

NOT PUBLIC UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT
OF
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DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER & RESERVE AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
OF THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
MILITARY & CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OVERVIEW
ON
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INTRODUCTION

Chair Gillibrand, Ranking Member Tillis, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to provide an overview of your Marine Corps personnel.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

Background

The Marine Corps has been in the talent management business since its creation. We have always strived to recruit and retain the best and brightest of our Nation's youth and have proven very successful at meeting our recruiting and retention goals with the right Marines, in the right billets, at the right time; and with a force representative of the American people – a force that is now over 43% diverse. However, our legacy personnel system was designed in the industrial era with assumptions about human capital which are now superseded by modern technological advantages of the information age. While improved upon over the years, this system is not well suited for the cultural and technological changes of today's world and tomorrow's Marines.

Talent Management 2030 (TM2030) describes a fundamental redesign of this system, empowered by the new statutory authorities provided by Congress, at a critical juncture for change. We are grateful for the additional authorities provided by Congress to enable us to better serve our service members, their families, and our Nation. TM2030 details how the Marine Corps will implement new models for recruiting and retaining talent, modernize an assignments process consistent with our warfighting philosophy, introduce new measures to increase career flexibility, and optimize access to modern digital tools, processes, and analytics, consistent with industry standards. The vision for TM2030 is a transparent, collaborative, data-driven, and commander-focused system to manage and improve talent. It will better focus on the

individual talents of each Marine. It will empower Marines and improve transparency, objectivity, and flexibility in their careers. With a modernized talent management system, we will better harness, develop, and compete for the unique skills and strengths demanded of Marines.

Like Force Design, TM2030 will be a multi-year effort – a service-wide strategic design process that we have already begun to execute. Some of our initiatives were already underway prior to formal publication of TM2030; some of the new initiatives will require more time to ensure successful execution. One of our first actions after publication of TM2030 was to leverage strategic-minded innovators to think through our talent management issues and provide resource-informed planning to organizational change. This group reports directly to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, but is co-located with the Marine Corps service personnel chief at Manpower & Reserve Affairs in Quantico for optimal effectiveness. The Talent Management Strategy Group (TMX) will be the leading organization to challenge orthodoxy and create an intellectual environment of strategic talent management.

Currently, we have distilled TM2030 goals into three key lines of effort within the human resource enterprise: (1) Build and retain the talented force; (2) Manage and develop the talented force, and (3) Inform and interface with the talented force.

Build and Retain

Improving MOS assignment – We are developing a better, more predictive, data-driven matching tool that will optimally align applicant interest, Primary Military Occupational Specialty (PMOS) skill requirements, and the needs of the Marine Corps. By using our new Marine Corps Occupational Skills Matching (MCOSM) tool for enlisted Marines and Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test (CCAT) for Marine officers, we plan to better align a person's interests

and talents with the needs of the service. Potential applications for MCOSM extend beyond accessions, and we plan to utilize it to assist in PMOS classifications and career retention. The overarching goal of MCOSM is to better align Marine's interests and skills in order to leverage talents to improve performance and thus increase their satisfaction and, ultimately, total Marine Corps retention.

Retention Prediction Network (RPN) – We are currently developing the RPN, a program used to identify potential recruit's likeliness to join and continue to serve through their first enlistment and beyond. RPN is a multi-year collaborative effort established between M&RA and Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics that will harness vast quantities of manpower data in near-real time to provide USMC Leadership with data-informed talent management decisions. The objective is to provide a new tool to help ensure we recruit the right individuals to the Marine Corps, with the right attitude for service, and the known willingness to see through the challenges of earning the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor.

Personality screenings – Our Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) is a tool the Marine Corps is using to help identify a recruit's potential for service in the Marine Corps. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery provides details on a person's cognitive aptitude for service, but in the 21st century, we need more information to capitalize on better analysis, to understand the force we are recruiting and expecting to confront and defeat our adversaries. TAPAS will help us better understand the personality and character attributes of potential Marines. This program works in direct relation with MCOSM and RPN to provide a better and more holistic perspective on our Marines, and the sharing of this data with a Marine's future command team will ultimately provide for a better informed and aware leadership structure around every American who joins our Corps.

