

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**

FIRST SESSION, 117TH CONGRESS

ON ARMY ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROGRAMS

MAY 12, 2021

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE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

2021 G-1 Posture Testimony Written Statement

Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, distinguished members of this committee, we 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 people—our Soldiers and Army Civilians, Families and veteran Soldiers for Life. All of the Army's personnel programs and initiatives are focused on taking care of our people with dignity and respect and promoting a culture where every individual can not only serve our country honorably, but can do so in a way that allows them to advance professionally as far as their talent and skills will take them. 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*. Additionally, three critical enablers from the *Army People Strategy* continue to set conditions for putting people first: Army Culture, Quality of Life, and a 21st Century Talent Management System.

Personnel Modernization

The foundation of Army Readiness is Personnel Readiness. New technology, programs, policy, innovations and management models are transforming the Army's Personnel Systems and 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 number one Human Resources (HR) modernization effort for the Total Army and fundamental to the *Army People Strategy*. IPPS-A is the Army's new web-based HR system which, once fully deployed, will deliver a single, comprehensive, data rich HR and talent management system to the Total Force. IPPS-A will integrate personnel, pay and talent management

functions into a secure system, providing Soldiers and units with unmatched access to their HR, talent and pay data.

The Army completed fielding to the Army National Guard in March 2020 with resounding success. All 54 states and territories are now on a single system allowing the Army to run HR processes and analytics on the entire Army National Guard at the touch of a button.

In December 2021, the Army will introduce the revolutionary capability of IPPS-A to the Active and Reserve components. Release 3 of IPPS-A will provide mobile access capability for self-service, business intelligence, and strength analytics tools, as well as automated workflow that will improve transparency of actions for Soldiers while enabling our commanders and leaders to make informed decisions for a more ready force. IPPS-A will facilitate the Army's ability to better manage the talents of the Total Force based on Soldiers' knowledge, skills and behaviors. Release 4 of IPPS-A is scheduled for May of 2025 and will add Army payroll to the system. A plan for continuous improvements through 2030 will enable the Army to continue to modernize a talent management system that will have strategic impacts for years to come.

The introduction of IPPS-A coincides with the Army's execution of a systematic approach to achieving HR data cleanliness; identifying authoritative data sources and services; and decommissioning legacy applications and systems which will be centralized in IPPS-A and a few other key systems. This HR IT modernization effort is linked to a future cloud migration of all HR systems, and is designed to facilitate the creation of a data rich environment that will allow us to fully implement a talent management system to recruit, retain and incentivize the very best personnel.

Talent Management

Talent Management provides our Army an enduring competitive advantage. 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 environments to secure America's interests. Fully embracing lessons learned from industry and the FY19 NDAA changes, the Army is actively building a talent management system capable of screening, identifying, and leveraging the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and preferences of individuals.

The FY19 NDAA provided the Army with new authorities to modernize the officer personnel system. Twenty-nine officers have received brevet promotions and another 76 positions are being marketed for brevet promotions this summer. Fourteen Cyber officers have been direct commissioned, and another 87 candidates are currently in the process. More than 65 officers with critical skills have been deferred past their mandatory retirement date. Ninety-four percent of the 83 officers who applied to opt-out of a promotion selection board have been approved. Of the nearly 1,000 officers who opted in to be considered early for promotion, 101 were selected.

The Army is building an attribute framework to support our talent management authorities. The new three-tiered structure, the Army Talent Attribute Framework (ATAF), will enable us to articulate assignment requirements, align talent to positions, and support individualized career paths as Soldiers profess their unique knowledge, skills, and behaviors (KSB).

The Command Assessment Program is improving the Army's ability to select more capable leaders at the battalion and brigade levels. From a population of nearly 1,800 officers, 1,050 were selected using psychometric, cognitive/non-cognitive, writing skills, verbal skills, physical fitness, leadership, and peer/subordinate assessments. Those selected are more cognitively capable, better communicators, more physically fit, and more apt to promote a positive command. By the fall of 2022, the Army will expand the Command Assessment Program to include brigade command sergeants major. We are also executing decentralized assessment pilots at local installations to provide insight and better align individual talents with first sergeant positions.

