5 days. As the Army's multi-year strategy to reduce time to hire matures, we expect to achieve consistent reductions in the time it takes to hire civilian personnel.

Marketing

The Army's current marketing efforts focus on acquiring diverse talent in an environment facing various economic headwinds and decreased propensity. These headwinds are pushing young adults to seek stability, security, and safety. In order to attract the talent the Army requires, we must inform and inspire public awareness of the wide array of opportunities the Army offers. Marketing remains a key tool to reaching qualified recruits.

The ad campaign "What's Your Warrior?" launched in 2019 to highlight the breadth and depth of Army careers for Generation Z (Gen Z) youth. "What's Your Warrior?" continues with subsequent campaigns based on extensive research to help close knowledge, culture, and relatability gaps with Gen Z. Two campaigns help connect youth with the Army. First, the Army launched the "Know Your Army" Campaign in March 2022, highlighting Army benefits available to youth considering their personal and professional goals. Second, the newest chapter of the "What's Your Warrior" campaign known as "Passions," connects prospects' passions to opportunities available in the Army. These marketing campaigns leverage a multi-media mix of traditional and digital advertising to reach Gen Z recruits and their influencers across platforms

including national broadcast, out-of-home advertisement, print, websites, and social media.

Conclusion

The people of the United States Army—these men and women who serve our Nation, both in and out of uniform, along with their families—are our strength and our legacy. Their talents, courage, and commitment make our Army the greatest in the world. To keep our Army strong, we must build our force with individuals who embody the best of America, and we must offer them opportunities to allow both their careers and families to flourish. A diverse, talented, strong, healthy, and resilient, force is the most important indicator of our readiness.

Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, members of this Committee, I thank you for your generous and unwavering support of our outstanding soldiers, civilian professionals, and their families.