

**Senate Armed Services Committee**  
**Advance Policy Questions for Mr. Franklin Parker**  
**Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs**

**Duties and Qualifications**

**1. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASN(M&RA))?**

The ASN (M&RA) is responsible for the overall supervision and oversight of manpower and reserve component affairs of the DON, including the development of programs and policy related to military personnel (active, reserve, and retired), their family members, and the civilian workforce; the tracking of the contractor workforce; and, the oversight of Human Resources systems with the DON. ASN (M&RA) also serves as the Chief Diversity Officer and the Senior Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion for the DON.

**2. What background and experience do you have that qualify you for this position?**

I possess over two decades as an attorney, and have held leadership positions in both industry and government. I have served as the chief legal officer and third ranking official in a civilian agency, as well as in two roles with the Department of the Navy; both as an attorney and most recently (from January 2016 to January 2017) occupying the position for which I am currently nominated. I am deeply committed to service. This, combined with my broad experience across multiple sectors, affords me a skillset, commitment, and perspective that well qualify me for this role.

**Major Challenges and Priorities**

**3. In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the ASN(M&RA), and how would you address them, if confirmed?**

The major challenges include maintaining the readiness of the force, retaining the talent within the DON workforce and fostering a culture of respect among all Navy, Marine Corps and civilian personnel. I would address these challenges through close coordination with my military and civilian counterparts and key stakeholders and through personal engagement on key issues. I also would prioritize significant efforts directly influencing the themes above such as implementation of critical sexual assault prevention reforms, fostering an inclusive environment for all servicemembers and civilians, and overall supervision of the administrative systems that care for service members in the Navy and Marine Corps, such as compensation, health care

(including mental health), and family programs, so these systems are responsive to the needs of our modern workforce and readiness requirements.

### **Civilian Control of the Military**

**4. If confirmed, how would you adhere to and further the fundamental principle of civilian control of the armed forces?**

Civilian control of the military is a fundamental principle of the Constitution. If confirmed, I will work closely with Congress, the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. I will arduously fulfill my Constitutional and statutory responsibilities to exercise control and oversight over the policies and duties of the ASN(MR&A) portfolio.

**5. If confirmed, how would you ensure your inclusion in the discussion, debate, and resolution of U.S. defense and national security issues?**

Title 10 of the United States Code, Section 8016 outlines the duties and responsibilities, as prescribed by the Secretary of the Navy, of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. If confirmed, I am committed to carrying out my statutory duties, and any additional duties assigned by the Secretary of the Navy, to ensure I am involved in any discussions, debates, or resolutions that pertain to U.S. defense and national security issues, especially where they are within my portfolio. In addition, I am committed to working closely with the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense to ensure we fully support the mission of the Department of the Navy.

### **Personnel Policy Implementation**

**6. If confirmed, what Department of the Navy personnel policies and processes would you implement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources management—both military and civilian—across the Department of the Navy?**

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Navy and Marine Corps and civilian leadership, to include DoD, to review the military and civilian personnel policies and practices to determine what, if any, need to be addressed to improve organizational effectiveness and remove barriers.

**7. What is your understanding of your responsibility, if confirmed, to inform and consult with this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress, on**

**the implementation of Department of the Navy personnel policies directed by law?**

If confirmed, I will keep Congress informed and will continue to promote open and frequent dialog between Senate Members as well as the professional staffers who support the Senate Armed Services Committee regarding DON personnel matters to ensure compliance with all personnel policies directed by law.

- 8. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to ensure consultation with the Committee on significant changes to Department of the Navy personnel policies, including when the changes are not directed by law?**

If confirmed, I will continue to promote open and frequent dialog between Senate Members as well as the professional staffers who support the Senate Armed Services Committee.

### **Non-Deployable Service Members**

- 9. In your view, should sailors and marines who are non-deployable for more than 12 consecutive months be subject either to separation from the service or referral to the Disability Evaluation System, as is current Department of Defense policy?**

Sailors and Marines must be able to deploy to support operational requirements, as the Navy and Marine Corps are expeditionary forces. I do, however, recognize that there are various reasons that could lead to situations where it may be in the best interest of the service for a Sailor or Marine who is non-deployable to be retained. For example, the expected duration of a Sailor or Marine's non-deployable status, cause of that status, criticality of the Sailor or Marine's skills, and deployment tempo for that skillset should all be considered when determining the best interest of the service. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to develop policies that will enable everyone who enters the Navy or Marine Corps, and those already serving, to remain deployable.

- 10. Under what circumstances would the retention of a sailor or marine who has been non-deployable for more than 12 months be in the best interest of the Department of the Navy?**

It is my understanding that service members can be retained even if they are non-deployable for greater than 12 months on a case by case basis, if determined to be in the best interest of the service. There are certain circumstances that might merit retention which include the expected duration of a Sailor or Marine's non-deployable status, cause of that status, and criticality of the Sailor or Marine's skills and deployment tempo for that skillset. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to ensure that Sailors and Marines' retention determinations for non-

deployability are made judiciously and fairly.

**11. In your view, how should this policy be applied to sailors and marines with HIV?**

I believe that Department of the Navy policies should align with current clinical data and developments in medical treatment, and if confirmed, I will work to ensure that those policies are consistently applied to Sailors and Marines.

