

**Advance Policy Questions for Lieutenant General Joseph L. Lengyel**  
**Nominee for the position of Chief of the National Guard Bureau**

**Defense Reforms**

**The Senate Armed Services Committee has initiated an intensive review of the organization of the Department of Defense—both military and civilian, including the elements created by the Goldwater Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Department of Defense to execute the National Military Strategy in the 21st Century.**

**Based on your experiences as a senior officer, what challenges have you observed with the current organizational structure, with particular focus on warfighting capabilities, and what modifications, if any, do you think are necessary to the current organizational structure including any Goldwater Nichols Act provisions?**

In the 30 years since the enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the Department of Defense and the active and the Reserve Components of the Services have been able to meet global security challenges with unity in effort and resources. However, the strategic and fiscal environment in which we operate has changed significantly. I believe re-evaluating the major aspects of Goldwater-Nichols is sensible in order to achieve greater efficacy in responding to current and future threats. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Committee to review and identify areas in need of modification.

**In your view, how should the forces of the Reserve Component generally, and the National Guard, specifically, be viewed as part of the long term fighting effectiveness of the Department of Defense?**

The Reserve Components are an integral part of each Service and should be viewed as an equally important part of the Nation's total military. The Reserve Components are a cost-effective force that allows the parent Service to surge personnel, capability, and capacity when the Nation needs without paying for a large standing force. The National Guard, specifically, should be viewed not just as a combat Reserve Component to the parent Services, but also as the military first-responder in the homeland. I support regular, predictable utilization of National Guard force structure.

**Qualifications**

**What background and experience do you have that you believe qualifies you for the position of Chief of the National Guard Bureau?**

I have served in both the Active Component of the United States Air Force and the Texas Air National Guard for over 34 years of combined service in a variety of operational, command and staff positions. I have exceptional experience and knowledge of National Guard missions in both non-Federal and Federal capacity. Most recently, I have served for four years as the

Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau; assisting the Chief in ensuring the nearly 453,000 Air and Army National Guard service members are accessible, capable, and ready to fight our nation's wars and to protect our homeland. During my time as the Vice Chief, I was involved in numerous consequential issues affecting the National Guard to include: readiness, modernization, budgeting, manning, acquisition, and family programs. Finally, as the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau, I had direct and frequent exchange with all members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Prior to my current position, I gained valuable foreign policy and multinational security experience serving as the senior United States defense official and Defense Attaché for United States Central Command in Cairo, Egypt. Prior to that, I served as the Military Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Requirements, Headquarters, United States Air Force. I assisted with development and integration of Air Force strategy, long-range plans and operational capabilities-based requirements as well as ensuring the Air Force built effective forces to achieve national defense objectives.

I am an F-16 Command Pilot with service spanning multiple conflicts and theaters including operations Desert Storm, Provide Comfort, Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom. Additionally, I have commanded at the Fighter Squadron, Operations Group, Air Expeditionary Operations Group, and the Air National Guard Readiness Center. I also served as the Deputy Director of the Air National Guard and as Vice Commander, First Air Force.

My leadership and management experiences combined with technical and tactical expertise employed throughout my career will serve as a solid preparation for service as the Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

## **Vision for the Future**

### **What is your vision for the National Guard of today and the future?**

My vision for the National Guard of today and in the future is a ready, all-volunteer, operational force of Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen, ready to meet our nation's challenges during this turbulent period in our history. My vision includes strong partnerships with the Adjutants General, our parent Services, Federal and State partners across 54 States and Territories to provide a force which fights our Nation's wars as part of the joint force, responds rapidly in the homeland, and builds enduring partnerships with international, national, State and local stakeholders.

### **What roles do you believe the National Guard should play in combat, humanitarian, and stability operations?**

In combat, the National Guard should augment the Active Component across the full spectrum of operations. With respect to humanitarian operations, National Guard forces provide a uniquely-qualified force of Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen capable of bringing our vast experience to humanitarian and disaster relief operations. Combined with our many partnerships around the globe, the National Guard should be a force of first choice

to provide humanitarian and disaster relief. Regarding stability operations, National Guard forces should play a prominent role in any stability operation for many of the same reasons we excel at humanitarian and disaster relief.

## **Major Challenges**

### **In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Chief of the National Guard Bureau?**

The next Chief of the National Guard Bureau will be challenged with maintaining a ready force while facing an increasingly diverse and complex range of threats at home and abroad in a constrained fiscal environment. The next Chief of the National Guard Bureau will have to strike the right balance between readiness and modernization, and meet today's requirements while preparing for future threats.

### **If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?**

If confirmed, I will work to maintain a ready, operational force through proper training, manning, and equipping; nurturing and sustaining current legacy fleets while leveraging current equipment and investing smartly in modernization with sound fiscal stewardship of resources; and ensuring the health and well-being of our Soldiers, Airmen, and their families. Collaboration, coordination, and communication with Congress, the Adjutants General, the Department, and the Services will be key in managing these challenges, and I look forward to fully developing these partnerships.

## **Role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

### **What is your view on the role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau in representing the position of the National Guard Bureau on matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions and representing the position of the state adjutants general on these matters?**

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau is uniquely situated to provide the viewpoint and insights of the Adjutants General on these matters as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; as principal advisor to the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force and their Chiefs of Staff; and as a full member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the specific additional responsibility for addressing matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions. Homeland defense and civil support are core missions of the National Guard, and members of the National Guard are our first military responders in time of national or regional emergencies. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau communicates constantly with the Adjutants General of the 54 States and Territories to maintain real-time awareness on the capabilities and readiness of their non-

Federalized National Guard forces to support homeland defense and civil support missions

**Do you believe that it is the role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to represent the final National Guard position on matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions and to defend that position?**

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau is the senior uniformed Department of Defense official with real-time knowledge of the capabilities of non-Federalized National Guard forces available to support homeland defense and civil support missions. As the channel of communication between the Adjutants General and Department officials, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau is uniquely postured to represent the National Guard position on matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions.

**What do you believe is the proper role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?**

I believe current statute has prescribed and codified the proper role of the Chief, National Guard Bureau. As with the other Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau functions as a military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau also has the specific additional responsibility as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for addressing matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions.

**Is it the role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to argue his position on matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions to the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?**

Yes. Section 10502 of title 10, United States Code assigns the Chief of the National Guard Bureau with the specific additional responsibility, as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, of addressing matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions.

**Is it the role Chief of the National Guard Bureau, as it is the role of the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to represent and defend the final decision from the Joint Chiefs of Staff? Why or why not?**

Yes. As a full member of Joint Chiefs of Staff under section 151 of title 10, United States Code, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau has the same roles and obligations as the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

## **Coordination with State Adjutants General**

### **What is your view concerning the role of the CNGB in creating defense policy and funding allocations?**

The Chief, National Guard Bureau's (CNGB's) role is to provide the best military advice and judgment as a principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as the principal adviser to the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army, and to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, on matters relating to the National Guard. To that end, the CNGB is responsible for creating defense-related policy pertaining to the National Guard and in particular the non-Federalized National Guard. The CNGB should also ensure, normally through the Directors of the Air and Army National Guard, that the budgeting processes within the respective Services take into account the unique domestic roles and responsibilities of the National Guard.

### **If confirmed, what will you do, specifically, in your role as the next Chief of the National Guard Bureau to work with the state adjutants general to ensure that their voices are heard in the defense budgeting process?**

If confirmed, I will participate in the State-Federal Consultative Process for Programming and Budgetary Proposals affecting the National Guard, alongside the States' Adjutants General through the Council of Governors. I will consistently and constantly seek the input of the Adjutants General through established processes to ensure that State-level inputs related to the National Guard are communicated to the Department of Defense for inclusion in plans, programs, analysis, and budget processes.

### **If confirmed, what will you do, specifically, to create one overarching National Guard Bureau position on matters important to national defense?**

If confirmed as the next Chief of the National Guard Bureau, I will work inclusively with all stakeholders to ensure the Bureau moves forward with one position on matters important to national defense.

### **In your view, should the Chief of the National Guard Bureau have any authority over state adjutants general? Over what resources and troops does the Chief of the National Guard Bureau exercise authority?**

Command authority over non-Federalized National Guard forces is always reserved to the States' Governors by the Constitution. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau and other Federal military officials exercise regulatory authority regarding the ways and means by which non-Federalized National Guard forces are organized, administered, recruited, trained, and equipped.

## Duties

**Section 10502 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Chief of the National Guard Bureau is (1) a principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on matters involving non-federalized National Guard forces and on other matters as determined by the Secretary of Defense; and (2) the principal adviser to the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army, and to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, on matters relating to the National Guard, the Army National Guard of the United States, and the Air National Guard of the United States.**

**If confirmed, how do you plan to carry out these responsibilities?**

If confirmed, I will provide my best military advice and judgment as a principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as the principal adviser to the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army, and to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, on matters relating to the National Guard. I will ensure the responsibilities and capabilities of the National Guard are considered in a planned and deliberate manner that is firmly rooted in law and national strategy. I will also ensure the domestic mission of the National Guard is taken into account, from the inception of planning through advising the President, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council on strategies and contingencies. In order to accomplish this, I will continuously engage with our Federal and State partners, the Adjutants General, and the Services to ensure all defense requirements are readily met by the men and women of the National Guard.