The Army Coaching Program helps Officers and NCOs learn from assessments. Our premier coaching program provides professional insight to support the development of Soldiers so that they understand their strengths and weaknesses and can weight their professional options. In FY20, at least 1,463 officers participated in the program. In light of the program's exceptionally positive feedback, ATMTF expects to expand the program to approximately 3,000 officers in CY21.

The Army is conducting a focused retention initiative targeting junior officers we want to retain into their field grade years. Selected captains will receive their career path of choice after company command, contingent upon continued high levels of performance. To date in FY21, we have extended an opportunity to just under 1,000 highly talented officers. Twelve have received an assured mid-career pathway and another 62 are in the selection process.

Using data gleaned from the assignment marketplace, the Army can see officer talents and link those to opportunities. More than 14,200 jobs and 15,000 Active Component officers are participating in the current marketplace where, based on their talents, they may match for their assignment of choice or earn a brevet promotion. A marketplace for master sergeants is expected in December 2021 with IPPS-A's talent management rollout.

Talent Based Branching represents the future of how the Army manages its people, combining talent assessments, coaching, resumes, interviews, and selection panels to put ROTC cadets in the right branch at the start their careers. This "whole person" approach is a significant leap forward over previous systems that screened based on class rank.

The Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model

The Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model (ReARMM) will align units across the total Army Force in a predictable and sustainable life cycle through training, modernization, and mission windows. The model will regionally align units to meet

current Joint Force demands, while allowing the Army to meet future challenges through modernization.

In support of ReARMM, the G-1 is developing new Army Manning Guidance (AMG) to drive personnel policy aligned with the ReARMM principles of predictability, stability, and synchronization. Additionally, the G-1 is reviewing personnel policies to include stabilization of key NCO leaders and development of the 21st Century NCO corps.

Marketing

The Army's marketing efforts focus on acquiring diverse talent in a competitive environment. To attract the talent we require, 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?*" added more content in late 2020 and the initiatives continue today. "*What's Your Warrior?*" leverages a mix of traditional and digital advertising to reach Gen Z recruits and their influencers across their preferred platforms including national broadcast, out-of-home advertisement, print, websites, and social media. The campaign reaches audiences through YouTube, GoArmy social media channels, and GoArmy.com with a range of promotional assets designed to appeal to different segments of the "Generation Z" population.

Civilian Workforce Efforts

Efforts specifically aimed at expediting the hiring of Civilians are increasing personnel readiness and ensuring talented individuals fill critical vacancies.

Direct Hire Authorities (DHAs) are hiring authorities that the Office of Personnel Management can grant to Federal agencies to fill vacancies in specific occupations, grade levels and locations, when it can be proven that there is a critical hiring need or a

severe shortage of candidates. DoD-specific DHAs enable the Army to expedite the hiring of qualified applicants for critical/hard-to-fill positions quickly and efficiently by removing some of the lengthier steps of the hiring process, specifically public notice, rating and ranking and Veterans' preference. The Army continues to use DHAs to expedite hiring for critical positions to increase readiness. DHAs cover many critical positions such as scientific, technical, engineering and mathematics (STEM), medical, and cyber. During 1QFY21, the Army utilized DHAs for 70.8% of eligible external hiring actions and increased the usage rate to 73.5% for 2QFY21.

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 FY25 hiring goal of 45 days. In conjunction with promoting the use of Direct Hire Authorities to decrease hiring time, Commanders have been given the authority to defer several conditions of employment that add significant time to the hiring process (e.g., pre-employment physical results, pre-employment drug test results, and completed security clearances). Since implementing various initiatives, we have seen a gradual decrease in fill time—FY19 hiring time was 90.63 days, FY20 was 83.4 days, and currently for FY21 the hiring time is 84.89 days.

In support of the Army People Strategy and Civilian Implementation Program, the Army has developed an Army-wide voluntary reassignment pilot program for Appropriated Fund employees called the Department of the Army Voluntary Re-Assignment Program (DAVRAP). The DAVRAP supports Army-wide human resource goals to reduce time-to-hire and bolster retention of current employees. This program delivers an Army-wide recruitment source that allows selecting officials to quickly fill vacant positions non-competitively with current Army employees. By allowing selecting officials to non-competitively select employees from different commands and/or locations, this program can facilitate the continued employment of current Army employees, to include Veterans and Military Spouses and family members undergoing a permanent change of station (PCS) with their military/civilian sponsor.