**12. In your view, how should this policy be applied to sailors and marines who identify as transgender?**

If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to fully understand the policy. Based on my knowledge of the standards and policies, transgender service members will be treated the same as other Sailors and Marines, including those undergoing comparable medical procedures and treatments unrelated to gender transition, and they will be required to meet the same deployability standards.

**The new Department of Defense policy on service by transgender persons, as set forth in DOD Instruction 1300.28, provides that “any determination that a transgender Service member is non-deployable at any time will be consistent with established Military Department and Service standards, as applied to other Service members whose deployability is similarly affected in comparable circumstances unrelated to gender transition.”**

**13. Please provide an example of a “comparable circumstance” that would be used to determine deployability of a transgender service member.**

I have not had the opportunity to review the details of the policy. Medical diagnoses can be variable and complex in nature, and there are medical requirements that can prevent Sailors or Marines from meeting the necessary standards to fulfill the operational demands of a deployment. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to develop a full understanding of current policy and how it will be applied in such situations.

**14. In your view, should a service member’s readiness to perform specific missions, functions, and tasks required in the context of a particular deployment also be considered in determining whether that service member is deployable?**

Yes, I believe that Sailors and Marines’ readiness to perform specific missions, functions, and tasks of a particular deployment should be considered in determining their deployability status. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to develop policies that will enable our Sailors and Marines to remain deployable.

**15. What are your ideas for addressing the challenges of medical non-deployability in the Department of the Navy's reserve components?**

Medical readiness is a part of warfighting readiness. The ability to deploy at a moment's notice if called into action makes a Sailor or Marine a true force multiplier. In order to make a fair assessment, I will need further data on why specific service members are medically non-deployable. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to determine the challenges and identify or enhance existing solutions for the reserve component.

**Diversity and Inclusion**

**16. In general, what is your assessment of the diversity of the Department of the Navy military and civilian workforces?**

I believe that diversity, in all its forms, contributes to the Navy's and Marine Corps' capability to solve problems on and off the battlefield. While the DON has made progress in promoting an environment that embraces Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I), I understand that racial/ethnic minorities and women continue to remain under-represented among senior military and civilian leadership ranks across the DON enterprise. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to find lawful ways to address this and ensure they have the most diverse and capable Department possible.

**17. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to increase diversity and inclusion within the Department of the Navy writ large?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Services and leaders across the DON to utilize authoritative data and other mechanisms to continuously assess DEI capabilities and progress, and investigate opportunities to advance initiatives. I understand that the DON is focused on identifying under-representation in its military and civilian occupational series; I will work to ensure that effort is lawfully advanced and that equal opportunity is provided to all members of the DON.

**18. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to take actions to ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps, at all levels, especially within the senior officer ranks, reflect the broad diversity of those eligible to serve?**

I know from their public statements that the Commandant and the CNO believe in the value of diversity. If confirmed, I will work with the CMC and CNO to amplify their efforts. I also understand that the DON is building the capability to identify under-representation in its military and civilian occupational series. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that effort is lawfully advanced and that equal opportunity is provided to all members of the DON. I'll work closely with leaders of the Navy and Marine Corps to identify under-representation in military occupational specialties and civilian

job series and to continuously identify and monitor under-representation to advance diversity and reduce under-representation.

**19. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to increase diversity and inclusion in the Department of the Navy’s civilian workforce, especially at the senior General Schedule and Senior Executive Service levels?**

I believe that diversity, in all its forms, contributes to the Navy and Marine Corps’ capability to solve problems on and away from the battlefield. While the DON has made progress in promoting an environment that embraces Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I), I understand that racial/ethnic minorities and women continue to remain under-represented across the DON enterprise. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Navy and Marine Corps leaders to find lawful ways to address this and ensure they have the most diverse and capable Department possible. If confirmed, I will also work with leaders across the DON to identify effective leadership development programs available for high performing employees to ensure there is a healthy flow of talent available to compete for senior positions.

**20. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to increase geographical diversity in the Navy and Marine Corps—promoting the accession or enlistment of persons from areas of the country and local communities that are currently underrepresented in the armed forces?**

I believe that diversity, in all its forms—including geographic—contributes to the services’ capability to solve problems on and away from the battlefield. I recognize the value the DON derives from the varying perspectives people bring from different regions of our country. If confirmed, I’ll work with the services to examine marketing and outreach capabilities to ensure we recruit diverse talent from all zip codes.

**Extremism**

**21. What is your view of the prevalence and effect of extremism within the Navy and Marine Corps?**

Participation in extremist activities is a violation of Department of the Navy policy and contrary to our values. My experience working in the Department suggests the vast majority of Sailors and Marines serve honorably and continue to uphold their sworn oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, though a small minority may engage in extremist activities that have a disproportionate impact on public safety and trust in the military. If confirmed, I will support the efforts already underway across the Department to counter extremist activity in our ranks, and to promote a culture of respect, trust, and professionalism in the DON.

**22. If confirmed, what would you recommend the Secretary of the Navy do to eliminate extremism within the ranks?**

If confirmed, I will support the efforts already underway across the Department to counter extremist activity in our ranks. Focusing on activities rather than beliefs is necessary to counter extremism while avoiding infringing on constitutionally protected liberties. The First Amendment to the US Constitution, which all service members have sworn to support and defend, protects its service members' freedom of speech and other rights. I believe the DON is committed to respecting these rights in a manner consistent with good order and discipline, and ensuring commanders have tools available to hold offenders accountable. I also believe that dangerous ideologies can be addressed through persistent efforts to educate.