**What will be the role of the Director of the Army National Guard and the Director of the Air National Guard in the performance of these duties?**

If confirmed, I will rely upon the Directors of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard to provide their leadership and expertise in their respective Services to further the mission of the National Guard Bureau and the Services.

**What do you consider to be the most serious problems in the performance of the functions of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau?**

I see no serious problems. I see some challenges as evolutionary and naturally associated with any major change within an organization as significant as the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I will raise any concerns to the Committee.

**If confirmed, what management actions and time lines would you establish to address these problems?**

If confirmed, I will make it my priority during my tenure to continue to institutionally mature the National Guard Bureau to support a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I will also continually review the structure of the National Guard Bureau to ensure resources

are properly aligned to provide effective and efficient support to the 54 States and Territories and the Department of Defense.

**If confirmed, what broad priorities will you establish?**

If confirmed, my first broad priority will be to maintain the readiness and utilization of the operational Army and Air National Guard in support of Combatant Commanders' warfighting requirements and to always be ready and always be there to respond to Governors' needs in responding to emergencies in the homeland.

My second broad priority will be to take care of our most important asset - the tremendous Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard and their families. I will strive to grow and train leaders who innovate and motivate our force. We will create a culture where ethical behavior goes from the top down and where acts that demoralize units and degrade readiness such as sexual assault and discrimination will never be tolerated, and where diversity and inclusion are the norm.

**Sections 151(a) and 10502(d) of title 10, United States Code, includes the Chief of the National Guard Bureau as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the specific responsibility of addressing matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions. If confirmed, how do you plan to carry out these responsibilities?**

If confirmed, I will carry out these responsibilities through close coordination with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, the Services, Combatant Commands and the Interagency; especially in regard to Federal matters. Regarding matters involving non-Federalized forces, the National Guard Bureau will coordinate and collaborate with the Adjutants General of the 54 States and Territories, and other Federal and State partners, in providing real-time situational awareness on the capabilities and readiness of National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions.

**In carrying out these duties, what would be your relationship with the following officials?**

- **The Secretary of Defense**

The Secretary of Defense is the principal advisor to the President on all defense-related matters and has authority and control over the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I will advise the Secretary of Defense on all military matters as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Regarding non-Federalized National Guard matters, I will provide this advice to the Secretary of Defense through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I remain an advisor to the Army and Air Force on all matters involving the National Guard.

- **The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the President and the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman plans the strategic direction and contingency operations of the Armed Forces; advises the Secretary of Defense on requirements, programs, and budgets that the Combatant Command commanders identify; develops doctrine for the joint employment of the Armed Forces; reports on assignment of functions (or roles and missions) to the Armed Forces; provides for representation of the United States on the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations; and performs such other duties as the law or the President or Secretary of Defense may prescribe. In conjunction with the other members of the Joint Chiefs, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau assists the Chairman in providing military advice to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, it would be my duty as a member of the Joint Chiefs to provide frank and timely advice and opinions to the Chairman to assist him in his performance of these responsibilities. I would also have the specific additional responsibility of addressing matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions. I will establish and maintain a close and professional relationship with the Chairman, and I will communicate directly and openly with him on any policy matters impacting the National Guard and the Armed Forces as a whole.

- **The Deputy Secretary of Defense**

The Deputy Secretary of Defense performs the duties and exercises power as the Secretary of Defense prescribes, to include acting in accordance with the law on the Secretary's behalf. If confirmed, I will be responsible to the Deputy Secretary of Defense for the operation of the National Guard Bureau, the implementation of his policies, and for providing advice as appropriate or authorized by law.

- **The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness**

Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as the Secretary of Defense may prescribe in the areas of military readiness, total force management, military and civilian personnel requirements, military and civilian personnel training, military and civilian family matters, exchange, commissary, and nonappropriated fund activities, personnel requirements for weapons support, National Guard and Reserve Components, and health affairs. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is responsible, subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, for the monitoring of the operations tempo and personnel tempo of the Armed Forces. The Under Secretary shall establish, to the extent practicable, uniform standards within the Department of Defense for terminology and policies relating to deployment of units and personnel away from their assigned duty stations (including the length of time units or personnel may be away for such a deployment) and shall establish uniform reporting systems for tracking deployments. If confirmed, I will



coordinate with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force to ensure the effective integration of National Guard capabilities into a cohesive Total Force. I will also coordinate with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, and the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force in developing statutory changes, policies, and procedures affecting the National Guard.

- **The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs**

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness for Reserve Component matters. If confirmed, I will coordinate closely with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force, to ensure the effective integration of National Guard capabilities into a cohesive Total Force. I will also coordinate closely with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force, in developing statutory changes, policies, and procedures affecting Federally-funded National Guard forces under State Governor command.

- **The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security**

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security is responsible for advising the Secretary of Defense and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on policy, strategy, and implementation guidance across a diverse portfolio of national and global security issues. These issues include countering weapons of mass destruction, cyber operations, homeland defense activities, antiterrorism, continuity of government and mission assurance, defense support to civil authorities and space-related matters. If confirmed, I will coordinate closely with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force, regarding the use of National Guard personnel and resources for operations conducted under title 32, United States Code, or in support of State missions. I will assist the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security in carrying out his responsibilities of incorporating the roles and responsibilities of the NGB and the National Guard pertaining to the use of National Guard forces under both Federal and non-Federal control in DoD policy and of representing the Department of Defense in interagency, national, and international forums concerning policy for those same matters.

- **The General Counsel of the Department of Defense**

The General Counsel of the Department of Defense is the chief legal officer in the Department in accordance with title 10 United States Code, section 140. If confirmed,

I will ensure the officials and personnel of the National Guard Bureau fully comply with legal opinions, the Department of Defense Standards of Conduct Program, and relevant policies of the General Counsel. I will consult and coordinate with the General Counsel on legal issues or any other matters required by law or policy.

- **The combatant commanders, particularly the Commander of U.S. Northern Command**

As established by the Unified Command Plan, and subject to the direction of the President, the Combatant Commanders perform their assigned duties under the direct authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, I will build close relationships with the Combatant Commanders and provide advice, coordination, and support as required. I will communicate regularly and openly with the Combatant Commanders of United States Northern Command and Pacific Command in regards to coordinating non-Federalized National Guard domestic operations.

- **The Assistant Secretaries in the military departments responsible for reserve matters**

The Assistant Secretaries in the Military Departments responsible for reserve matters shall have as their principal duty the overall supervision of manpower and Reserve Component affairs of their respective Military Departments. If confirmed, I will establish a close working partnership with the Assistant Secretaries. As directed by the Secretary of Defense and the Service Secretaries, I will coordinate with the Assistant Secretaries those matters requiring Service action or coordination that have been assigned or delegated to the Assistant Secretaries in law or policy.

- **The Directors of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard**

The Director of the Army National Guard and the Director of the Air National Guard assist the Chief of the National Guard Bureau in carrying out the functions of the National Guard Bureau as they relate to their respective branches. The Directors will provide their leadership and expertise in their respective Services to further the mission of the National Guard Bureau and the Services.

- **The Assistants to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for Guard and Reserve Matters**

Established by law in 1998, the Assistants to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for National Guard and Reserve Matters serve the Chairman and coordinate with the Joint Staff. The Assistant to the Chairman for National Guard Matters is an adviser to the Chairman on matters relating to the National Guard and performs the duties prescribed for that position by the Chairman. The Assistant to the Chairman for Reserve Matters is an adviser to the Chairman on matters relating to the reserves and performs the duties prescribed for that position by the Chairman. If confirmed, and in

coordination with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I will closely coordinate with the Assistants to ensure they are fully informed and able to provide the best advice based on the most current information. In the National Guard and Reserve Matters (NGRM) role, the Assistants are in unique positions to interface both with the Chairman's staff and Guard and Reserve staffs. Their access enables them to identify and advise when issues are diverging or potential misunderstandings have or are about to arise. They are valuable liaisons who contribute insights and provide timely subject matter expertise on Reserve Component issues. If confirmed, I envision no change to the current collaborative relationship with them.

- **The Chiefs of the Reserves of each of the Services**

The Chiefs of the Service Reserves are the principal advisors to the Service Secretaries on Reserve matters. If confirmed, I will communicate and coordinate regularly with the Chiefs on matters concerning or affecting the National Guard which have implications across all Reserve Components.

