

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the committee. I am truly honored to be here and thank you for your longstanding support of the mission, and men and women of the National Guard. I also want to thank President Biden, Secretary Austin and General Brown for their trust and confidence in nominating me to be the next Chief of the National Guard Bureau. I am privileged to testify alongside Vice Admiral Holsey, an incredible officer and teammate. I'd also like recognize General Dan Hokanson and his wife Kelly for the enduring impact they left on the National Guard.

I would not be here today if it were not for my family, and I would like to recognize them for the sacrifices they've made to allow me to do what I love. My wife Shannon is the love of my life, the rock of our family, and my faithful spouse for over 35 years. Her commitment and advocacy for our family and the soldiers and airmen who serve has been nothing short of amazing. Together, we have 5 children, 6 grandchildren, and 430 thousand Guardsmen we consider family.

Shannon is the oldest daughter of Paul and Brenda Lawrence. Paul is a retired Air Force Air Traffic Controller who served in Southeast Asia during Vietnam. My father, Don served in the Navy. He, along with my mom Sandy, are responsible for my passion for flying and joining the Air Force. Our son Clay is a Captain in the Space Force, and the others are patriots in their own ways. Whitney, our oldest and

Luke are working within their communities. Our twins, Noah and Austin, are currently attending college studying business and music at Dayton and Michigan.

Over the past 35 years, I have been shaped by incredible leaders and service members who I have served with at home and abroad during multiple U.S. and coalition deployments. I have held five commands, served at NORAD and US NORTHCOM, and on the NGB Joint Staff as Director of Operations and Logistics. I have served both in the active duty and in the National Guard as a traditional guardsman, a temporary technician, and an Active Guardsman. These unique leadership experiences have made me acutely aware of the security challenges we face and the tough decisions ahead.

I come to you today at an important time in our nation's history with the rise of strategic competitors, a complex geopolitical environment with roughly 40,000 National Guard soldiers and airmen engaged globally. We face persistent threats both in the homeland and abroad and the next Chief of the National Guard Bureau must work closely with the 54 States, Territories and District of Columbia as well as the Services, Joint Force, and our Allies and Partners to meet these challenges. In this vein, I also believe the State Partnership Program is critical to our success, making us stronger together and stronger tomorrow.

If confirmed, I will ensure our National Guard Airmen and Soldiers are manned, trained and equipped to continue to meet any mission, anywhere. I will work tirelessly with this committee and all our stakeholders to defend our nation. I firmly believe the National Guard is an elite and ready warfighting force, serving as the primary combat reserve of the Army and Air Force providing robust capabilities, capacity, and strategic and operational depth. This investment serves as a force multiplier, enabling the National Guard to concurrently respond to our community's needs, while serving under the control of their Governors, and our military's needs during times of conflict. You have my solemn promise to maintain an open line of communication with this committee and Congress.

For the last 388 years, the incredible men and women of the National Guard have risen to every challenge and proven themselves on the battlefield and in our communities. They are and will always be my highest priority. They must balance their military careers, civilian careers, and family life so we can keep our promise to America to be, "always ready, always there."

In closing, I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to be before this committee. I look forward to your questions.