### **Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**

**23. In your view, to what extent are Department of the Navy policies, programs, and training in regard to the prevention of and response to sexual assault in the Navy and Marine Corps adequate and effective?**

Sexual assault and other harmful behaviors are unacceptable behaviors and abuses of power that must not be tolerated. Marines, Sailors, and civilians who experience sexual assault should have access to the support they need, and offenders must be held accountable. I understand that both Services within the Department are tirelessly working to reduce the prevalence of these behaviors and ensuring comprehensive care to those who seek help. However, there is more to be done. If confirmed, I will prioritize these programs, ensuring leaders are fostering healthy climates and recognizing and addressing precursor behaviors early and before they escalate.

It is my understanding that the Department of the Navy is currently implementing the approved policy changes recommended by the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, as well as implementing changes mandated by the FY22 NDAA. If confirmed, I will focus on cultural transformation, promoting the Department's efforts to strengthen healthy relationship skills across the career cycle to increase respect, trust, communication, and ensuring accountability for those who cause harm.

**24. If confirmed, to what extent would you take actions to increase focus on the *prevention* of sexual assaults in the Navy and Marine Corps?**

If confirmed, I will continue the Department's efforts to take a cross-cutting, integrated approach to address risk factors related to sexual assault, including sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and other negative behaviors that set the conditions for sexual assault to occur. I will leverage data to identify locations and populations of Sailors and Marines with higher risk and will ensure the Department has the appropriate resources aligned to support changes and hold leaders accountable. I will focus on innovative and evidence-informed prevention programs that hold the most promise for working in the unique context of the military. I support

the transformational nature of the recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, and the Department of the Navy's ongoing efforts on integrated prevention, to include development of a dedicated prevention workforce. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize leadership and professional development, ensuring that leaders at all levels have the knowledge and competencies to effectively prevent sexual assault and foster positive behaviors. I will also continue to create policies and response programs that support survivors of sexual assault, and ensure appropriate accountability for perpetrators of sexual assault.

**25. What is your assessment of the Department of the Navy's implementation of protections against retaliation—most notably social ostracism and reputation damage—against sailors and marines who report sexual assault?**

Retaliation and reprisal are detrimental actions that are at odds with our core values. These harmful measures not only negatively impact the individual victim, but also erode unit trust and cohesion, which is toxic to warfighting units and substantially degrades combat-readiness. The Department of the Navy has a responsibility to prevent retaliation and reprisal, and hold leaders accountable when victims' lives and careers are harmed because they reported experiences of sexual assault or harassment. If confirmed, I intend to continue these efforts and identify other ways to train and educate the total force on how to recognize and report instances of retaliation and reprisal so that the Department can better protect victims' rights and hold leaders accountable when they fail to do so.

**26. The recently enacted National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 makes significant changes to how the military will investigate and prosecute certain offenses, including sexual assault. What is your understanding of these changes and your role, if confirmed, in the implementation of these reforms?**

I understand that the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 requires the establishment of Special Trial Counsel, responsible for the investigation and prosecution of certain covered offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, to include sexual assault, domestic violence, and other crimes. Among other authorities, these special trial counsel will have the exclusive authority to refer charges to trial by special or general courts-martial. Prior to this important reform, that authority was vested in commanders, who have not had the same level of legal training that Special Trial Counsel would. If confirmed, I will work diligently and expediently to stand up the Department of the Navy's Offices of Special Trial Counsel within the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps and ensure both offices are staffed and equipped to begin their work upon the statute's effective date in December 2023.

**The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently found that the timing, amount, and mix of legal training provided to commanders may not be meeting the commanders' needs.**



**27. In your view, do military and civilian leaders within the Department of the Navy have the training, authorities, and resources needed to hold subordinate commanders and supervisors accountable for the prevention of and response to sexual assault and retaliation? If not, what additional training, authorities, or resources do you believe are needed, and why?**

The President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of the Navy have each stated clearly that we must do more to end sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other destructive behaviors that undermine the readiness of our forces. If confirmed, I am committed to doing just that and taking any action within the authority of the office to ensure that the Sailors, Marines, and civilian employees of the Department of the Navy can thrive. While I am aware of this GAO report and its findings, I have not had the opportunity to thoroughly review the legal training provided to Department of the Navy commanders and senior leaders. If confirmed, I will ensure that this training is thoroughly reviewed to identify any areas in which it might be improved. If that examination identifies that our leaders need additional training, authorities, or resources to hold subordinates accountable for the prevention and response to sexual assault and retaliation, I will work to quickly equip our leaders with whatever is necessary to do so.

**28. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to improve legal training for commanders?**

The commander plays a central role in our Armed Forces and is responsible for all that occurs within his or her unit. Commanders both set and enforce standards and in so doing are a driving force of a unit's culture. I believe that it is imperative that the Department of the Navy provides our commanders with the training and tools they need to promote a culture in which all people are treated with dignity and respect. If confirmed, I will ensure that the training provided by the Department of the Navy, including any specific legal training, is thoroughly examined to identify areas in which it might be improved.