CCAT is similar to the newly developed TAPAS; it is designed to assess a Marine officer's aptitudes and traits in order to better align them to PMOS placement at The Basic School. In concert with the other assessment tools, CCAT will begin to place Marines of diverse backgrounds into occupational specialties across the warfighting functions of the Marine Corps. The end state of this effort will be a talented Marine placed into a specialty most aligned to their natural talents and traits, with an expected benefit of rapid growth of skill and maturity – ultimately resulting in a higher retention of Marine officers of higher skill.

Lateral Entry (Pilot Program) – In TM2030, the Commandant made known his intent to apply the lateral entry authorities granted to us from Congress to provide “an open door for exceptionally talented Americans who wish to join the Marine Corps, allowing them to laterally enter at a rank appropriate to their education, experience, and ability.” Such an open door would “be limited and primarily reserved for recruiting highly qualified applicants in select specialties, not used as a means to recruit en masse.” Currently, the Marine Corps is exploring courses of action to make use of these authorities by offering constructive service credit to officer candidates who possess graduate-level education, certifications, and experience in certain high-demand career fields. Furthermore, the scope and accession model will be open to prior-service recruitment – capitalizing on those Marines that left service as a non-commissioned officer, earned a degree or gained extensive experience, ultimately invited back to service as a senior non-commissioned officer or officer.

Manage and Develop

Talent Marketplace – Our Talent Management Engagement Portal (TMEP) seeks to modernize the current assignments system with a transparent, data-based environment that allows Marines, commands, and headquarters elements to collaborate on the assignments

process. At full integration, it will use advanced analytics and artificial intelligence and machine learning elements to support a market-style assignment system. It will allow for more informed career decisions throughout a Marine's career with information on billet availability, popularity, comparative assessments, and other information. Currently, this information is stored in several separate legacy systems, which limit transparency and ease of use. TMEP will solve these data management challenges. Through an agile development approach backed by necessary resourcing, we will have a fully operational talent marketplace fielded to the fleet – at speed.

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Flexibility – PCS moves, while essential, are disruptive to Marines and their families, impact spousal employment and child and family education, and can create financial distress. Since at least 2019, we have worked to reduce PCS moves by issuing Permanent Change of Assignment (PCA) orders instead – these are local moves where a Marine changes units, but remains in the same geographic location. Through TM2030, we will seek to further increase PCS flexibility, balancing it with both the needs of the individual Marine's career and those of the Marine Corps.

360 Degree Leadership Review Program – The goal of this initiative is to improve leadership effectiveness by identifying blind spots and areas of improvement for personal growth. It will use an industry-developed, researched-backed tool that ultimately will help leaders identify their strengths and weaknesses through honest feedback from their supervisors, peers, and subordinates. An initial pilot of the program is scheduled for execution in 2022, with expansion to wider populations through 2024.

Promotion Opt Out – We appreciate this statutory authority provided by Congress; we've incorporated it into TM2030 to create or enable career paths to increase the diversity of experience in our leaders. This authority allows an officer to opt out of promotion without

penalty, and enable them to complete a broadening assignment, advanced education, another assignment of significant value to the Marine Corps, or a career progression requirement delayed by the assignment or education. This authority will be implemented in our FY24 promotion boards, which are executed in this calendar year.

Inform and Interface

IT Systems Modernization. One of the most vital, but often overlooked, aspect of virtually every Marine Corps' talent management initiative involves its information technology systems. The systems and applications the Marine Corps employ now to build and sustain the most lethal fighting force possible rides on decades-old technology than spans over 70 disparate applications and databases. Modernizing our IT portfolio will consist of consolidating these systems into a small subset of interoperable multi-faceted applications that ride on a single IT system hosted in the cloud. Cloud migration allows the Marine Corps to gain IT efficiencies and effectively scale applications, databases, and services across the enterprise to meet emergent requirements in a dynamic environment. We have already made great strides in migrating the Manpower Information Portal (MIP) into a single cloud hosted IT system that supports 51 applications, 5 services, and 8 databases to facilitate manpower functions and enable TM2030. The migration of the MIP to cloud services has positioned us to implement agile development practices to further optimize its human resource applications. As more systems, services, and databases are migrated and refactored to cloud based applications, we will be able to engage in wide ranging optimization and be postured to capitalize on the promise of artificial intelligence and machine learning. These sophisticated, cloud-based, mobile-device accessible tools are the norm in the private sector and the same must be true in the Marine Corps in the near future.

