

Thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am deeply honored to come before you today as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. I am grateful to President Biden, Secretary Austin, Deputy Secretary Hicks and Undersecretary Cisneros for their trust and confidence in me.

I want to start with thanking my family, friends and mentors for their encouragement and support that has brought me to this place and time. While my mother is unable to be here in person today, she and my brothers understand the great importance of this moment and are certainly cheering me on from afar. And lastly, my father who undoubtedly is proudly watching down on these proceedings. Coming from a family of educators my parents instilled the values of hard work, empathy and public service in my siblings and me, which has served as my north star and given me the passion and commitment to serve our Service members, their families and our Career Public Servants.

I have very vivid memories as a small child loading up in the family station wagon as we would drive my father to our local armory as he headed off to Ft Drum for his annual training each year. Equally so I recall the official military photos of my uncles that sat in a place of prominence on our living room mantel as they served in Vietnam. All a constant reminder of the important sacrifice our Service members and their families make for all of us each and every day.

While I have never served in uniform, I have spent the vast majority of my 30-year career in support of our Service members and their families. My first job out of college was as a

young Schedule-C appointee in the Department of Defense during the Clinton Administration. It was at that time I discovered my passion for working with and for our Service members and their families. Throughout my career I have worked in support of a wide variety of human capital-focused efforts to include transition assistance, sexual assault response and prevention, mental health counseling and support of our Wounded, Ill and Injured population among others. Under the Obama Administration I had the honor and privilege to serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy where I was able to further play an important role in a wide array of important programs.

Secretary Austin has laid out clear priorities reaffirming that the men and women of our Armed Forces are our most valuable asset. I sit here before you today with the full understanding that if confirmed I will be charged with addressing some of the most important policy decisions in the Department – a responsibility I don't take lightly.

If confirmed for this position I would pay special focus on a number of major challenges including recruitment and propensity to serve, as well as several issues impacting retention including compensation, spouse employment, and access to affordable childcare for our military and our career public servant families.

I have deep appreciation for this committee and its role in the formation and oversight of our national security policy. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with you regularly to advance our nations priorities in an active, bipartisan and cooperative spirit.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your questions.