- **The Reserve Forces Policy Board**

The Reserve Forces Policy Board serves as an independent adviser to the Secretary of Defense to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary on strategies, policies, and practices designed to improve and enhance the capabilities, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Reserve Components. If confirmed, and at the request of the Service Secretaries, I will nominate officers or retired officers of the Army and Air National Guard for recommendation by the Service Secretaries to the Secretary of Defense for appointment to the Board. Upon request of the Secretary of Defense, I will nominate officers of the Army and Air National Guard to serve as Board members or as Board staff. Upon the request of the Board, I will make members of the National Guard Bureau or of the National Guard available as witnesses or subject matter experts to assist the Board in performing its functions.

- **The State and Territorial Governors**

Although a matter of State or Territorial law, generally, the Governor acts as Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard of that jurisdiction. If confirmed, one of the most critical responsibilities I have is to act as the channel of communication between the State National Guards and the Department of Defense on all National Guard related issues. I will assist the Governors at their request regarding specific National Guard matters of concern. I will also participate as a Federal official in the meetings of the Council of Governors and exchange views regarding the matters delineated in Executive Order 13528.

- **The Adjutants General of the States and Territories**

The Adjutants General in each of the 54 States and Territories are a foundation on which the National Guard is built. It is essential for the Chief of the National Guard

Bureau to support the Adjutants General as commanders of their National Guard forces. If confirmed, I will wholeheartedly embrace a policy of constant, robust two-way communication with the Adjutants General in order to proactively seek their opinions, concerns, and advice on important matters impacting the National Guard.

**Do you believe that the statutory designation of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has materially changed how the Chief participates, or should participate, in major force structure decisions by the Department of Defense, including decisions relating to the disposition of military personnel or property? If so, please explain.**

Yes. The statutory designation of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau as a member of the Joint Chiefs has ensured the full capabilities of the National Guard, non-Federalized and Federalized, are fully and seamlessly integrated into Department of Defense/Service planning, programing, and budgeting. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau participates in Joint Chiefs of Staff advisory and assessment processes, including those related to resource requirements and priorities. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Staff, and the State Adjutants General in these joint processes.

### **Roles and Missions**

**Some have expressed concern about the use of the Reserve Component as an operational reserve and the regular mobilizations of National Guard members. Do you believe that the use of the Reserve Component as an operational reserve and regularly mobilizing the National Guard is an appropriate use of these forces?**

Yes. With the current fiscal and security environment, it is my belief that an operational National Guard is needed now more than ever.

An operational reserve requires regular and predictable utilization to achieve and maintain readiness and allow our Airmen and Soldiers to grow through operational leadership development experiences. Although we try to utilize the force as predictably as possible, we understand that some National Guard units may mobilize more frequently than others due to high-demand, low-density specialties.

I receive constant feedback that, on the whole, National Guard members want to be deployed and remain an operational force.

**Do you think the role of the Reserve Component should change, and, if so, how?**

I think the National Guard should remain an operational reserve that includes regular deployments and rotations. I think we should continue to grow and develop leaders and capabilities across the full spectrum of operations.

**Are you concerned that such use will have an adverse effect on recruiting and retention in the National Guard, or on employers' willingness to hire National Guard members in civilian occupations?**

No. As an operational reserve, the National Guard has never been stronger. Our retention rates remains strong, and Soldiers and Airmen across the force tell me that they want to remain the operational force we are today. Certainly, there are some stressed career fields as we strive to support the wartime demands and our parent Services, but the majority of our force has joined to be part of a relevant and operational force both at home and abroad.

The key to successfully leveraging the operational use of 447,500 Airmen and Soldiers is sufficient funding to maintain readiness and predictability in the deployment cycles. This predictability will allow employers to best prepare for and support using the National Guard to defend our Nation.

**If confirmed, what actions will you take to enhance recruiting and retention of experienced members of the National Guard?**

If confirmed, I will continue the programs that incentivize the recruiting and retention of qualified, trained, and experienced Airmen and Soldiers. An important focus area is our interaction with the Air Force and Army to maximize the opportunities for Active Component Airmen and Soldiers to serve in the National Guard. Finally, I will review the recruiting force in the Air and Army Guard to ensure they have the personnel and resources to effectively perform their mission.

**Additional National Guard Programs**

**The National Guard participates in programs such as the Youth Challenge Program, STARBASE, and the State Partnership Program. In times of limited resources, what is the added value of these programs to our national defense?**

The Youth Challenge and STARBASE programs are funded by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the National Guard is the executive agent. These programs enhance community linkage between the National Guard and local populations, building partnerships at the local level.

The State Partnership Program is an invaluable, cost-effective tool to build enduring relationships with other countries, which has transformed security consumers into security providers and is directly responsible for generating partner participation in coalition operations. For 23 years, the National Guard has cultivated relationships with 76 partner countries in every geographic Combatant Command. In addition to military-to-military engagements, the State Partnership Program leverages whole-of-society relationships and capabilities which facilitate broader interagency and whole-of-government activities, meeting Department of Defense and partner country security objectives.

**The National Guard participates in programs such as the Youth Challenge Program, STARBASE, and the State Partnership Program. Have these programs been successful, in your view, in improving propensity to serve in the military among youth?**

The Youth ChalleNGe Program was created to focus on at-risk youth, not with the goal of recruiting its graduates or increasing their propensity to serve in the military. According to the Fiscal Year 2015 annual report, the Youth ChalleNGe Program currently averaged approximately 6 percent of graduates entering into some type of military service.

The STARBASE Program was created to focus on children, primarily fifth graders, and therefore it is difficult to assess the propensity of students towards military service. The program centers around a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum, providing students a hands-on experience by leveraging the use of military bases, and utilizing military STEM examples.

The State Partnership Program (SPP), in contrast, is a strategic engagement program working with our partner nations' military and security forces in a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship. There is no correlation between the SPP and a propensity to serve in the military, however, I believe the SPP has a positive impact on National Guard retention.

**How many Youth Challenge participants join the military after completion of the program?**

The Youth ChalleNGe program focuses on rescuing at-risk youths. It was not created or administered with the goal of recruiting its graduates or increasing their propensity to serve in the military. According to the Fiscal Year 2015 annual report, approximately 6 percent go on to some type of military service.

**Do you believe it is the role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to make manpower allocations based on the national security and homeland defense missions first?**

Yes.

### **Defense Budgeting Process**

**What are your views on the relative balance required between the Air National Guard and active Air Force end strength levels?**

Over the past several years, all three Air Force components (Active, Guard and Reserve) have been fully engaged in every region of the world, in every mission area and across the full spectrum of operations. While the dynamic, trans-regional, multi-domain and

multi-functional threats to our Nation and national security interests grow day-by-day, the downsizing of Total Force end-strength has increased the risk that our Combatant Commanders won't have the ready resources to meet national security objectives. The Air Force continues to rely on the Air Guard for growth into emergent and critical missions such as cyber, ISR, command and control, and space. If confirmed, I will continue to fully support the Secretary of the Air Force's goal of judiciously growing Total Force end-strength to meet our Nation's security needs.

**What are your views on the relative balance between the Army National Guard and active Army end strength levels?**

I believe the Total Army must retain a force size and mix across all of its components sufficient to meet the demands of our National Defense Strategy. It is my opinion that a ready force of 980,000 Total Army (450,000 active; 335,000 Army National Guard; 195,000 Army Reserve) is the minimally sufficient number needed to meet current and anticipated missions. Should global threats continue to emerge, the risk of meeting the national security objectives with a 980,000 Soldier Army would increase.

**What level of input should the Chief of the National Guard Bureau have on force structure or resource allocations within the military departments, and how should those recommendations be made?**

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau should be fully integrated in all matters pertaining to force structure and resource allocation. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau provides input through the established Department of Defense and Service processes.

**Enhanced Reserve Mobilization Authorities**

**What is your assessment of the Department's use to date and planned use in the future of the mobilization authority provided in 10 USC 12304b?**

I support the use of section 12304b mobilization authority, designed to facilitate the pre-planned operational use of the National Guard through normal planning and programming processes. While the Services have increased the funding to access the National Guard via section 12304b, we can still do more to alleviate the stress on the Active Component. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to increase the use of the National Guard via section 12304b, as well as advocate to bring member benefits in line with involuntary mobilization and other active duty authorities

**What is your assessment of the Reserve Component in general, and the National Guard in particular, as an operational reserve and how it will fit into this new paradigm of forces rotating into and out of multiple locations of strategic interest? Do you see a role for National Guard units as rotational forces using this new authority? If so, what is your understanding and assessment of that role?**

The last 14 years of war have fundamentally transformed the Reserve Component, particularly the National Guard, for the better. The Reserve Component, to include the National Guard, should continue to be an essential part of an operational reserve providing rotating forces. As a combat reserve of the Air Force and Army, the National Guard seamlessly integrates into the rotation of forces to ease the stress on the Active Components and increase options available to the Combatant Commander. The key to recurring deployments for the National Guard is predictability.