Building and Maintaining a Quality Force

We must attract, acquire, and retain a diverse and talented force from across the Nation to build cohesive teams that are highly trained, disciplined and fit, and ready to fight and win.

Recruiting

The Army enlisted 61,253 recruits in the Active Component (AC), 38,633 recruits in the Army National Guard (ARNG), and 13,706 recruits in the Army Reserve (USAR) in FY20.

The AC achieved 38% of its FY21 recruiting mission. Recruiting continues to be a challenge in the COVID-19 environment. The Army's Recruiting Command has tripled its virtual efforts this year with multiple initiatives, including quarterly virtual campaigns; development of virtual career fair capabilities; and on-line job postings. These virtual efforts have compensated for the loss in face-to-face prospecting opportunities. The AC is on track to achieve its end-strength of 485,900.

The ARNG achieved 45% of its FY21 recruiting mission. With an aggressive emphasis on retention and attrition management, combined with an improved recruiting strategy, the ARNG is on glide path to achieve its end-strength of 336,500.

The USAR achieved 37% of its recruiting mission. The USAR continues its effort to reduce attrition and increase prior service transfers from the AC and Individual Ready Reserve as a means to offset recruiting production. They expect to achieve 98.6% of the 189,800 end-strength objective.

The Army is on track to recruit and access more than 4,700 AC officers in FY21, with more than 10,000 officers accessed across all components. All sources of commission are expected to meet their FY21 accessions mission despite challenges due to COVID-19. 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. Officer Branching is aligned with the Army People Strategy underpinned by the ASA (M&RA)'s diversity guidance to 'build the bench' of our Nation's future leaders. The Reserve Component is also on track to exceed their FY21 accession goals.

Retention

The Army's People Strategy requires that we not only recruit and employ the best talent, but that we retain them as well. As part of the Army's People Strategy, we have called for a 20% reduction in attrition during initial-entry training and a 15% reduction in attrition of Soldiers who are within their first 36 months of service by the end of FY20. We are seeing significant improvements in attrition-reduction efforts, and we expect to achieve our reduction goals by the end of the fiscal year.

The AC and the USAR each achieved their FY20 retention missions, while the ARNG achieved nearly 98% of their retention mission. The AC continues to exceed historical retention rates and the FY20 retention rate of our eligible population (91.6%) was the highest to date. The FY20 retention rate was an increase of nearly 10% over FY19 and 2% over FY18. In FY21, the AC will accomplish its mission requirements. These retention achievements support meeting our NCO requirements in the near to mid-term and would not be possible without the funding support for incentives granted by Congress.

The Army saw consistent officer retention in FY20, retaining 90% of Army Competitive Category (ACC) captains and 96% of ACC majors, which is consistent with FY19 and a slight increase since FY18. Overall, the Army retained 93% of all officers and warrant officers in FY20. Approximately 71% of officers are staying at least one year past their initial Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO).

Non-Deployable Personnel

The Army's current initiatives to update regulations concerning non-deployable status have postured the Army to meet the 5% goal for non-deployable personnel. When

these policy changes occur, the Army is postured to achieve the DoD goal of less than 5% by the end of 3QFY21.

As of March 31, 2021, the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) non-deployable population consisted of 12,374 personnel. The COVID-19 impact to the medical examination portion of the IDES process resulted in more than 2,800 deferments. Consequently, the average processing time (from referral until separation) increased from 202 days in FY20 to 272 days as of March 2021. We expect the processing time to increase through the summer, level off, then decrease in the fall of 2021 as we clear out deferred cases. The Army will continue to work closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs and 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.

The Diversity of the Force

Over the last 14 years, the Army's Enlisted Force has become racially and ethnically more diverse, with Hispanics 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.