### **Sexual Harassment in the Civilian Workforce:**

**In responding to the 2018 DOD Civilian Employee Workplace and Gender Relations survey, 17.7 percent of female and 5.8 percent of male DOD employees indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment and/or gender discrimination by "someone at work" in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.**

**29. In your view, do Department of the Navy policies and processes for tracking the submission, and monitoring the resolution, of informal complaints of harassment or discrimination provide leaders, supervisors, and managers, with an accurate picture of the prevalence of these adverse behaviors in the Navy and Marine Corps?**

I believe that sexual harassment and gender discrimination are destructive behaviors that can establish conditions that serve as a precursor to sexual assault. I accept that these behaviors may be underreported, and that prevalence of these behaviors may be higher than the Department's statistics indicate. I have not yet been able to review all of the DON's policies in this area and so I cannot render an opinion on whether the policies in question contribute to this underreporting.

**30. Do the Department of the Navy's policies and processes for recording the outcomes of informal complaints of harassment or discrimination provide leaders, supervisors, and managers, with an adequate means of identifying repeat perpetrators?**

I am firmly committed to ensuring we have a workplace that is free of harassment or discrimination in all forms. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the Navy's policies and procedures that are currently in place to identify and address this type of workplace misconduct to ensure we are taking all possible steps to identify and prevent harassment and discrimination.

**31. What is your understanding of the actions the Department of the Navy has taken to establish a modern, comprehensive harassment prevention and response policy and program for the Department's civilian workforce?**

It is my understanding that the Department of the Navy (DON) leverages an integrated violence prevention approach to more effectively address and reduce the risk of sexual assault, sexual harassment, suicide, domestic violence and other high-risk behaviors. DON's cross-cutting prevention approach recognizes the benefits of addressing common risk and protective factors to promote healthy cultures and climates and sets the conditions for every Sailor, Marine, and civilian employee to thrive. This strategy focuses on the root causes of harmful behaviors and targets upstream prevention factors to build resilience and address emerging behaviors. It is also my understanding that the DON has made significant progress in advancing its violence prevention capabilities by establishing the requirements for a dedicated prevention workforce, promoting evidence-informed and evidence-based prevention approaches and leveraging partnerships across the Services and within academia, industry, and other government agencies to build capacity of prevention stakeholders and drive innovation.

**32. If confirmed, what actions would you take were you to receive or become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from a civilian employee of the Office of the ASN(M&RA)?**

If I were to receive a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from an employee of the Office of ASN(M&RA), I would refer the employee to the Equal Employment Opportunity Office to ensure the employee received the assistance s/he needs to address the matter in accordance with the laws and regulations governing the processing and investigation of such allegations. I would also ensure the employee

was made aware of employee assistance programs that might assist in addressing any personal harm or trauma associated with such an incident. If a properly executed investigation confirmed the employee's allegation, I would commence appropriate administrative or disciplinary action against the perpetrator. I would also institute staff-wide training to ensure such behaviors were clearly identified as well as the proper procedures for addressing them.

### **United States Naval Academy**

**33. What is your assessment of the diversity of midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy (USNA)?**

Similar to my assessment of the DON workforce, racial/ethnic minorities and women continue to remain under-represented. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to find ways to address this and ensure we have the most diverse and capable Department possible.

**34. In your view, are additional measures warranted to increase diversity at USNA? If so, please explain.**

I have not had an opportunity to review all of the measures and specific policies in place to increase diversity at the USNA. However, I recognize that racial/ethnic minorities and women continue to remain under-represented at the USNA. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to find ways to address this and to assess whether additional accession and retention policies and measures may be warranted.

**35. What is your assessment of the efficacy of the policies and processes in place at USNA to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment, and to ensure that midshipmen who do report assault or harassment are not subject to retaliation, including social ostracism and reputation damage in particular?**

It is my understanding that the Department of the Navy (DON) leverages an integrated violence prevention approach to more effectively address and reduce the risk of sexual assault, sexual harassment, suicide, domestic violence, and other high-risk behaviors. DON's cross-cutting prevention approach recognizes the benefits of addressing common risk and protective factors to promote healthy cultures and climates and set the conditions for every Sailor, Marine, and civilian employee to thrive. These policies also prohibit retaliation against those who come forward with allegations of retaliation and ostracism. I have not yet been able to review the application of these policies at the USNA, and so cannot render an opinion on their efficacy.

**36. What is your assessment of the efficacy of suicide prevention programs at USNA?**

Suicide is a preventable loss that impacts unit readiness, morale, and mission effectiveness. It is critical that all Midshipmen are able to receive supportive resources when they seek help, and to address the upstream factors that contribute to suicide. I have not yet learned the details of the suicide prevention program at USNA, but I understand that there is a concerted focus on providing leaders with the skills to appropriately respond to Midshipmen seeking support as well as opportunities for midshipmen to build life-skills that increase personal resiliency, maintain mental wellness, recognize warning signs in peers, and enhance the coping skills necessary to reduce risk of self-harm or other destructive behaviors. These skills include the healthy management of stress, resolution of conflict, responsible use of alcohol, and support for healthy relationships. If confirmed, I will support these programs to promote good health and overall wellness and to develop midshipmen ready to complete the mission.

**37. Do you believe the current five-year minimum active-duty service commitment for Military Service Academy graduates is sufficient return on investment for the U.S. military and the American taxpayer?**

The Naval Academy is an outstanding accession source that provides some of America's most talented youth the training and education needed to develop into our nation's future leaders. As junior officers, they serve in different career fields and a wide variety of jobs. Many Naval Academy graduates already enter career fields that require longer service obligations. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to fully understand how the commitment aligns with Service needs and if any changes are appropriate.