The ultimate goal is to have modern technology with significantly increased capabilities to supplement our personal management of Marines' careers. Our monitors will continue to provide Marines with intimate, transparent mentorship, traveling to every major Marine installation in the world. This ensures that our Marines have the most up-to-date information on policies affecting their assignments and promotions. It also ensures that every Marine who wants to meet with their monitor has an opportunity to have an in-depth conversation about their next assignment and their career, often with their family by their side. This human interaction is crucial to matching our talent to professionally-rewarding and personally-supportable careers.

AI Implementation – We are modernizing many of our legacy processes and manpower models used to access and assign Marines across the Force. Our collaboration with Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory to develop our RPN will enable our recruiters to better prepare future Marines to complete recruit training and their first enlistments. Several of our legacy manpower models are undergoing a significant transformation that leverages advanced data analytics to produce our recurring enlisted and officer staffing goals. Even the legacy process we use to assign Marines to course dates at their PMOS schools is being explored through our Enhanced Shipping Model. Measuring the impacts of these initiatives, as well as others, is partially done through our Exit and Milestone Longitudinal Survey (EMLS). Using EMLS, Marines are solicited to provide feedback on personnel and service satisfaction at specific milestones in their careers: upon entry, at first and subsequent reenlistments, when officers receive career designation, in conjunction with officer promotion selections (O4-O6), and at separation from a component of service.

Virtual Boards - Our Enlisted Career Retention Boards (ECRBs) strive to ensure that the Service retains the very best and most qualified Marines in competitive occupational specialties.

The Service executed the ECRB virtually last year during FY21, for subsequent term or career Marines seeking reenlistment in fast-filling MOSs. These boards consist of voting members from throughout the active duty force and virtually from around the globe. In FY22, we expanded the virtual boards to our first-term Marines as well. To further improve our virtual board process, we developed Digital Boardroom 2.0, a cloud based application that increases the fidelity and accuracy of the information presented to board members to ensure that the best and most qualified Marines are selected. Digital Board Room 2.0 has the capability to fully execute virtual selection boards which will enhance the Marine Corps' ability to execute boards in a distributed fashion while safeguarding this critical talent management process. The introduction of virtual boards in no small way increased and further strengthened our partnership and transparency with the Fleet Marine Force. This ensures that our senior enlisted leaders have a larger impact on retaining our most talented Marines.

Crowdsourcing – We recently reached out to our Marines and solicited ideas from across the Marine Corps to gain a better understanding of our Marines' personnel policy perspectives. For example, we have asked for Corps-wide input on what non-monetary incentives would influence their decision to remain in the Marine Corps. Previous themes have focused on career development, assignments, leave policies, promotions, and daily living conditions (barracks, mess halls, etc.). We received over 700 suggestions and reviewed them for feasibility. Feedback shows many ideas focus on enhancing Marines' opportunities to attend career-enhancing schools and on expanding PCS flexibility.

RECRUITING

All Marine Corps recruiting efforts - officer, enlisted, regular, reserve, and prior-service - fall under the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. This is unique amongst the services.

Operationally, this provides us with tremendous flexibility and unity of command, facilitating efforts to meet accession and end strength requirements.

Last fiscal year, COVID-19 impacted recruiting efforts. Social distancing requirements limited the capacity at our depots, delayed shipping activities, closed schools, and canceled community events that we depend on for personal contacts and outreach. We adjusted to these challenges by exploring new digital prospecting tools and researching the market reactions to those endeavors. These actions gave recruiters the means to operate in a reduced personal contact environment. We made mission last year; however, FY22 has proved to be arguably the most challenging year in recruiting history. In addition to COVID-19, the growing disconnect and declining favorable view between the U.S. population and traditional institutions, labor shortages, high inflation, and a population of youth who do not see the value of military service also continue to strain recruiting efforts and place the Marine Corps' accession mission at risk.

