

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE PRESENTATION

TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF AIR FORCE (UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE) CHIEF OF
PERSONNEL WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL POSTURE
HEARING FOR FY22

STATEMENT OF:

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INTRODUCTION

Chairwoman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, Distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee. As the Nation's newest military Service, it is exciting to come before you today to discuss all of the great work our Guardians are doing to build a force capable of defending our Nation's vital interest in the space domain.

THE FORCE WE NEED

The Space Force operates in a unique and dynamic personnel environment. As the Nation's newest military Service, we start with a "clean slate" with respect to culture and organizational process and procedure. At the same time, the needs of the Nation dictate that we are operationally capable of deterring conflict and defending our Nation's interests immediately. This need cannot wait for us to finish building the force. To this end, we are building our force rapidly through new accessions and interservice transfers and taking advantage of the progress the Department of the Air Force has made in improving the timeliness of the civilian hiring process.

The Space Force is building culture and structure; it is increasing in end strength; it is developing the systems necessary to be the digital force it must be; and it is employing new and innovative methods of managing talent. We realize that continued Congressional support is necessary to achieve all of these goals at a rapid pace in a dynamic environment and we are appreciative of that support.

END STRENGTH

The Department's FY22 military end strength request for 512,300 Airmen and Guardians increases the USSF end strength by 1,966 due to mission transfers from the USAF, Army and Navy and facilitates modest USSF headquarters growth. This increase is steeper than anticipated due to accelerated programming from FY23. However, the Space Force has a plan in place to manage personnel inventory to support mission requirements with Congressional support.

RECRUITING

The competitive market for STEM talent creates a significant challenge to attracting and recruiting individuals with those unique capabilities into the Space Force. Our recruitment initiatives are focused on expanding the pool of potential STEM applicants through partnerships with colleges, universities, and organizations that produce STEM capable personnel.

While we focus on STEM talent as a whole, we cannot lose focus on the individual. A beta test is underway to evaluate an enhanced selection process that gives the Space Force a better understanding of each recruit. We have instituted interviews, and behavioral assessments, to expand the tools used for a holistic approach to selecting future Guardians. This will facilitate the Space Force's ability to select the best fit Guardians from a diverse applicant pool.

The Space Force is working with the Department of Defense and Department of the Air Force stakeholders to mitigate potential barriers to service from members of underrepresented groups. We are conducting a comprehensive review of accessions policy, and we will begin a review of all career field entry requirements and assessments to identify opportunities to expand the pool of potential applicants from underrepresented groups.

MANAGING TALENT

The Space Force is taking a fresh approach to talent management in order to build an organizational culture that emboldens Guardians to produce trailblazing outcomes and enable a warfighting ethos.

We expect leaders at every level to take bold, data-driven, and risk-informed actions, while making full use of their team's abilities to overcome obstacles and accomplish the mission.

The Space Force will shift from managing people within prescribed career fields, to managing positions based on the competencies and experiences needed to succeed. To implement this approach, the USSF's Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) will centralize and unify talent management activities for all Guardians, military and civilian, in an Enterprise Talent Management Office (ETMO) that leverages talent management teams and systems.

The Space Force must provide Guardians with the tools to succeed in the 21st Century; we must be a digital Service. All Guardians will have access to digital services, allowing them to accelerate innovation of operational and business processes and activities, and foster collaboration. To accomplish this, the Space Force will create digital solutions, dismantle data stovepipes, and establish a digitally enabled culture focused on transparency, communication, and inclusive decision-making. As one of the first steps in creating a digital Service, in FY21 the space force launched the Software Development Immersive Program. This 12 week immersive course will build a community of Guardians, of any AFSC, skilled in the development, security and operations approach to rapid software development. These "Supra Coders" will enable us to securely deploy cloud-native applications onto Space Force platforms in order to strengthen our digital infrastructure.

Today's newest Guardians are tomorrow's Space Force leaders; it is vital that we get this right. The Space Force's brand and Guardian Value Proposition (GVP) will address, distinctively and intentionally, our responsibilities to our society and local communities. The GVP must focus on how our culture, rewards, recognition, opportunity, organization, people, and work differentiates us from others competing for the same talent. The Space Force is committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse force, to include improving outreach to populations from underrepresented communities. We will employ talent-finding platforms to actively seek out and engage people to serve in either a military or civilian Guardian capacity. We will use a blend of current competency assessments, potential-measuring assessments, and behavioral assessments to determine fit within the Space Force. Engagement with Guardians will not end when they leave the Space Force. The Space Force will create an alumni database called "Guardians for Life" that departing members can choose to join. This will assist with maintaining strong connections to gather feedback, request recruiting support, and welcome back strong performers who desire to return in line with our talent needs.

The Space Force will develop each Guardian according to their needs. Every individual will receive tailored training, education, and experiential opportunities to prepare them for specific placement. Developmental feedback will focus on strengthening individual competencies and encouraging growth mindsets. Coaching and mentoring programs are central to our continuous developmental and engagement approach. This will include reverse mentoring programs to ensure senior leaders gain the insights and perspectives from underrepresented demographics and more junior members of the force. We are exploring a new promotion assessment approach that looks at three key indicators of readiness: current performance, psychometrics, and preparedness to address situations common to the next grade.

The Enterprise Talent Management Office (ETMO) will provide all Guardians with individualized and command support that enables space warfighter readiness, leader development, and personal growth. They will reduce the gaps between operations, cyber, intel, and acquisitions personnel development and talent management to achieve Space Superiority by unifying execution consistently across the enterprise. The ETMO must unite, leverage, and organize existing talent management capabilities within the force; embrace

maximum flexibility by tying geographically dispersed talent together via technology, tapping into excellence wherever located across the globe; and implement expanded permeability programs within the Service, Academia, and Industry.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SUPPORT

As a growing Service, and one that must remain lean, agile and mission-focused, we are grateful to have the continued support of the United States Air Force and the Department of the Air Force across a wide range of personnel and family support activities and programs. Interpersonal violence, sexual assault prevention and response, suicide prevention, resiliency, and family care are all areas in which the Air Force maintains the lead role. The Department of the Air Force has taken the lead role in diversity and inclusion initiatives. While some of these functions will transfer to the Space Force as we continue to grow, many of them will remain with the Air Force and the Department of the Air Force. We are truly all one team in this fight, and we are grateful for the continued efforts of all members of our team.

CONCLUSION

Guardians are the heart of the Space Force. In order to achieve mission success, we must create an environment that fosters their success and recognizes their value. We must develop them according to their individual capabilities and the Service's needs. We must provide leadership that encourages growth. We must provide them the tools, digital and otherwise, necessary to accomplish the mission. We must provide an environment in which they and their families feel safe from any internal threat, an environment where they can thrive. We must ensure that we are doing right by our Guardians and their families. We thank you for your continued support for your Space Force, its uniformed and civilian Guardians, and their families.