

Shon J. Manasco
**Nomination Hearing for Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower
and Reserve Affairs**
Opening Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee

Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee. I am grateful to be with you this morning and feel privileged to sit alongside these distinguished patriots and fellow nominees.

My nomination to this position was unexpected, and while I never planned to return to public service, I am humbled to have been asked to serve once again.

If confirmed, you have my commitment that I will work diligently to ensure my department is transparent, prompt and proactive in working with each of you and your staffs.

I am thankful for the support and confidence the President, Secretary Mattis, and Secretary Wilson have placed in me.

I want to thank my mother, my family and my friends for their mentorship, encouragement, and loving support. They are too numerous to name today, but several are here today.

It is hard to identify another time in our nation's history where the threats we face are as numerous and varied as they are today. War is being waged in new and previously uncontested domains. Controlling the high ground is not a given anymore, and therefore, we must make prudent investments today to ensure air, space, and cyber-space superiority tomorrow. I contend these investments must be in both weapon systems and our people.

If confirmed, I will bring perspectives shaped by my experiences in the private sector. I have had the good fortune of leading high performing and innovative teams recognized in industry for being at the top of their game. My focus would be on critically evaluating existing practices and integrating the best thinking from industry. All of this to best serve airmen and to increase the lethality of the force.

For the Air Force, and the armed services more broadly, success today and in the future, will be determined by our ability to win in the war for talent. Winning in a

hyper-competitive labor market will require us to challenge our conventional philosophies and methods in how we attract, develop, and overall manage talent.

I am convinced that in all great organizations, people and culture are key differentiators. This is certainly true of our Air Force. So, if the strength of our Air Force is in our airmen, the strength of our airmen is in their families.

The family unit is a critical component of overall readiness and talent retention. This reality is sometimes lost in our calculus. I have witnessed the strain of war on families first-hand through my sister, her active duty husband, and their beautiful children. War leaves a profound mark on these families and we owe them even more support.

You see, I come from a long line of service members, past and present, dating back to the Civil War. My grandfathers fought in WWII and members of our family have been involved in every major conflict since.

As a young paratrooper, I depended on the Air Force countless times to get me over the drop zone and, when deployed, to protect my soldiers and myself from any threat above. Never once did they fail me.

If confirmed, I will do everything I can to not fail them. You have my vow to do my duty to the best of my ability, to serve honorably, and to do it for the love of our country.

I thank you for our consideration and I look forward to answering your questions.