Despite the challenges, the quality of your Marines remains exceptionally high. The Department of Defense requires 90% of enlistees to have a high school diploma or equivalent (Education Tier 1), and 60% of enlistees to score in the Mental Groups I-III A (mental aptitude). Last year, the Marine Corps achieved over 99% for Education Tier 1, and over 70% for Mental Group I-III A. We expect to exceed DOD standards in FY22, despite the continued environment.

To meet the challenges ahead, we remain committed to assigning our best Marines to recruiting duty. Our recruiters closely reflect the face of the Nation we recruit, which is a testament to our efforts to recruit a more diverse force. Approximately 47% of our recruiters have a diverse background, well above our Nation's demographics as a whole. Our recruiting efforts connect Marines with the communities they represent. We have recruiters assigned to

every zip code in our Nation, and constantly strive to reach all qualified youth and their influencers - from the most rural of small towns to the largest of cities.

For future recruiting success, we must continue to adequately fund both recruiting operations and advertising; we thank Congress for its support in this goal. Our advertising program is vital to building awareness of the Marine Corps among high quality, diverse populations that are increasingly disconnected from military service. A strong advertising program enables our recruiting command to attract and recruit the highest quality accession cohorts. Advertising funds repay many times over, as they produce lower first-term attrition, higher quality Marines, and increased readiness. However, an increasingly fragmented media environment and media inflation rates approaching 20% in many cases have made maintaining program success exceptionally difficult. To help improve our recruiting challenges, we ask for Congress' support for expanded authority to modernize our ability to reach out to prospective recruits with information on military service.

RETENTION

The essence of Marine Corps talent management is to retain the very best Marines capable of fulfilling our leadership and operational needs. Overall, we met our retention goals in FY21, and are on track for FY22. However, there is a continuous challenge to keep high-quality Marines in the service, especially in the current competitive civilian job market. We thank this Subcommittee and Congress for the retention authorities and flexibility you have given us. We employ many of these authorities and hold others in reserve should the need arise.

In general, we believe that military pay is very competitive, especially once you take into consideration all of the accompanying benefits such as housing and medical care. Currently, enlisted pay is in the top 15% of comparable pay in the private sector and officer pay is in the top

23% percentile. We appreciate Congress' passage of the new Basic Needs Allowance to supplement those junior service members with lower incomes who may have large families or otherwise are eligible. We are working with OSD to implement this new NDAA authority. Any other, large across-the-board changes to the pay should be studied to determine costs and impacts and should be narrowly tailored to identified areas of need. We continue to collaborate with the Department of the Navy and the Office of the Secretary of Defense on economic insecurity mitigation initiatives.

We are implementing the use of monetary and non-monetary incentives, modernizing our performance evaluation systems, and refining the way we match and assign Marines to billets. Incentive pay remains critical to our retention effort, allowing the Marine Corps to fill hard to retain positions, such as cyber operators, special operators, and counter intelligence specialists. Selective Reenlistment Bonuses allow us to shape our career force by targeting critical military occupational specialties and supporting lateral movement of Marines to these billets.

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Taking advantage of the wide array of experiences, perspectives, and talent of our all of Marines is necessary to maintain our current and future warfighting excellence. We are committed to capitalizing on the knowledge, skills, abilities, performance, and potential of every Marine. Diversity in the Marine Corps is improving. Since 2009, diverse enlisted accessions have increased from 34% to 48%, and diverse officer accessions have increased from 16% to 35%. Female officers have increased from 8% to 15% during this same time period. Females represented in previously restricted MOS are also on the rise. Last year, 1,101 females were in previously restricted units; that number is now 1,200. Similarly, 415 women were serving in previously restricted MOS; today that number is 471, including the first woman Reconnaissance

Marine. To date, 24% of Brigadier Generals and Brigadier General-selects are diverse, the highest level of diverse representation at that rank in Marine Corps history. We look forward to seeing this trend continue.

Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan will contribute to our actions over the next five years in the areas of recruiting and accessions, talent management, education, training, and commandship. It provides a framework to align a number of efforts, identify new initiatives, and provide oversight across the Corps for implementation by commanders at every level.

Outreach and external engagement are an important facet of our holistic approach to diversity and inclusion. We have steadily increased our Outreach Program budget from \$150k in FY2015 to almost \$1M in FY2022. This program provides opportunities for professional development, mentoring, and networking experiences by fully funding approximately 500 Marines to attend 19 national/regional conferences hosted by non-federal entity affinity groups events throughout the year.

TAKING CARE OF MARINES AND THEIR FAMILIES

As we embark on this new strategic landscape, we will not allow for the real impacts of life and service to our Corps on families to be a blind-spot; our fighting effectiveness is not just built in unit training, it is supported and maintained with a Marine's support structure at home and within their communities. The talented force will have all the markers of the current Marine Corps – Marines in specialties, with specialty skills that contribute to the fighting effectiveness of our Corps. These talented Marines rely on the institution to provide them, their families, and, often times, their communities with stability. As mentioned throughout TM2030 – talent management is not just managing exquisite skills – talent management is also deeply connected

to the life a Marine builds when not training with their unit. To that end, we recognize the importance of Marine and family stability and support as a major line-of-effort for successfully achieving our talent management goals.

Behavioral Health

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response. Sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response are top priorities for the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps appreciates and remains committed to implementing the Independent Review Commission's (IRC) recommendations. We have established plans of actions and milestones for the IRC recommendations to align with Departmental guidance. We will continue to collaborate and work with the Department of Navy on execution of our Marine Corps implementation plans. Full compliance will require significant resources (\$560M over FYDP for 723 new civilian employees and 103 military billets). The Marine Corps' overarching approach to all these plans is to create and maintain a culture that instills respect and protects the well-being and readiness of every Marine, their family and our civilian workforce.

There are a number of important updates to our sexual assault prevention efforts. For example, we have changed our training pipeline for entry level training and professional military education in order to promote integrated prevention and ensure skill building across the career. We have also updated our Commander's Course to better prepare senior leadership to prevent sexual assault once they assume command. This includes information focused on actionable recommendations for pre-command leaders and small group discussions facilitated by Marine Corps mentors and SAPR experts. Commanders set the tone of their unit—we know how important it is to ensure they are equipped *before* they assume command to establish the right command climate—a climate that encourages Marines to look out for one another and report

destructive behaviors and crimes, and that mandates accountability for perpetrators and enablers. Finally, the Marine Corps has created a SAPR Data Dashboard which has been released to leaders across the enterprise and sets us apart in our use of data to inform prevention. The SAPR Data Dashboard allows SARC's to explore and visualize the data within their areas of responsibility, comparing across time, demographics, subordinate commands, and more. This provides SARC's with data analysis to inform targeted sexual assault prevention initiatives and to collaborate on data-driven integrated prevention.

Suicide Prevention. Suicide is an enterprise-wide concern that has lasting harmful effects on Marines, families, and the Marine Corps. Because leadership involvement is critical to preventing crisis, suicide prevention is a commander's program in the Marine Corps. Every leader focuses on building connections with each one of their Marines to recognize unhealthy stress responses, promoting an environment in which mental wellness is prioritized, and utilizing medical providers, counselors, chaplains, and other health and wellness resources throughout the Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps' Death by Suicide Review Board continues to identify key themes and provide actionable information. For example, we know more than sixty percent of recent death by suicide among Marines involved firearms, so we are focused on lethal means safety initiatives. We have also learned that relationship distress is consistently the most common stressor present among those Marines who have died by suicide. As a result, primary prevention efforts have increased the focus on healthy relationship development.