**38. In your view, does USNA contribute to the pool of military officer accessions commensurate with its attendant costs? Why or why not?**

Though I have not yet had the opportunity to review all the pertinent information, I understand that the officers produced by the Naval Academy often have longer retention rates than other accession sources. To my understanding, the Naval Academy is a tremendous asset that effectively prepares our future leaders for military service. If confirmed, I will consult with Service leadership to fully understand the benefits and contributions of all the Department's accession sources.

**39. Under what conditions would you deem it appropriate, if confirmed, to permit a USNA graduate to play professional sports prior to completing at least two consecutive years of commissioned service following graduation?**

I have not had the opportunity to fully assess the situation regarding Naval Academy graduates playing professional sports. The main purpose of the Naval Academy is to educate, train, and commission naval officers to meet the Department of the Navy's

readiness and leadership requirements in the Fleet. However, sports programs at the Naval Academy play a critical role as a recruiting tool and provide exposure to the Navy. The potential benefits for the Department when permitting a graduate to play professional sports may include public marketing, advertising, and recruiting, especially when the graduate has an opportunity to play in televised games. To my understanding, these opportunities are relatively rare. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy along with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to fully assess and understand the potential benefits compared to the costs of allowing graduates to participate in professional sports.

**In recent years, there have been a number of notable and reported honor code violations at the military academies.**

**40. If confirmed, what criteria will you use to determine whether a midshipman who violates the honor code deserves to be expelled from USNA?**

From past experience I know that USNA Midshipmen disenrollment is governed by statute as well as Department of Defense and Department of the Navy regulations. Determining if a Midshipman should be expelled requires assessing the individual facts of each case within the procedures established by those authorities. If confirmed, I will ensure that each case is judged fairly and with respect for due process.

**41. If confirmed, what criteria will you use to determine whether a midshipman who is expelled from USNA should be enlisted or required to reimburse the government for the cost of his or her Academy education?**

I understand that existing Department of Defense and Department of the Navy regulations define service and monetary recoupment obligations for Midshipmen who are disenrolled from USNA due to misconduct, including honor concept violations. Determining whether enlisted service or monetary recoupment is appropriate must be done on a case by case basis with due consideration of the underlying facts and the individual's suitability for further service.

**42. Do you believe that the current honor program at USNA successfully trains, and when necessary, rehabilitates and improves the integrity and ethical behavior of midshipmen? Why or why not?**

I do not have sufficient information about the USNA's current honor concept program to form an opinion about its effectiveness. Nonetheless, I support all efforts to ensure that USNA has the appropriate policies and procedures necessary to educate and promote the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior in the Brigade of Midshipmen.

**Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC)**

**43. In your view, to what extent is the Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC) program still a viable source of officer accessions for the Navy and Marine Corps?**

The triad of Officer accession programs (USNA, SROTC, and OCS) continuously provides the Navy and Marine Corps with high quality Officers. The Reserve Officers' Training Corps has proven to be an effective commissioning source because of the highly effective and valuable education and training it provides for the future leaders of our country. If confirmed, I will consult with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to fully understand the viability of the SROTC program and the role it plays in Officer accessions.

**44. What is your assessment of the diversity in Department of the Navy SROTC programs? Are additional measures warranted to increase their diversity? If so, please explain.**

Similar to my assessment of USNA and the DON workforce, racial/ethnic minorities and women continue to remain under-represented in Navy SROTC programs. Yes, measures are warranted to increase diversity and if confirmed, I look forward to working with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to find ways to address this and ensure we have the most diverse and capable Department possible.

**45. In your view, should the Department of the Navy continue to operate SROTC units at colleges and universities that fail to meet their minimum annual commissioning requirements? If not, please explain the factors you believe should be used to determine which units should be terminated.**

I have not had the opportunity to fully assess the SROTC program. The Department needs to ensure SROTC units are providing high quality education and training, and operating in such a capacity that offers good value to the Department of the Navy and the taxpayer. If confirmed, I will consult with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to understand the requirements, operating conditions, and yield of our SROTC program.

**46. To what extent would you seek to modify the SROTC scholarship program to attract the top talent that our armed forces need to meet national defense requirements?**

To my understanding, the Department's SROTC scholarship program has been successful in attracting top talent and developing high quality officers that help it meet the Service's requirements. If confirmed, I will work to fully understand the current scholarship program and how it contributes to the Department's national defense requirements.

**47. To what extent would you seek to modify the SROTC program to enhance geographic diversity in Navy and Marine Corps officer accessions?**

I have not had an opportunity to review the relevant data to make an assessment of the current geographic diversity of our SROTC program. I do believe it is important the Officer Corps reflects the diversity of the nation, to include geographic diversity. If confirmed, I will consult with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to fully understand the current program and determine if modifications are required.

### **Gender Integrated Training in the Marine Corps**

**The FY 2020 NDAA requires the Marine Corps to gender integrate basic training at Parris Island within five years, and at San Diego within eight years.**

**48. In your view, can the Marine Corps fully execute the gender integrated basic training mandate, on the timeline prescribed by the NDAA, while maintaining the readiness and lethality of the Corps?**

While I am not entirely knowledgeable of Marine Corps' plans to integrate its recruit training at its recruit depots at Parris Island and San Diego, I believe the Marine Corps is on track to meet the timelines associated with the recruit training gender integration requirements of the FY20 NDAA. I believe that the Marine Corps is committed to ensuring integration is completed in such a way that will promote lethality, unit cohesion, accountability, equity, diversity, and sustainability. If confirmed, I will work with Marine Corps leadership to ensure they continue to comply with the FY20 NDAA requirements.