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, 13.5% of Soldiers were women. Today, 15.5% 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 2021, 742 females were serving in infantry or armor roles within BCTs. BCT gender integration has progressed steadily, with 29 of 31 BCTs currently integrated and the remaining two BCTs scheduled to integrate by fall 2021. The Army plans to integrate its BCTs by cohort to ensure female Soldiers arrive at a unit with at least one same-gendered battle buddy. Four 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 shortfalls using initiatives set forth in its officers, warrant officers and enlisted cohort diversity plans.

Army Civilians

Making up approximately 23% of the Total Force, nearly 300K Army Civilians work across the institutional Army in more than 500 unique job series. Army Civilians are an

integral part of the Army team, and they play a critical role in enabling our Soldiers to deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars. Army Civilians provide the Army with unmatched technical competence in essential functional areas including technical, medical, engineering, science, logistics, finance, and administrative disciplines. They provide leadership, stability, and continuity across the Generating Force, allowing Soldiers to focus on warfighting. Our Civilian workforce is motivated, diverse, and highly skilled.

COVID-19

The health and welfare of our people during the pandemic has been our top priority since March 2020 when the Department of Defense (DoD) implemented the Stop Move order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect our Soldiers, Civilians, contractors, and family members. Currently, our vaccination priorities are focused on sustaining and improving our readiness through prioritization and education of all eligible and willing personnel. Our efforts continue to follow CDC and DoD force health protection measures to ensure the safety of our force and reassure our foreign partners that the Army is committed to preventing the spread of the virus into and within their countries.

To support Soldiers during transitions, we have authorized them to report up to 30 days early and up to 20 days past their report date. This flexibility allows our personnel to best align transportation, pick up of household goods, and school start dates for their dependents.

We have implemented virtual promotion boards at the junior NCO level and initially suspended professional military education requirements for promotion to the next grade to minimize travel requirements and gatherings of large groups. For officers attending the captains career course, the Secretary of the Army authorized attending in a temporary duty versus permanent change of station status through May 2021 to reduce risk and stress on family members. We have implemented specific compensation and entitlements that include Hardship Duty Pay—Restriction of Movement, isolation

allowances, basic allowances for subsistence and meals at no cost, suspension of requirements to receive performance-based special and incentive pays, and Special Leave Accrual. All our efforts are designed to provide financial assistance and prevent undue hardship during this pandemic.

The People First Task Force

In December 2020, the Secretary of the Army established the People First Task Force (PFTF) to assess findings and recommendations of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee (FHIRC) and develop options to address critical people issues which eroded public trust in the Army. The PFTF is taking actions to holistically address each of the nine findings and implement all 70 recommendations of the FHIRC, and is well under way to broadly apply meaningful changes through multi-faceted plans to combat sexual harassment, sexual assault, violent crimes, and other harmful behaviors that exist in our ranks across the Army, ultimately enhancing a culture of trust and building cohesive teams at all echelons. Deliberate efforts to redesign the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program are in progress and the task force expects to present its recommendations to Army leadership soon for review and implementation.

In March, the People First Solarium brought together 100 junior enlisted Soldiers and officers from across the Total Army at the U.S. Military Academy to examine Army culture and the behaviors that negatively impact cohesion and trust. This event initiated a deliberate effort to close the communications gap between Soldiers and senior leaders combined with 96 listening sessions at 14 locations. Parallel to the Solarium, the *This Is My Squad* initiative employs a grassroots approach to building cohesive teams that nests with the Army's NCO Strategy to shape the NCO Corps for generations to come. In support of *This is My Squad*, the Army developed the *Squad Leader Development Course* (SLDC) to assist first-line leaders in understanding and embracing their roles. The recently revised SLDC curriculum assists junior leaders as they develop their leadership philosophy by tying their philosophy to their signature character strengths and personal values. Additionally, the Army will aggressively

improve criminal investigation structure, crime prevention procedures and missing Soldier protocols to empower and protect our Soldiers.

The task force is also conducting pilot programs to measure unit cohesion and trust, as well as the effectiveness of programs meant to counter harmful behaviors such as sexual harassment, at select installations. The assessments include: Soldier interviews and small unit visits; surveys measuring morale and trust in leadership; and analysis of a formation's operations with regards to trust and cohesion, leader development programs, training, awards, legal actions, and Soldier separation programs.