**In light of the current defense strategy, do you believe the size and the makeup of the National Guard are appropriate?**

Broadly speaking the force structure composition of both the Army National Guard and Air National Guard is appropriate, and we continue to partner with the Army and Air Force in exploring ways to best balance the Active Component/Reserve Component mix.

Further reductions in the National Guard end strength will increase risk in meeting the requirements of the current defense strategy, as well as in the homeland response. A larger National Guard would decrease risk in meeting current requirements, allow for increased depth, and provide an additional hedge for unforeseen and emergent threats. However, any increases in end strength must be accompanied by funding to maintain its readiness as well as adequate full time support requirements

**If confirmed, what will you do to improve the readiness of National Guard units to ensure timely and effective mobilization of National Guard personnel in order to maximize available time for operational missions?**

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Congress, the Army and the Air Force to ensure appropriate resourcing to maintain foundational levels of readiness throughout the force.

The past 14 years of conflict have taught us that the key to timely and effective mobilization is ensuring the National Guard maintains at least a foundational level of readiness prior to mobilization. In general, this means that the units are filled with the right number of people, they are trained and utilized in their jobs, and have the right equipment. This is a fundamental tenet in maintaining the operational National Guard. Both the Army and Air Force support the Total Force and active-reserve associations, review of overall training model, and a more effective employment of our assets.

**Are National Guard aviation units successfully executing their flight hour programs to maintain adequate skill proficiencies for air crews and maintainers? If not, how would you improve and provide better oversight?**



Yes, our unit commanders have done an outstanding job executing and maximizing National Guard flight hours to maintain minimum levels of aircrew flight proficiency. We continue to be funded at a level that enables us to meet mission requirements; however, our aviators have to prioritize resources as available flight hours typically have not been resourced to train all pilots to the same level. I will continue to work closely with the Services, based on future potential demands for our aviation assets, to ensure we request funding levels that will provide the flying hours necessary to achieve optimal proficiency levels.

**What recommendations made by the National Commission on the Future of the United States Army, if implemented, would, if implemented, improve National Guard readiness? What would be the costs?**

The recommendations to increase 12304b utilization, continue with multi-component approaches and training partnerships, and continuing to treat readiness as the most important funding priority, if implemented, will all enhance National Guard readiness. The total cost will vary depending on which combination of recommendations are implemented. If confirmed I will continue to work with the Army and the Department to assess and implement recommendations of the Commission as a Total Force.

**Congress also authorized the Secretary of Defense to order Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, and Air Force Reserve units and members not assigned to units to active duty for up to 120 days in response to a Governor's request for Federal assistance in responding to a major disaster or emergency. The legislation provides that when these forces, active duty forces, and the National Guard are employed simultaneously in support of civil authorities, appointment of a dual-status commander should be the usual and customary command and control arrangement. What is your view of this authority?**

I fully support the authority granted by Congress for the Secretary of Defense to have this option to respond to a Governor's request for Federal assistance. The designation of a dual-status commander provides an effective command and control construct for achieving unity of effort among Federal military forces and the non-Federalized National Guard when responding to a major disaster or emergency in the homeland, while respecting the authority of the Federal and State executives to command and control their respective military forces. The dual-status commander arrangement has been used successfully and, if confirmed, I look forward to continuing our work with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, United States Northern Command, the States, and other stakeholders to refine policies and procedures for designating and employing dual-status commanders.

**In your view, can a single officer serve in both a State and Federal capacity and effectively exercise both State and Federal responsibilities?**

Yes. Although used sparingly, the “dual status” command authority provided in sections 315 and 325 of title 32, United States Code has provided operational flexibility to coordinate Federal military forces and non-Federalized National Guard forces under a single officer, thereby maintaining unity of effort through the officer’s ability to simultaneously exercise both State and Federal responsibilities. Examples of successful use of this authority include the response to Super Storm Sandy and joint task forces that have been used during presidential inaugurations and other national special security events.

**In your view, what are the advantages and risks of such an arrangement?**

The primary advantage is that the dual status officer may simultaneously exercise both State and Federal command authorities, thereby achieving synergy and increased unity of effort across Federalized and non-Federalized forces. For example, under the authority of a single commander, Federalized forces within a joint task force may perform diverse active duty support missions, but only non-Federalized forces within the joint task force could perform law enforcement functions. The greatest challenge for the dual status commander is resolving conflicting orders from the State and Federal chains of command. Despite the inevitable learning curve, dual status commanders have worked well to date with the support of both the States and United States Northern Command. I am confident we can continue to build on lessons learned and refine our procedures and training for even greater effectiveness in the future.

**If confirmed, what actions will you take to minimize the risk?**

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Governors, the Adjutants General, the Combatant Commanders, the Services, the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the dual status commander arrangement is fully understood by all military forces. I will also minimize the risk posed by dual status officers receiving conflicting orders by providing close coordination between the State and Federal military staffs, and by ensuring State and Federal officials execute detailed agreements and plans on how to de-conflict contradictory orders should they arise during dual status operations. The Department of Defense is also preparing an instruction to formalize policy for dual status commanders to provide additional clarity for future dual status operations.

**Homeland Defense and Civil Support**

**What do you see as the appropriate role of the National Guard in homeland defense and civil support activities?**

The National Guard is the Governors’ military first responder to homeland crises. The need to coordinate and integrate the response planning of Federal and non-Federalized military forces, as well as the planning efforts of the inter-organizational community at Federal, State, tribal, and local level, is a vital responsibility of the National Guard.

In a Federal homeland defense situation, if needed by the Combatant Commander, National Guard forces will mobilize in support of United States Northern Command and United States Pacific Command.

**Do you agree with the recommendation of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves to rebalance the capabilities of the National Guard, shifting some capabilities to the Federal Reserve components or to the active duty military?**

I believe the force structure is appropriately balanced to support both the homeland and warfight missions.

**What capabilities, if any, should receive increased emphasis in the National Guard?**

If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the close partnership that exists with the Army and Air Force to evaluate Total Force capabilities. In general, National Guard capabilities should closely mirror those of the Active Component. Currently, there is increased emphasis in the Army and Air Force to grow the cyber enterprise which requires careful management and resource allocation.

**What capabilities currently resident in the National Guard can we afford to trade for increasing emphasis on higher priority missions?**

Maintaining a balanced force structure with combat and enabling forces best prepares the National Guard to meet both Combatant Commander and Governors' requirements and provides cost-effective depth to both the Army and Air Force. As part of the Army and Air Force processes, we continually re-evaluate Total Force requirements to ensure they meet the broad spectrum of missions. If confirmed, I will continue this close partnership to ensure National Guard capabilities best reflect the needs of the Nation.

### **Relationship between National Guard and U.S. Northern Command**

**If confirmed, how would you seek to maintain and improve the relationship between the National Guard Bureau and USNORTHCOM, particularly the planning, coordination, and collaboration among USNORTHCOM, the National Guard Bureau and the state National Guard forces?**

If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with USNORTHCOM to meet requirements for the defense of the homeland. In addition to our many efforts at integrated planning, training and exercising, the National Guard will continue to stay engaged with USNORTHCOM to advise and assist them in their development of plans and requirements to protect United States citizens and property from attack, and to ensure that our forces are trained, equipped and ready to succeed.

## **Weapons of Mass Destruction and Civil Support Teams**

**What is the current role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau with respect to oversight of the WMD-CSTs?**

Even though the Army is the Executive Agent for the National Guard Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams (WMD-CSTs), the Chief of the National Guard Bureau has the responsibility to organize, train, equip and sustain this capability for the Department of Defense and the Governors. The Chief also oversees WMD-CST program management, which includes policy, programming, budgeting, developing planning and training guidance, as well as maintaining readiness in coordination with the Adjutants General, Combatant Commanders and other Department of Defense stakeholders.

## **Duty Status Reform**

**What is your view on the need to reduce the number of duty statuses in which National Guard personnel serve?**

If confirmed, I will ensure the National Guard Bureau continues to participate in the Department's working group to "right size" the current duty statuses to an appropriate number that will enable the National Guard to successfully execute our assigned missions. My concern is for ease of mission accomplishment, ease of transition from citizen to Soldier or Airman, and equivalency of pay and benefits among any given set of statuses.

**Are you concerned about the ability of the Service's personnel and pay systems to handle significant changes to the number of duty statuses related to National Guard?**

Yes. I am always concerned about pay and benefits for our service members. Major system changes always pose a risk during transition. If confirmed, I will ensure we watch any transition closely and protect pay and benefits of service members.

**If you agree that the number of duty statuses should be reduced, do you support the recommendation of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves to reduce the number of duty statuses to 2, the recommendation of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission and the Eleventh Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation to reduce the number of duty statuses to 6, or do you recommend some other number of duty statuses?**

I agree there may be efficiencies in streamlining the duty statuses that currently exist within law. The National Guard Bureau is working with the Department of Defense's working group to analyze the different duty statuses and determine where it makes sense to remove or combine statuses. It is important that this effort ensures our commanders

have the flexibility to meet assigned mission requirements both at home and abroad, while ensuring appropriate pay and benefits for service members.