The importance of force preservation and resiliency cannot be understated for a ready Marine Corps. The Marine Corps Force Preservation process is the formalized method used by commanders to identify individual Marine risk factors and apply holistic risk management

measures to improve individual and unit readiness. Every day, this process assists leaders across the Corps to identify those in need. To further improve and modernize force preservation, we have developed an application-based tool that will provide Commanders a single, standardized platform to enable proactive identification and assessment of individual Marine risk and resiliency factors. With the implementation of our Command Individual Risk Assessment System (CIRRAS), this data is transferable between commands so that, as Marines PCS, gaining commands will have a clear picture of the Marines at higher risk, allowing for proactive support from the command.

Family Support

Parental Leave. No Marine should have to choose between service and having a family. Our Commandant early on made increasing parental leave a priority. As it stands today, a Marine who is the primary caregiver can take as much as 20 weeks of paid leave through use of multiple convalescence and other paid leave authorities, and can do so in flexible increments. We also recently increased secondary caregiver leave from two weeks to three weeks. Additionally, we are working with the Department on the recent parental leave expansion authorities in the FY22 NDAA.

Child and Youth Programs. High-quality child care is one of the many important child and youth programs we offer. It is a readiness priority for the Marine Corps. COVID-19 and the resulting protocols continue to significantly impact our child care capacity. Each installation is impacted differently by COVID-19, and operational status is based on local command needs and circumstances. Modifications of daily operations are in place to mitigate social distancing and operation changes implementing the Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

For our Child Development Centers, we currently have waitlists totaling approximately 1,500 children, primarily at Camp Pendleton, Hawaii, Quantico, and Camp Lejeune/New River. The waitlists are caused by a variety of factors, such as a shortage of qualified workers, high turnover/low pay, and lengthy hiring process. An exacerbating factor is that, due to COVID-19 apprehension, almost 50 percent of the Marine families on the waitlist who we contact to offer a child care spot, decline it; they instead decide to remain on the waitlist for a future spot. We are addressing child care waitlist issues through increased hiring and a non-competitive child care employee transfer program. We also offer fee assistance for eligible Marines who are geographically remote, reside more than 15 miles from an installation, or are assigned to an installation that has a significant wait list. In FY21, over almost 1,200 children were enrolled in the fee assistance program at a total cost of over \$4.3 million; the resources provided by Congress are both appreciated and well utilized.

Spouse Employment. Spouse unemployment is a concern for many Marine Corps families, and can be an obstacle for financial security and readiness of that Marine. To assist, the Marine Corps hosts job fairs and provides employment-related referral services, resume and cover letter writing training, one-on-one career coaching, entrepreneur business opportunities, and other services. We also utilize the non-competitive military spouse appointment authority to help spouses obtain jobs. Recently, we have created a process that makes it easier for military spouses working in a CDC to transfer to a position at the CDC at their next duty station. We are also able to reimburse Marine spouses up to \$1,000 for state licensure and certification costs arising from relocation to another state.

CONCLUSION

Your Marines are the centerpiece of the Marine Corps – always have been, always will be. Our highest priority is recruiting, developing, and retaining elite warriors. We have decisively stepped out on a talent management design and modernization effort to increase the lethality of your Marine Corps to fight and win if called upon by the Nation. Accomplishing the objectives of force design will not be possible without the right Marines to execute it.

The challenges to accomplishing our talent management goals are many. We must continue to recruit the best of our Nation's youth to serve and we must do so in an environment that has shown shrinking propensity and eligibility to serve, exacerbated by COVID-19, industrial age limitations on recruiter outreach, and rapidly rising costs of advertising our message of honor, courage, and commitment. Retention is also proving more or more challenging as the civilian job market continues to rebound and provide high pay for the exquisite skills Marines possess. These challenges are all the more reason why we need to reach out to every sector of our diverse Nation for tomorrow's Marine Corps leaders. At the same time, we also need to ensure the readiness of our Marine families. We know that we recruit Marines, but we retain their families. We must continue to provide the quality behavioral health, family support, and other family readiness programs that enable Marines to remain in the Marine Corps.

Victory in the competition for talent is a Marine Corps with improved performance and lethality in combat, and a force that fulfills our Congressional mandate to be 'most ready when the Nation is least ready,' today and on the battlefields of the future.

I am proud to represent your Marines, their families, and our civilian employees and look forward to answering your questions. *Semper fidelis.*