Equity and Inclusion Efforts

The Army continues to advance the Army People Strategy Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Annex which includes 5 goals, 25 objectives, and 126 action tasks that serve as the core of the Army's Project Inclusion initiatives and fulfill the FY20 NDAA section 529 mandate for the military services to develop a diversity and inclusion strategic plan by December 20, 2020. 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 April 15, 2021, the Army has conducted 97 listening sessions at 14 different locations, reaching 5,401 Soldiers and Department of the Army Civilians.

Another initiative is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion outreach to Affinity Groups program. On January 18, 2021, then Secretary of the Army McCarthy signed a memorandum of agreement with the National Pan Hellenic Council to focus on mutually shared objectives that help diversify the Army; mentor young men and women throughout the National Pan Hellenic Council community; and collaborate on outreach opportunities to build a community of talent, capable of joining the Army and achieving their aspirations and defined ideals of success.

The Army has also inculcated diversity, equity, and inclusion training into Army Professional Military Education. The Training and Doctrine Command has revamped Military Equal Opportunity training to include diversity, equity and inclusion, the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army signed the Officer Diversity Plan on January 7, 2021. We are working to complete plans for our enlisted, warrant officer and civilian cohort by the end of FY21. These plans are designed to help the Army 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, as mandated by FY21 NDAA section 913.

Quality of Life Programs

People First means creating a duty and installation environment that allows Soldiers and their families to thrive. Last year we committed to quality of life priorities that included: quality housing both for families and our Soldiers in the barracks; quality childcare and youth services; and meaningful employment for spouses.

The Army continues to execute the Army Housing Campaign Plan to shape policies, procedures, and processes at every echelon. We have fully implemented 14 of 18 Tenant Bill of Rights at 44 installations and expect the remaining 4 tenant rights to be available at most installations with privatized housing by June 1, 2021. We implemented incentive fee metrics to hold privatized companies accountable for proper maintenance and customer service, and hired 114 additional government personnel to provide quality assurance oversight to privatized and government-owned housing. We implemented 100% change of occupancy inspections, and 100% quality assurance checks on life, health, and safety work orders. We developed environmental hazards (mold and lead) education materials; established an environmental hazard response registry; established habitability and displaced residents' policies; and hired independent, third-party experts to perform financial and development/operations reviews on privatized companies.

Quality childcare is essential in enabling personnel readiness. The Army has a multi-pronged strategy to maintain, and in some cases, increase access to care. We plan,

with Congressional support, to build 21 additional Child Development Centers by FY30, adding approximately 4,000 childcare spaces. We appreciate Congressional support of the three centers funded in FY21, two in Hawaii and one in Alaska. We continue to invest in our people, adjusting compensation to recruit and retain quality staff. We are incentivizing the Family Childcare Program with bonuses for new providers and for families that continue in the program after a move. Finally, 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 a long wait for care.

The Army, with the support of Congress, continues to make improvements in spouse employment initiatives. The Army reimburses spouses up to \$1,000 for professional licensing and certification in a new state. We improved policies for military spouse hiring preference and strengthened the Employment Readiness Program. We also made the transfer of non-appropriated fund employees between installations easier and streamlined the home-based business application and approval system. We continue to work with DoD to promote workforce development scholarships; improve state license reciprocity and professional license compacts; and reduce overseas employment barriers.

Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program (SHARP)

The Army continues to show the highest sexual assault and harassment reporting ever recorded. The continued increase in reporting is viewed as a positive trend by DoD and civilian sexual assault/harassment and prevention experts. Soldier surveys, such as the Workplace and Gender Relations Survey and the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), have linked an increase in reporting to greater trust in the chain of command and the SHARP response system. Optimally, we would see an increase in reporting in conjunction with a decrease in prevalence, or the estimated number of assaults.

We are working to redesign the Army's SHARP system and are implementing initiatives to provide Commanders with the essential resources, education, training, and

awareness they need to bring an end to sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Army. The PFTF has assembled a team of experts and stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive review of the Army's efforts to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault, along with providing coordinated, victim-centered and trauma-informed reporting and response services. The PFTF has engaged experts from academia, the public sector, DoD and the Army to develop bold, holistic, and sweeping recommendations to improve the Army's SHARP program. These recommendations will also address the 70 recommendations from the Fort Hood Independent Review. The Army is committed to eradicating sexual harassment and sexual assault in our ranks, and we see the SHARP program redesign as a foundational effort.