### **Mobilization and Demobilization of the National Guard and Reserve**

**What is your assessment of advances made in improving reserve component mobilization and demobilization procedures over the past decade, and where do problems still exist?**

I support any appropriate means of improving our National Guard mobilization and demobilization procedures. It is critically important that our Guard service members are trained, equipped and ready to deploy alongside our Active Component counterparts on a predictable and consistent basis. Improvements in Army National Guard pre-mobilization timelines have resulted in post-mobilization timelines that are 90 days or less in most types of formations. Additionally, the force generation model now allows for better synchronization of manning, equipping and training functions and resources. Similar improvements have been made to streamline and synchronize our preparation efforts in the Air National Guard. Finally, by focusing on demobilization procedures and support, the National Guard has been able to ensure that Guard service members are provided the benefits, holistic medical support and family support they require. The changes to mobilization and demobilization procedures for our Soldiers and Airmen have directly improved their lives by increasing predictability and reducing training timelines.

A well-oiled mobilization and demobilization machine is critical to national security, and another good reason to continue utilizing the National Guard as an operational reserve.

**What do you consider to be the most significant enduring changes to the administration of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard aimed at ensuring their readiness for future mobilization requirements?**

It is my opinion that the three most enduring and important changes to the organization of the National Guard are: the Militia Act of 1903; the National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007; and, provisions contained in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012. The first, also known as the Dick Act, codified the circumstances by which the National Guard could be Federalized, and provided Federal funds to the Guard to pay for equipment and training. The second, the National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007, contained within the National Defense Authorization Act for 2008, established the National Guard Bureau as a Joint Activity of the Department of Defense with enhanced functions, elevating the position of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to the grade of general. The third, provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, codified the position of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau as a full member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with specific responsibility of addressing matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and

civil support missions. These three pieces of legislation, accompanied by resourcing necessary to maintain an operational posture, will ensure that the National Guard is ready to meet its mobilization requirements at home and in the warfight.

**What recommendations made by the National Commission on the Future of the United States Army, if implemented, would improve mobilization of Army and Air National Guard personnel and units?**

In general, the Air and Army National Guard mobilize their personnel differently, so broadly applying recommendations from the Army Commission would be difficult. I believe readiness is the key component to mobilization. Therefore, Commission recommendations that improve readiness will inherently improve our mobilization capability. A specific example of a Commission recommendation that improves mobilization is Recommendation 46, which increases annual Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations for Army National Guard Brigade Combat Teams. Increasing CTC opportunities enhances our unit readiness and subsequently hones our mobilization practices.

**Do you see a need to modify current statutory authorities for the mobilization of members of the Army and Air National Guard beyond the new mobilization authorities in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012?**

No. I do not see a need to modify current statutory authorities for the mobilization of members of the National Guard. The current mobilization authorities provide access to the National Guard for operational missions ranging from full mobilization to supporting Combatant Command pre-planned missions.

**Invisible wounds, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), may not be manifest until months after demobilization. If confirmed, what steps if any would you take to improve consistency of identification and referral for care for PTSD and TBI for member of the Army and Air National Guard?**

If confirmed, I will work to ensure Airmen and Soldiers have access to the care they need at the point of identification, regardless of duty status, so that they can utilize all the tools necessary for holistic care. The invisible wounds of war, unlike physical injuries, are more difficult to diagnose and often have a stigma associated with them that hampers effective identification and referral. For our part-time force, identifying these illnesses soon after deployment is further challenged by the lack of consistent observation and assessment. As our National Guard service members transition from one duty status to the next, we also have unique challenges to eligibility for treatment, which impacts access to care once the need for treatment is identified.

**What, in your view, are the unique challenges faced by the National Guard in the Disability Evaluation Process, and if confirmed, what steps if any would you recommend to mitigate these challenges?**

Care of our Wounded Warriors will remain one of my highest priorities. As a Nation, we owe our Wounded Warriors a debt that cannot be repaid. In the National Guard, once members reach the point in their injury or illness where they need a medical board, there are long administrative delays, often years. They also face many obstacles to actual entry into the Integrated Disability Evaluation System, followed by a prolonged processing period. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to ensure that National Guard members receive timely processing and disability evaluation priority, and I will work toward establishing a more efficient process to minimize disruption to their civilian jobs. I will also support the current efforts to streamline the Disability Evaluation Process.

### **Lessons Learned**

**What do you believe are the major personnel lessons learned from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn that you would seek to address if confirmed?**

We have learned that it all starts with foundational levels of personnel readiness. The main elements include medical and dental readiness, adequate levels of full-time support, family readiness, and predictability of utilization. Foundational readiness prior to mobilization reduces the number of non-deployable Airmen and Soldiers and maximizes availability. If confirmed, I will focus on applying these lessons learned to ensure the National Guard is prepared to meet Combatant Commander requirements.

### **Operational and Personnel Tempo**

**Current Department of Defense policy is that Reserve component members should have five years of dwell time for each year they are mobilized.**

**What is your understanding and assessment of the current dwell time status of National Guard personnel?**

The National Guard works closely with the Army and Air Force to develop force generation cycles to best meet Combatant Commander requirements, allocate resources, and maintain a healthy force. The Army National Guard aims to operate at a 1:4 mobilization-to-dwell cycle and the Air National Guard aims for a 1:5 cycle. The actual average dwell time for individual Guardsmen varies across capabilities and units. If confirmed, I will continue monitor the mobilization-to-dwell ratios to ensure we are not overly-stressing the force.

**What is your view of the achievability of this goal? If confirmed, what measures would you take to achieve this goal within five years?**

These goals are achievable. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Army and Air Force to develop force generation cycles to best meet Combatant Commander requirements and maintain a healthy force.

**In your view, is a 1:5 dwell time ratio for National Guard personnel adequate to sustain favorable employer relationships?**

Yes. I believe predictability and consistency are the keys to maintaining good relations with the stakeholders that support our National Guard Airmen and Soldiers.

**What is your understanding and assessment of measures taken to respond to operational requirements for low-density, high-demand units and personnel whose skills are found in the Army and Air National Guard?**

The National Guard works closely with the Services and the Combatant Commanders to determine the best and most equitable way to utilize low-density, high-demand units and personnel. In the current constrained fiscal environment, we are prioritizing use of these critical assets to minimize stress on these units and personnel.

### **Stress on the Families**

**In your view, what are the key indicators of the stress on National Guard families at this time?**

Financial readiness, relationships and behavioral health continue to be the top stressors on National Guard members and their families. Financial assistance and communication assistance have been top issues highlighted by our Family Assistance Centers over the past five years. Additionally, we recognize that unemployment can negatively exacerbate the other factors, and so is a major focus area as well.

**If confirmed, what will you do to address these key indicators?**

If confirmed, taking care of National Guard Airmen, Soldiers, and their families will continue to be a priority for the National Guard. I will work with the Department of Defense and the Services to ensure proper resourcing and support for the programs designed to help our service members and their families.

**What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues in the National Guard?**

I consider the most important family readiness issues to be predictability of deployments, continuity of care, employment security in both military and civilian sectors, proper



resources and support programs for families and competitive pay and benefits. If confirmed, I will focus on bolstering our support for family readiness across the National Guard.

**If confirmed, how would you manage costs and at the same time ensure support for National Guard families, particularly those who do not reside near an active-duty military installation, related to mobilization, deployment, and family readiness?**

If confirmed I will work to best maintain critical capabilities where we can maximize service member and family engagement where they are, within the communities where they live. To find efficiencies, the National Guard Bureau has shifted to a new outreach model that better integrates community and military resources, known as Joining Community Forces. This program is intended to better connect military and community resource networks to foster a sustainable network of local support through governmental, non-governmental, non-profit, corporate partnerships, and local citizen collaboration.

**If confirmed, what additional steps would you take to ensure that family readiness needs, including child care, are addressed and adequately resourced, and that costs are managed?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Adjutants General to improve upon the Guard's partnerships with communities and leverage local resources and services in conjunction with National Guard programs funded by the Services. In particular, child care programs supporting our full-time force and those who are deployed or mobilized will be maintained as a priority. Additionally, I will review our programs, continue to develop and refine metrics of effectiveness, and ensure the programs are adequately resourced and managed.

### **National Guard Unemployment and Transition Assistance**

**The Committee continues to be concerned about reports that National Guard members return from deployment and cannot find employment or are under-employed.**

I share your concern with regard to employment of our National Guard members post deployment. It is a part of our business model to mitigate the unemployment and under-employment of National Guard members, including those members who have yet to deploy. The National Guard utilizes major programs such as Department of Defense Transition Goals, Plans, Success (GPS), Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Military One Source, Veterans Employment Service Office, Department of Labor's American Jobs Centers, and the National Guard's Job Connection Education Program. The National Guard leverages these programs to help service members and their families efficiently find employment. Geographic dispersion of our National Guard members remains a challenge, and if confirmed I will work with Congress and the Services to empower our leaders with all available resources to reduce National Guard unemployment rates.