**49. What lessons have been learned from the integration progress and effort to date?**

I am aware of both Marine Corps Recruit Depots (MCRD Parris Island and MCRD San Diego) integrating their Regimental, Battalion, Company, and Support Instructor Staffs. I am confident the Marine Corps will incorporate lessons learned from both recruit depots' experiences to continue building towards a comprehensive, phased, supportable, and sustainable transition to gender integrated training that continues the noble mission of transforming civilians into Marines.

### **Military Compensation**

**50. Do you agree that the primary purpose of a competitive military pay and benefits package is to recruit and retain a military of sufficient size and quality to meet national defense objectives?**

Yes, I agree that the primary objective of competitive pay and benefits is to recruit and retain a talented workforce of the right size, skill, and quality. The demands of naval service are great for Sailors and Marines, necessitating competitive pay and

benefits to attract top talent. Taking care of the Department's people is of the utmost importance to me, which begins with ensuring our service members are compensated fairly.

**51. What is your assessment of the adequacy of the current military pay package in achieving this goal?**

In general, military compensation appears to be adequate when examining recruiting and retention levels. However, there are unique exceptions for Sailors and Marines possessing highly sought after skill sets in the civilian sector. The Services remain in continuous competition with the civilian sector to recruit and retain a highly talented workforce. If confirmed, I plan to work closely with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to ensure we are adequately compensating our Sailors and Marines. The Department of the Navy must maintain focus on providing additional monetary and non-monetary incentives to retain our Sailors and Marines who possess skills in high demand.

**52. What changes, if any, would you recommend to the current military pay and benefits package, if confirmed?**

From my previous experience in this role, I know just how dynamic and expensive recruiting, retention, and development of a highly-skilled workforce in the Navy and Marine Corps can be, especially when competing with the civilian sector. While I do not have enough recent information to make an informed recommendation on any specific changes to pay and benefits at this time, I know that balancing the compensation needed to attract and retain top talent with other fiscal demands within DoD budget constraints is always challenging. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to develop any proposals appropriate to ensure the Department of the Navy continues to recruit and retain top talent.

**53. What specific recommendations do you have for controlling rising military personnel costs, including entitlement spending?**

The strength of the Department of the Navy resides in our Sailors and Marines. Recruiting, developing, promoting, and retaining a high quality force takes time and resources to ensure that we are a competitive choice for Sailors and Marines. If confirmed, I look forward to working within the Secretary's strategic guidance alongside the Department's leaders to streamline processes and target opportunities to reduce rising costs and entitlement spending, while attracting and retaining sufficient Sailors and Marines with the required talents to man the Fleet.

**Professional Military Education**



**The National Defense Strategy notes that professional military education (PME) has stagnated and does not foster the skills and abilities needed for independent action during combat.**

**54. If confirmed, to what extent would you take actions to improve the quality of Navy and Marine Corps professional education programs?**

If confirmed, I will strengthen the Department's education programs, institutions, and systems to ensure that all Sailors and Marines obtain quality, accessible education throughout their careers that is relevant to the current and future fight. Each of the Department's naval education institutions and programs contribute to developing our force's cognitive skills to navigate highly complex situations. The Naval Community College's establishment, for example, will improve the quality and number of enlisted education opportunities to develop cognitive skills in domains that support national defense objectives.

**End Strength**

**55. Are the Navy and Marine Corps current end strengths sufficient to meet current national security objectives and execute the associated operational plans? If not, what end strengths do you believe are necessary? Please explain your answer.**

I do not have enough information on the current operational plans and the Navy and Marine Corps end strength requirements for those plans to provide an informed answer. Increased end strength leads to improved readiness, with all other things remaining equal. If confirmed, I plan to work with the Secretary of the Navy and leadership of the Navy and Marine Corps to ensure the budget process provides the required end strength to achieve all warfighting readiness requirements in the future across the Department of the Navy.

**Ready Relevant Learning**

**56. What is your understanding of the Navy's Ready Relevant Learning initiative?**

My understanding of the Ready Relevant Learning (RRL) initiative is that it fundamentally changes the way our Sailors train by transforming industrial-era, conveyer-belt training into a modern, proactive system that provides Sailors with the right training, at the right time, to maximize their ability to operate and ultimately win in a high-end fight.

**57. What is your understanding of the congressional requirements of section 545 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018 as amended by section 574 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2021?**

My understanding is that section 545 of the FY18 NDAA required the Secretary of the Navy to submit an annual report on the status of implementation of the RRL initiative for each applicable enlisted rating to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Section 574 of the FY21 NDAA added additional requirements to the report including a life cycle sustainment plan and report on the use of readiness assessment teams.

**58. If confirmed, will you ensure that Navy officials continue to comply with the requirements of sections 545 and 574?**

If confirmed, I will continue and reinforce the efforts currently underway to provide the committees with timely, appropriate, and sufficiently detailed information, consistent with congressional direction.