Our Army SHARP Academy, the only sexual assault prevention and response-dedicated school among the Services, has introduced new prevention curriculum for all SHARP professionals informed by the DoD Prevention Plan of Action (PPoA). The new curriculum includes a range of unit-level training products that enable interactive learning. In January 2021, the Academy began providing updated and enhanced SHARP training in the Army's Pre-Command Course and work is underway to improve the required content across the full range of Professional Military Education (PME).

We are in the process of seeking an exception to policy to allow the Army to provide SHARP advocacy services to Army Civilians filing unrestricted sexual assault reports regardless of whether they are serving in CONUS or OCONUS. Currently, policies only allow limited SHARP services to Civilians serving OCONUS.

Resilience Programs

The Army's Ready and Resilient (R2) program continues to provide the foundation for individuals to build and sustain personal readiness and resilience. Resilience is the Army's number one investment in primary prevention, as well as a protective factor against harmful behaviors.

During the past year, we have increased the ability of Command Teams and Leaders to better “see” their Soldiers and units, by deploying 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. This access provides the Command Teams a consolidated history of each Soldier’s personal information and potential risk. Battalion Commanders, Command Sergeants Major, Company Commanders, and First Sergeants are the only personnel who can view individual Soldier risk related to Personal Identifying Information (PII) and limited Protected Health Information (PHI). We completed fielding of the CRRT to the Active Component and are currently rolling out the capability to Reserve and Guard units. CRRT not only provides Command Teams unprecedented visibility of their Soldiers’ risk factors, it also displays aggregated risk data from Company through Army Command level. This tool provides leaders with a common operating picture consisting of high-risk event trends with relationship to operational events.

Suicide

The Army continues to take a multidisciplinary, holistic comprehensive approach that includes awareness, research, and clinical/non-clinical initiatives to address suicide and other harmful behaviors. Unfortunately, Army suicides increased in late 2019, and we continue our efforts to prevent these tragedies through our comprehensive strategies. While we recognize the COVID-19 conditions that increased isolation and decreased social connectedness could exacerbate suicidality, evidence does not yet exist to support a causal link with the pandemic. We are taking proactive measures such as leader engagement, training and awareness to mitigate associated stressors. We continue to equip commanders with the tools and resources required to strengthen resilience, increase leader visibility and enhance communication, prevention, and intervention capabilities through a collaborative community response.

We are nearing completion of two pilot initiatives. A Suicide Prevention/Resilience Strengthening initiative that include units at Forts Bliss, Hood, and Campbell, is aimed

at decreasing the prevalence of suicidality through increases in unit cohesion, trust, and coping and communication skills. During the pilot, we are evaluating two main initiatives: Leader Education and Training and Command Visibility Tools. Pilot findings will assess the impact on reduction of suicides, behavioral health problems and undesirable behaviors such as substance abuse, violence, and crime, and will be available in 3QFY21. A second pilot, the Behavioral Health Readiness and Suicide Risk Reduction Review (R4) tool, focuses on the populations most at risk of suicide (company level and below) and provides first-line leaders with practical knowledge for communicating with their Soldiers on suicide prevention. Initial pilot findings will be complete in 3QFY 21.

We continue to embed multidisciplinary teams of behavioral health (BH) professionals to provide direct support of brigade-level units. The Army expanded BH telehealth appointments during COVID-19, and the Office of the Surgeon General is reviewing the continuation of this service after the pandemic subsides.

The Army is revising how it governs its Suicide Prevention programs to better incorporate Prevention and allow the Department to address early on any new emerging challenges. By elevating our governance process and taking a more holistic prevention approach, our Senior Leaders will have both the continuous visibility and information to reduce the incidents of suicide across our Army.