**What is your understanding of the current employment situation for transitioning members of the National Guard?**

Surveys show that up to 40 percent of deployed Airmen and Soldiers will be looking for employment when they return home. The National Guard Bureau monitors transitioning members of the Air and Army National Guard through the National Guard Bureau Employment Support Division. Additionally, several States such as South Carolina, Indiana and New Hampshire have developed programs in coordination with the United States Department of Labor, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and various State agencies to craft unique plans to assist newly returned veterans in finding employment. The National Guard Bureau continues to share these State best practices across the National Guard to improve employment opportunities for our service members.

**What programs are currently showing the greatest promise to improving reemployment opportunities for members of the National Guard?**

Overall, the National Guard Pilot Employment Program has placed over 9,700 service members and their families over the last 5 years at an average wage of \$17.67 an hour. The National Guard Employment Support initiative, consisting of 56 employment support specialists across the Nation, combines the innovative work of the States with national level government and private organizations.

**What are the biggest challenges remaining?**

The biggest unemployment challenge facing National Guard members relates to underemployment. There are National Guard members that would like to have stable civilian careers; however, some service members are forced to work numerous part-time jobs to generate enough income to support themselves and their families. This remains an issue that requires attention.

**If confirmed, how will you address unemployment issues of National Guard members returning from deployment?**

We are already working in multiple ways to attack the issue of National Guard service member unemployment, and if confirmed I will continue to focus on this issue. We will work on continuing and growing partnerships with those agencies and organizations that can help us in the employment and career arenas. Programs such as Department of Defense Transition Goals, Plans, Success (GPS), Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Military One Source, Veterans Employment Service Office, Department of Labor's American Jobs Centers, and the National Guard's Job Connection Education Program help service members and their families efficiently find employment.

Internally, we are conducting an ongoing analysis to find the right number and distribution of employment specialists, case managers, and facilitators to reduce duplication and more tightly focus limited resources. Our goal is to support the States

with robust and meaningful member employment opportunities and career options, while staying within our available resources.

### **Medical and Dental Readiness of National Guard Personnel**

#### **What is your view of the medical and dental readiness of the National Guard?**

Consistently, the Air and Army National Guard achieves or exceeds the Department's goal of 80 percent medically ready. Medical and dental readiness directly impact unit readiness and availability. Resourcing the National Guard to achieve and maintain the Department of Defense goal of 80 percent medically ready reduces the number of non-deployable Airmen and Soldiers in our formations, and reduces the amount of time spent at mobilization stations prior to deployment.

**Medical and dental readiness of reserve component personnel remains an issue of significant concern to the Committee, and shortfalls that have been identified have indicated a need for improved policy oversight and accountability.**

#### **If confirmed, how would you seek to clarify and coordinate reporting on the medical and dental readiness of the National Guard?**

Individual medical readiness (IMR) statistics in both the Army and Air National Guard have consistently met or exceeded the Department of Defense's goal of 80 percent. However, despite these successes, timely reporting remains a concern. Streamlining the flow of medical and dental readiness information, in order to optimize real-time decision making, demands a concerted effort to reduce inefficiencies in the reporting process. If confirmed, I will continue to strive to maintain high medical and dental readiness as a key indicator of overall force readiness. I will review the current reporting system to ensure that the 54 States and Territories are reporting accurate medical and dental readiness information in a timely manner. I will also review existing policies to ensure mechanisms are in place to perform the oversight and accountability of the medical and dental readiness programs, and make appropriate recommendations where improvement is needed.

#### **How would you improve on the ability to produce a healthy and fit National Guard?**

Medical readiness is the first step in ensuring a healthy and fit force. A central tenet to medical readiness is that Airmen and Soldiers receive annual health assessments and dental screenings, which ensures regular counseling for preventive health services and the early identification and treatment of disease. If confirmed, the health of the force will continue to be a leadership priority. I will promote programs and policies which provide a seamless, continuous health care benefit for those who are serving and for those injured while serving, and foster a culture of mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional health and fitness.

## **Health Care and National Guard Personnel**

**Members of the National Guard who are ordered to active duty for more than 30 days are eligible for the same health care and dental benefits under TRICARE as other active duty service members.**

**What is your view of the adequacy of health care for National Guard personnel?**

If confirmed, I will prioritize and work closely with this Committee and the Department to improve access to quality healthcare, including behavioral health services and continuity of care. The healthcare provided by TRICARE while on active-duty, and the TRICARE Reserve Select option for traditional National Guard members, has been vital to the readiness, health and well-being of the force and their families. However, challenges remain to ensuring access to care for our geographically dispersed, often rural members. In addition, TRICARE is not widely accepted by civilian mental health providers.

**What are your suggestions for improving continuity of care for members of the National Guard and their families?**

I appreciate Congress' support in assisting the Department in making great strides in improving continuity of care through TRICARE Reserve Select and psychological health programs. If confirmed, I will work closely with medical professionals, service members and their families, the Services and the States to find ways to improve access to dental and health care for our National Guard members and their families.

**TRICARE Reserve Select authorizes members of the Selected Reserve and their families to use TRICARE Standard at a subsidized rate when they are not on active duty. What is your assessment of TRICARE Reserve Select and its level of utilization in the National Guard?**

The TRICARE Reserve Select program is vital to the readiness of our National Guard Soldiers and Airmen and the health of their families. This benefit is among the top reasons that Soldiers and Airmen choose to stay in the National Guard, and directly contributes to our high retention rates. This program continues to be a popular and valuable program across the National Guard.

**What impact has TRICARE Reserve Select had on recruiting for the National Guard?**

In speaking with service members, I've received very positive feedback on the TRICARE Reserve Select program and its impact on recruiting and retention.

**One of the major concerns for military family members is access to health care. Military spouses tell us that the health care system is inundated, and those stationed**

**in more remote areas may not have access to adequate care, a particular concern for members of the reserve components.**

**If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure complete access to health care for the families of members of the National Guard?**

I appreciate Congress' support for TRICARE, which has made significant improvement in access to health care for members and their families.

However, access to health care remains a major concern and readiness issue for National Guard Airmen, Soldiers, and their families. The National Guard has geographically dispersed service members across 54 States and Territories with many in rural areas. I fully support increasing access to care for all National Guard members. If confirmed, I will work with the Department and this Committee to determine a cost-effective method to ensure that all service members and their families have access to quality health care.

### **National Guard Equipment and Readiness**

**In your view, how will the reduced pace of operations in Afghanistan affect the active and reserve component mix and capabilities and National Guard readiness?**

In my view, a reduced pace of operations in Afghanistan will not affect the active and Reserve Component mix or the National Guard's readiness. The current security threats at home and abroad requires a National Guard that is utilized and maintains its operational readiness and capabilities.

**In your view, should the missions of the National Guard change to meet these new priorities?**

No. The National Guard is a cost-effective, operational force capable of supporting domestic and warfight missions across the full spectrum of operations when properly resourced, trained and equipped.

**What are your views on the allocation of force capabilities between the National Guard and active components of the Army and Air Force? Should reserve components be more composed of support and enabling forces that could be more readily used for dual federal-state purposes, and combat forces allocated to the active components?**

The National Guard is an operationally engaged reserve force that has consistently, without fail, provided surge capacity ready to support the parent Services in times of crisis or increased operations tempo, and should remain included in all force capabilities. Combat forces, especially through their organic mission command capabilities, play an invaluable role in domestic emergencies. The same skills that enable combat forces to lead and execute complex wartime missions are leveraged to manage homeland responses. Maintaining a balanced force structure with combat and enabling forces best

enables the National Guard to meet both Combatant Commander and Governors' requirements and provides cost-effective depth to both the Army and Air Force.

**The National Commission on the Future of the United States Army made many recommendations in regard the total Army's Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI). One of which was a recommendation to maintain AH-64 Apache helicopter battalions in the National Guard to maintain a strategic depth in the total Army. If implemented, how will you ensure standards for combat training, safety and maintenance are being achieved and enforced for these critical resources? How will you provide oversight?**

I support the Commission's recommendation to maintain AH-64 Apache helicopter battalions in the Army National Guard. The National Guard will ensure training, safety and maintenance standards are at the highest levels possible throughout all Army National Guard aviation units including AH-64 battalions. We will ensure these standards are met in the same way the Army applies them to all Apache battalions regardless of component.

The Army National Guard's AH-64 Battalions have a history of successful operations and support, especially over the last twelve years of heavy rotations, and I have no doubt that the Army National Guard will carry that success forward.

**If confirmed, what steps if any would you take to ensure improvement in continuity of care and consistency of health and mental health support for member of the National Guard?**

If confirmed, I will make caring for our Airmen and Soldiers a top priority. I will review the programs available to ensure we are not duplicating programs, and that our Airmen and Soldiers understand where they can go to get the care they need, when they need it.