**Recruiting and Retention**

**59. What do you believe to be the primary reasons that fewer than 30 percent of American youth in the 17–24-year range are eligible for military service, and how would you propose increasing the size of that pool?**

I believe medical conditions disqualify youth in the target age demographic, some of whom are disqualified for being overweight as an example. In addition, other factors such as drug use, tattoos, financial and legal issues contribute to decreasing the population of eligible recruits. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to review initiatives and ensure the Department is able to sustain our force while maintaining the necessary qualification standards.

**60. Similarly, why do you believe the propensity of American youth to serve in the military continues to drop and is at its lowest level in years? What would you do, if confirmed, to address this issue?**

To increase propensity for military service, I believe the Navy and Marine Corps must continue to work toward educating today's youth on the opportunities and benefits that military service can offer. Due to a decrease in family ties to the military for today's youth, there are misperceptions and a lack of knowledge surrounding military service. If confirmed, I will consult with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to expand our reach within the available recruiting market, and work to improve perceptions of military service.

**61. Do you believe that non-native English speakers are disadvantaged in qualifying for military service by current testing processes?**

I understand the ability to effectively communicate is essential to maintaining readiness within the Navy and Marine Corps. If confirmed, I will consult with Service leadership to understand the current testing processes to ensure that all

qualifying tests provide valid determinations of eligibility for military service or entry into specific career fields.

**62. How would you address any such disadvantages to increase the pool of eligible and interested youth?**

If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to fully understand any disadvantages and remedy any instances in which qualifying tests are not found to be valid predictors of test takers' abilities to perform the essential skills of Navy and Marine Corps occupational specialties.

**63. In your view, should existing medical and other qualification standards be reconsidered to accommodate youth willing to enlist for service in certain high-demand specialties, such as pilots or the cyber workforce?**

I understand the Navy and Marine Corps set qualification and medical standards to ensure an individual can successfully accomplish the mission, and our recruiters work with individuals who have the propensity to serve and strive toward achieving required standards. It is my understanding the Services continuously reevaluate medical standards with the Department of Defense to balance Service needs with the overall medical readiness of the Department. If confirmed, I will consult with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to fully understand their standards and strive to maintain balance among those standards, the needs of the Services, and individuals' desires to serve in uniform.

### **Suicide Prevention**

**The number of suicides in each of the Services continues to concern the Committee. During the past few years, five sailors assigned to the *U.S.S. George H.W. Bush* committed suicide.**

**64. What actions has the Navy taken to address suicides in the wake of the *Bush* suicides, and what lessons have been learned?**

I understand that the Navy has spearheaded numerous initiatives to train, educate, and equip Sailors with the skills to recognize stressors, build resilience, and access behavioral health resources. If confirmed, I will remain committed to ensuring the wellness of each and every Sailor, Marine, and civilian and continue to support the Department's current prevention strategies that address multiple forms of violence, including suicide. I will work throughout the Department to identify and mitigate unnecessary stressors, encourage help-seeking behaviors, and remove barriers to care and support services. I will support and advance efforts to encourage, develop, and promote leaders at every level who make the mental and physical well-being of their teams a priority and enable every Sailor, Marine, and civilian to thrive both personally and professionally.

Though I am not privy to the specific actions taken following the suicides on the *U.S.S. George H.W. Bush*, I understand that every year the Navy brings together a comprehensive team of experts to conduct an in-depth review of all Sailor suicides. These reviews leverage personnel, investigative, and command climate data to better understand risk factors and identify lessons learned that the Department of the Navy can use to prevent any further and tragic loss of life.

**65. If confirmed, what actions would you take to prevent suicides within the Navy and Marine Corps, including within the Navy and Marine Corps reserve components, and within the families of sailors and marines across all Components?**

Loss of life of even one Sailor, Marine, or civilian to suicide is one too many. Zero is the only acceptable number when it comes to suicide. If confirmed, I will remain steadfast in my commitment to ensuring the wellbeing of all Sailors, Marines, and civilians and continue to support the Department's current efforts to eliminate suicide, which include leading a campaign focused on encouraging positive, health-seeking behaviors, eliminating the stigma associated with seeking self-care, and increasing access to critical resources. If confirmed, I will demand we have the necessary critical conversations essential in reducing suicide myths and increasing knowledge regarding the safe storage of lethal means and the important role team and family members play in recognizing and addressing warning signs. These team and family members are often the first to observe such warning signs and the Department must be committed to equipping them with the skills to detect changes in behavior, recognize risk, and have the conversations needed to intervene and support Sailors, Marines, and civilians.

If confirmed, I will promote the Department's work that aligns with the President's National Strategy on Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide by reducing risk early on, and strengthening protective factors long before suicide is a consideration. I will address the health of unit climates and hold leaders at every level accountable for creating environments that foster trust, connectedness, and belongingness, healthy communication and the safety and well-being of Sailors, Marines, and civilians. The health of our teams and the readiness of our personnel is mission-essential for ensuring that the Navy and Marine Corps can successfully defend our country and allies.

**66. If confirmed, what would you do to enhance the reporting and tracking of suicide among family members and dependents of sailors and marines across all Components?**

If confirmed, I will review existing reporting and tracking tools used by the Navy and Marine Corps and work with the Services not only to enhance the use of military and civilian data but also to explore what other tools or methods are available to help the Department better understand and prevent suicides. I will also work to identify new

data sources that, in conjunction with current suicide data, will provide a more comprehensive picture of risk and protective factors. In addition, I will ensure the Department has and maintains the talent necessary to leverage existing data and leads the way forward in our suicide prevention efforts. I will also work closely with key stakeholders across the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and academic leaders, to continue evolving the Department's data analytics approaches, to leverage evidence-based strategies, to identify trends and to share resources. It is my goal to make the Navy and Marine Corps leaders in the elimination of suicide across the Services.