Alcohol and other Substance Abuse

Recognizing the nexus between alcohol and substance abuse and other harmful behaviors, the Army is employing a multidisciplinary and holistic prevention approach to reduce alcohol abuse and other substance abuse among Soldiers. Our most at-risk population continues to be junior enlisted male Soldiers that have co-occurring psychological or physical conditions. Combat exposure and traumatic experiences can also increase the risk of substance abuse within our population. The Army continues to emphasize the importance of deterrence, training, and awareness efforts, and offers self-referral for Soldiers struggling with alcohol and other substance abuse problems.

In July 2020, the Army published an update to AR 600-85, *Army Substance Abuse Program*. Other revisions include the addition of problematic gambling behavior to our Prevention, Education, and Training Objectives. We also provided updated guidance for administrative processing for separation of Soldiers for alcohol or other drug abuse and implementing the designation of certain positions as Testing Designation Positions under the Army Drug-Free Federal Workplace Program. These revisions support efforts to implement an integrated and comprehensive prevention model aimed at strengthening Soldiers, DA Civilians and Family members, building protective factors, and fostering a culture of trust that promotes readiness, successful service that is free of alcohol and other substance abuse and organizational cohesion.

We are placing increased emphasis on stigma reduction efforts to encourage those who want assistance, but are hesitant to seek help, due to fears it will negatively impact their careers. In addition, the Army's substance abuse prevention efforts are being aligned with the Centers for Disease Control prevention strategy to ensure a holistic approach to prevent and deter substance abuse.

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. For FY20, the Army's Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act compliance is 95%. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) remains available to all veterans for six months after transition, and to all retirees for life.

Even with the challenges of COVID-19, more than 90% of transitioning Soldiers met the Career Readiness Standards required by DoD and the Army. The Army already had a 24/7 Virtual TAP Center that enabled us to be flexible during this pandemic. Counselors worldwide use our Virtual software, Microsoft Teams, and telephonic support to ensure Soldiers in transition and their families have access to online support and information.

According to data from the Department of Labor, in FY20 the unemployment rate for all Veterans increased due to COVID-19. The Army TAP efforts helped to stabilize the unemployment rate for recently transitioned Veterans to be lower than the national average. Between FY11 and FY20, Army TAP efforts, coupled with the Nation's low Veteran unemployment rates, have contributed to reducing the Army's annual unemployment reimbursement costs from a high of \$514.6 million to \$112.8 million.

The Army TAP's Career Skills Program (CSP) provides Soldiers the opportunity to participate in first-class apprenticeships, on-the-job training, employment skills training, and internships. It also affords Soldiers the opportunity to obtain industry-recognized skills and move into high-demand and highly skilled careers at little to no cost. The Army has more 4,000 industry partners and sub-partners in the CSP program. In FY20, 6,041 Soldiers successfully completed a CSP, and 5,586 (or 90%) of them were placed into careers following the CSP training, despite a world-wide pandemic that moved most CSP training for the Army to an online and/or virtual platform.

Soldier for Life

The Army Soldier for Life program continues to expand its efforts to influence policies, programs and services that support Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families. Forced to transition to virtual operations during the pandemic, the program conducted more than 25 key virtual engagements with Army, government and non-government organizations. In support of the Army Quality of Life Task Force focus to support military spouses, Soldier for Life spearheaded the initiative to establish co-working space for self-employed and remote-working military spouses, with pilot programs already established at Forts Belvoir, Knox and Sill. For the past two years, Soldier for Life has increased program awareness through aggressive strategic messaging across all social media platforms with remarkable success. The Soldier for Life podcast produced 89 episodes designed to share resources with the military community. Soldier for Life thrives on creating an environment where Soldiers, Veterans and their Families

embrace their positive Army experience and return to their communities to inspire others to serve through personal example.

The Army's Retired Soldiers are both a strategic and tactical asset for the Army. They inspire Americans by telling their Army stories and explaining military service and how critical it is to the strength and security of our nation. During the pandemic, more than 200 retired Soldiers with needed medical skills were recalled to active duty to serve in COVID-19 hotspots or to backfill Soldiers in military treatment facilities who deployed to these hot spots.

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. Accordingly, putting our People First is key to readiness, modernization, and reform. Every one of our people has unique talents and abilities they are willing to use in service to our Nation, and we owe them the opportunity to do so. Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, members of this committee, I thank you for generous and unwavering support of our outstanding Soldiers, Civilian Professionals, and their Families.