**What unique challenges if any are faced by redeploying members of the National Guard who need care for conditions including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury that are incurred during these members' military service? And, how, if confirmed, would you help ensure that these unique challenges are addressed?**

If confirmed, I will ensure that outreach remains a top priority of the National Guard, and that the National Guard Bureau continues to work to remove barriers Soldiers and Airmen may face in seeking treatment. The National Guard faces the challenge of a being a very geographically dispersed force. Injuries both visible and hidden may go unnoticed and untreated as National Guard members transition between military service and civilian life. While in civilian life, National Guard members may not seek the treatment they need for any number of reasons. Those injuries, especially Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, may go undiagnosed and lead to more serious complications.

## **Readiness Reporting**

### **What is your understanding of the readiness reporting systems currently being used by the Services?**

The Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS) is the over-arching family of systems for defense readiness reporting. This system includes both traditional metrics-based “SORTS” reporting as well as capabilities-based reporting to capture the readiness of forces.

### **If confirmed, what improvements or changes to the readiness reporting system, if any, would you recommend?**

Other than routine continuing upgrades and improvements, I do not believe significant changes are needed to the readiness reporting system. The National Guard Bureau is a partner in the Department of Defense’s efforts to continually assess the state of our readiness reporting processes and systems and we will continue to be engaged on this important matter.

### **In your view, to what extent has the overall readiness of the Army and Air National Guard’s improved since Congress first started appropriating money for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA)?**

Today’s National Guard is better equipped than at any other time in my career, due in large measure to National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA) funding. As a result of Congressional support, our Soldiers and Airmen are able to seamlessly integrate with our active duty counterparts in training and on the battlefield. NGREA funding has been a key element in the improvement of the National Guard’s interoperability, capability, and overall equipment posture in support of both contingency and domestic operations. NGREA has been instrumental in increasing the Army National Guard’s equipment on-hand, and has facilitated procurement of combat simulators, engineering equipment and ambulances. The Air National Guard has utilized NGREA to increase combat and domestic response readiness through operational testing, evaluation and fielding of off-the-shelf technologies such as helmet-mounted queuing systems, defensive counter-measures, advanced communications and surveillance equipment.

## **DOD Efficiency Initiatives and Budget Top Line Reductions**

### **What is your understanding and assessment of the DOD efficiency initiatives and the role of the National Guard to reduce costs of administration and operations?**

In a time of declining budgets, the National Guard has worked with the Services and the Department of Defense to find efficiencies in administrative overhead, to include the restructuring of headquarters management, the implementation of better business practices, to include energy consumption, and to take a hard look at how we prioritize and execute our funding in a time of budgetary constraint. If confirmed, I will work with

the Services and the Department to ensure that the National Guard – from headquarters to the unit level – is as efficient as possible in meeting our mission requirements. These efforts to find efficiencies are and will continue to reduce costs while sustaining effectiveness to meet State and Federal mission requirements.

**In your view what are the major risks for the National Guard associated with efficiencies related reductions and, if confirmed, how would you propose to manage those risks?**

Efficiency-related reductions can negatively impact readiness. While I believe every organization should strive for efficiencies, to include the National Guard, the National Guard operates a different business model than the Active Component. With only 30 percent full time in the Air National Guard and 16 percent full time in the Army National Guard, further reductions are likely to have a disproportionately negative impact on National Guard readiness, and accordingly must be carefully managed.

**Harvesting savings through process improvements and efficiencies has a mixed record of success in DOD. In your view, how likely is it that savings will be achieved in the National Guard?**

In this fiscal environment, finding efficiencies and generating savings whenever possible is paramount. Every organization, to include the National Guard Bureau, is not perfectly efficient and is capable of generating some level of savings. The National Guard Bureau has instituted a Fiscal Stewardship Comprehensive Plan, which includes the Adjutants General, with the intent of a creating a culture of fiscal stewardship from the strategic level down to the individual Airman and Soldier. Through this and other process improvement efforts, the National Guard is committed to saving taxpayer dollars whenever possible.

### **Military Construction Budgeting**

**If confirmed, how will you manage the National Guard's infrastructure requirements in light of these funding reductions?**

If confirmed, I will work with Congress and the Adjutants General to ensure that the National Guard maintains adequate infrastructure across the country that is tailored to meet mission requirements at minimal cost. Due to the decline in funding across the Department, I will continue to prioritize the most critical National Guard requirements with the resources available.

### **National Guard Budgeting**

**If confirmed, what role would you play, if any, in the Department's budget formation process for the National Guard?**



If confirmed, I will ensure the Federal and State requirements of the National Guard are considered in the Department of Defense's budget formation process.

**What is your understanding and assessment of the Department of Defense's annual budget process and the documentation of the priorities and proposed funding levels for equipment procurement for the National Guard?**

**What changes, if any, would you recommend to the process or documentation of the equipment-related funding request for the National Guard?**

The Department of Defense continues to provide transparency in the prioritization and procurement of the National Guard equipment-related funding. The annual budget process identifies the equipment required across the Reserve Components and is documented in both Active Component and Reserve Component justification and procurement books. This is further detailed in the annual National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report which provides a review of the status of Reserve Component equipment and requirement shortfalls.

I am currently unaware of changes needed at this time. However, if confirmed I will review this process to determine if changes are necessary to provide better advocacy and transparency in the equipment procurement process.

**What is your understanding and assessment of the oversight of National Guard budget execution by the National Guard Bureau, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, and the Department of the Air Force, particularly with respect to the transparency of the execution of annual appropriations for personnel, operations, and procurement? If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you take to improve this oversight?**

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau provides oversight for the Army and Air National Guard Personnel, Operations and Maintenance, Military Construction, and National Guard and Reserve Equipment accounts. The Departments of the Army and Air Force are responsible for National Guard procurement within their respective accounts, and our Air and Army National Guard staffs work within service processes to identify resourcing requirements each year during budget planning. The Department of Defense retains responsibility to oversee various accounts that impact the National Guard, such as the Central Transfer Account. In my role as Vice Chief, National Guard Bureau, I review and improve our oversight and visibility of the full National Guard portfolio. If I am confirmed, I will continue to look for ways to improve the process, our participation with the Services, and will insist upon accountability across the National Guard.

### **Evolving Roles of the National Guard and Reserve in the Defense Establishment**

**What is your understanding and assessment of the changes, if any, over the past 20 years in the required levels of readiness of the National Guard prior to mobilization?**

My assessment is that we are in a much better place than we were on 9/11, and we continue to improve our readiness for the dual mission at home and abroad. The Nation has made a tremendous investment in today's operational National Guard. Additionally, our full-time support personnel are critical to achieving and sustaining the necessary readiness levels in support of the warfight, and civil support and homeland defense. Increased readiness yields increased availability for "boots on the ground."

**In your view, how do, or should, these changes affect the manning, equipping, training, and budgeting for the National Guard as an "operational" reserve as opposed to its historical role as a "strategic" reserve?**

An operational reserve must maintain higher levels of manning, superior and disciplined training, and sustained levels of equipment. We require adequate levels of resources to achieve this higher level of readiness and operational responsiveness.

**Does the National Guard have all the needed capabilities and capacities to meet requirements as outlined in published time-phased force and deployment lists to support our most critical contingency plans?**

Yes. The National Guard, if we continue to receive operational reserve levels of funding, can meet the current published time-phased force and deployment lists to support contingency plans. However, further reductions in full-time support and other critical aspects of foundational readiness may risk the National Guard's ability to meet deployment timelines in the future.

**In your view, what changes, if any, are required to DOD or military department policies or programs to meet the Defense Strategic Guidance for the reserve component as an "operational" reserve at acceptable levels of risk as established by the Department of Defense?**

As stated in Department of Defense Directive 1200.17, the Reserve Components as an operational force participate in a full range of missions according to their Services' force generation plans. Units and individuals participate in missions in an established cyclic or periodic manner that provides predictability for the Combatant Commands, the Services, service members, their families, and employers. Given the sweeping potential impacts of the National Commission on the Future of the Army recommendations, and the continuing work of the Air Force in implementing recommendations from the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, if confirmed, I will need to review this matter in some detail. As possible changes in policies or programs are identified, I will raise the concerns to the Services, the Department, and this Committee as appropriate.

### **Army National Guard Marketing**

**What is your understanding and assessment of the Army National Guard's modularity transformation strategy?**

The modular transformation strategy reorganized the Operational Army from large division-size formations designed to defeat traditional threats in conventional campaigns to more versatile and deployable brigade-size units designed to support joint force requirements for full-spectrum operations. I believe the strategy implemented by the Army National Guard was successful. The Army initiated modular transformation of the Total Force in 2003, and Army National Guard formations completed the modular transformation by 2011.

**If confirmed, what actions or changes, if any, would you propose relative to the Army National Guard's modular transformation strategy?**

I do not believe any change to the Army National Guard modular transformation strategy is required. The Army National Guard's strategy was successfully implemented and executed with all formations completing modular conversion by 2011.

**What changes, if any, would you propose to the modular design, the mix of National Guard combat and supporting brigades, or modular unit employment to improve performance or reduce risk?**

I see no need for changes at this time. However, if confirmed, I will ensure the Army National Guard continues to work with the Active Army and the Army Reserve to assess the Total Force mix. In general, National Guard capabilities should closely mirror those of the Active Component and should be part of any emerging mission sets that can be accomplished by an operational reserve.

**The National Commission on the Future of the United States Army made many recommendations to improve the readiness and accessibility of the National Guard. Would partnering between Regular Army units and National Guard units be an effective way of improving National Guard readiness? Might it make mobilization more efficient?**

Yes. In my opinion, increased readiness and more efficient mobilization is a likely outcome for units participating in associated unit or multi-component configurations.

**If confirmed, how would you propose to implement a decision to add a third maneuver battalion to the National Guard's armored and infantry brigades? What National Guard force structure or capabilities would you propose to reduce in order to increase maneuver forces within the combat brigades and stay within the end strength authorization?**

The Army National Guard is currently implementing force structure changes that provide a third maneuver battalion to the Army National Guard's Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and we will be complete in Fiscal Year 2018. These third maneuver battalion alignments are consistent with Army structure. Currently, the Army National Guard's Stryker BCTs are organized with three maneuver battalions mirroring the Army's structure. No

additional reductions are necessary for the implementation of the third battalions given the already planned Army National Guard BCT inactivation, which allow for battalion realignment consistent with this strategy.

### **Reserve Forces Policy Board**

#### **What is your understanding and assessment of the appropriate role, function, and membership of the Reserve Forces Policy Board?**

By statute the Reserve Forces Policy Board is composed of members with significant experience in national security and Reserve Component matters. The collective voice of the Board provides the President and Congress, through the Secretary of Defense, an independent view of strategies, policies, and practices to improve and enhance the capabilities, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Reserve Components. I believe today's board represents a well-informed and highly respected independent voice, providing our Nation's leaders with a very useful perspective on key Reserve Component issues.

#### **Based on your experience as the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau, what is your assessment of the utility of the Reserve Forces Policy Board with respect to the issues facing members of the National Guard and their families?**

Because of the Reserve Forces Policy Board, the Department of Defense gets more out of the Reserve Components. I believe the members of the National Guard, and their families, are well-served by the Reserve Forces Policy Board. If confirmed, I will work with the Board to support those actions that address the needs of the National Guard service members and their families.

#### **If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend concerning the Reserve Forces Policy Board?**

I believe the Board serves effectively as prescribed in statute, and no revision to its current role, function, or membership is required. If confirmed, and at the request of the Service Secretaries, I will nominate highly qualified officers and retired officers of the Army and Air National Guard for recommendation by the Service Secretaries to the Secretary of Defense for appointment to the Board, in order to sustain its valuable contributions. Upon the request of the Board, I will make available members of the National Guard Bureau as witnesses or subject matter experts to assist it in performing Board functions.

### **Employment of Full-Time Support Personnel**

#### **Do you think, as a matter of policy, AGR members should be authorized in limited circumstances to perform limited state active duty missions?**

Yes, I believe there are circumstances in which AGR personnel should be authorized to support State active duty missions as a matter of policy to ensure that our AGRs can

serve their States and communities alongside other National Guard members. If confirmed, I will work to review and develop policies to identify the appropriate circumstances for the employment of AGRs to support State active duty missions in response to domestic emergencies.

**Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe such use should be authorized?**

AGRs are responsible for organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, and training of National Guard units to ensure their readiness. Under certain circumstances, AGR personnel are available to support an immediate response situation at the request of civil support authorities. If confirmed, I would explore options suggested, and changes to policy and law, to use AGR personnel in additional roles for State active duty missions.

**Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**

**In the context of the National Guard, do you consider the current sexual assault policies and procedures to be effective?**

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Department of Defense and the Services to confront sexual assault. There is no place for sexual assault in the National Guard. While the Department's policies and procedures continue to make progress in combating sexual assault, more work needs to be done. I will do what is necessary to create an environment that is safe for victims of sexual assault to come forward and seek support. We will continue to train and educate all military members to prevent and respond to this crime. We will leverage the Office of Complex Investigations, Special Victims Counsel program, and Defense Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program. The ultimate goal is to eliminate sexual assault from our ranks.

**What is your assessment of the adequacy of support systems and processes for victims of sexual assault in the National Guard?**

Supporting victims of sexual assault and ensuring a command culture built on trust and confidence is essential—we can never do enough in this area. The National Guard's unique structure and geographic dispersion presents some challenges, but also many opportunities. With our strong community base, we have established partnerships across the Nation to help provide support and assistance to victims. Additionally, the National Guard Bureau's Office of Complex Investigations gives the Adjutants General a neutral investigative tool to ensure reports of sexual assault receive thorough investigations. Lastly, our Special Victims' Counsel Program gives the victim a voice throughout the military justice process and administrative processes.

**What is your assessment of the authorities available to National Guard commanders to hold assailants accountable for sexual assault?**

National Guard commanders have a range of options available to hold accused members appropriately accountable when allegations are substantiated by military or civilian

authorities. These authorities include investigation and criminal prosecution under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice when members are on active duty; State military codes of justice, where available; referral to civilian law enforcement authorities for criminal prosecution under State or local laws; referral to the NGB for investigation by the Office of Complex Investigations; and, pursuing appropriate administrative actions to include formal reprimands, bars to reenlistment, or separations from military service under less than honorable conditions.

### **Suicide Prevention**

**The number of suicides in the military, including in the National Guard, continues to be of concern to the Committee.**

**If confirmed, what role would you play in shaping suicide prevention programs and policies for the National Guard to help prevent suicides and to increase the resiliency of Guardsmen and their families?**

I also concur this is a tragedy that needs to be confronted. If confirmed, I will support a holistic approach to caring for our Airmen and Soldiers across a geographically-dispersed force. My three priorities for suicide prevention are: 1) raise awareness across the National Guard and ensure everyone is aware of and has access to the programs available to help them; 2) ensure first-line leaders are involved in checking on the wellness of their Airmen and Soldiers; and 3) align resources within the National Guard Bureau to ensure the right programs are available at the right time.

### **Transgender Policy**

**What is your assessment of the effect in the National Guard if the Secretary of Defense authorizes transgender individuals to serve in the Armed Forces?**

This matter is currently under review within the Department. If the Secretary of Defense authorizes transgender individuals to serve in the Armed Forces, I will fully implement his decision, if confirmed. Due to the dual State and Federal nature of the National Guard, unique challenges may arise that have yet to be identified.

### **Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program**

**What is the role of the National Guard Bureau in implementing the changes to the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program?**

The National Guard Bureau's role is to update policies and procedures consistent with changes in regulation and statute. Recent changes to the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program have included expanding the program to personnel who have been activated but not deployed, including those who support border security initiatives, and providing pre-, during, and post-mobilization events without a 30-60-90 day restriction. Updates to policies and procedures must be done in a manner that ensures compliance while also

providing the Adjutants General the flexibility in implementation of the Yellow Ribbon Program. Much of the success of the Yellow Ribbon Program is due to the continued support of Congress.

**What is your understanding and assessment of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program resources and how available resources are allocated among needed services, including counseling, substance abuse and behavioral health support, all of which are provided to members of the National Guard upon return from deployment?**

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is vital to our Soldiers and Airmen returning from deployments. As part of the continuum of support throughout a service member's career, the Yellow Ribbon Program is a venue to present information about available military and community programs that are available to assist service members and their families. When conducting Yellow Ribbon events and activities, we coordinate the use of service support and community based resources such as Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Warrior Support, Family Programs, Directors of Psychological Health and Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, as well as State and local departments and various public and private organizations. Resources are allocated among the Services by the States according to the local needs and requirements of their members.

**If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose to redistribute resources to best provide for the range of services intended by the Yellow Ribbon Program?**

I am unaware of any necessary changes at this point. However, if confirmed, I will review the current distribution of resources to the Yellow Ribbon Program to assess whether or not the current structure of the program is optimized to provide for the range of services intended.

**Does the National Guard require legislative authority to provide members of the National Guard flexibility to plan and schedule participating in transition programs when they perform multiple short-term federal active service periods?**

No. I do not currently see any need for additional legislative authority related to Yellow Ribbon events. National Guard members who perform multiple short-term Federal active service periods are free to attend and obtain the same services provided to service members who serve on extended Federal active service periods.

### **Congressional Oversight**

**Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriates of the Congress?**

Yes.

**Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the administration in power?**

Yes.

**Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Chief of the National Guard Bureau?**

Yes.

**Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, and other communications of information are provided in a timely manner to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?**

Yes.

**Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted Committee, or to consult with the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?**

Yes.