### **Department of the Navy Reserve Components**

#### **67. What is your vision for the roles and missions of the Navy and Marine Corps Reserves?**

The Reserve Force is critical to the Department of the Navy's mission. Reserve Sailors and Marines provide operational capacity and strategic depth that is vital to mission success. If confirmed, I will work with the leaders of the Navy and Marine Corps to ensure we maintain a reserve structure that meets the operational and strategic capabilities required as a Total Force.

#### **68. In your view, do the reserve components serve as an operational reserve, a strategic reserve, or both? In light of your answer, should the reserve components be supported by increased training, improved equipment, and/or higher levels of overall resourcing for readiness?**

In my opinion, the reserve components serve both as an operational reserve and a strategic reserve. Navy and Marine Corps reservists require training support, equipment support, and resourcing in order to execute the mission of the Total Force. I need more information on the current readiness of the Department's Reserve Force in order to determine if these areas require increased support. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps reserve leadership to ensure the Department properly allocates resources to the reserve components for mission success.

#### **69. In your view, to what extent should actions be taken to improve permeability between the active and reserve components of the Department of the Navy?**

In my opinion, the active and reserve components should maximize permeability to ensure success of the Total Force. At this time I do not have the required data to know if any process or procedure needs improvement. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to ensure the Department retains talented Sailors and Marines, and to ensure personnel can move between the active and reserve components without barriers.

**70. In your view, are the current requirements for becoming a Joint Qualified Officer appropriate for reserve component officers? If not, how should they be revised to better meet the needs of reserve component officers?**

While both Navy and Marine Corps reserve officers can become Joint Qualified Officers, without the proper data, I am not able to determine whether current requirements are appropriate. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to assess the need to revise current requirements for the reserve components in order to support the Joint Force.

**71. In your view, is the current Department of the Navy PME system appropriate for the Navy and Marine Corps reserve components? If not, what changes would you recommend if confirmed?**

Professional military education (PME) fosters leadership within Sailors and Marines and develops their knowledge, skills, competencies, and understanding. I believe naval education needs to be continually assessed for alignment with National Defense Strategy objectives so that it is relevant to the current and future fight. If confirmed, I will assess the Department's PME system with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to ensure it satisfies the requirement for the Department's reserve component to be a force multiplier.

**Mandatory Vaccination for COVID-19**

**72. What is your view of the Secretary of Defense's requirement that all servicemembers be vaccinated for COVID-19 unless they meet established exemption criteria?**

I fully support the Secretary of Defense's policy that mandatory vaccination against COVID-19 is necessary to protect the Force. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to ensure that all Sailors and Marines are vaccinated or exempted in accordance with existing Department policies.

**73. In your view, should sailors and marines who decline to be vaccinated be separated, even if they have skills and experience that the Navy and Marine Corps need?**

I fully support the Secretary of Defense's policy that mandatory vaccination against COVID-19 is necessary to protect the Force. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to understand our separation policies and to ensure that all Sailors and Marines are vaccinated or exempted in accordance with existing Department policies.

**Thousands of sailors and marines have requested a religious exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine requirement. The Navy has not approved any such requests to date. The Marine**

Corps has granted three requests, but only to marines who already had plans to leave the military.

**74. If the Department of the Navy continues to deny requests for religious exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccine mandate and separate sailors and marines who refuse the vaccine, at what point would you become concerned about the Navy's ability to achieve authorized end strength?**

It is my understanding that the Navy and Marine Corps is already a highly vaccinated Force. If confirmed, I will review vaccination percentages of the Navy and Marine Corps to determine if mandatory vaccination is affecting the Navy's ability to achieve authorized end strength.

**75. As the Department of the Navy balances the sincerely held religious beliefs of its personnel with legitimate military requirements, do you believe that an individual's military specialty should be a factor in determining whether to grant a religious exemption to the COVID-19 vaccine requirement? Why or why not?**

I am not privy to how the Department is applying law and policy to requests for religious accommodation to the COVID-19 vaccine requirement. However, it is my understanding that the Navy and Marine Corps is already a highly vaccinated Force. I also understand that the Department is committed to adjudicating all requests for religious accommodation on a case by case basis and in accordance with the law. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that current law and policy within this area are consistently applied to all requests by Sailors and Marines.

**76. What impact will the discharge of several thousand sailors and marines who refuse the vaccine have on Navy and Marine Corps readiness?**

It is my understanding that the Navy and Marine Corps are already a highly vaccinated Force. If confirmed, I will review vaccination percentages of the Navy and Marine Corps to determine if mandatory vaccination is affecting readiness within the Department of the Navy.

### **Military Quality of Life**

**77. If confirmed, what qualify of life and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs would you consider to be priorities?**

If confirmed, I am committed to supporting the programs that have the greatest impact on readiness, retention, and resiliency. I believe a broad collection of MWR programs, including single service member programs, health and wellness programs, and fitness centers are necessary to support the mental and physical health of our Sailors, Marines, and their families. I would work with Navy and Marine Corps

leadership to ensure the Department is delivering programs that support service members and their families.

**78. What metric would you apply in determining which MWR and quality of life programs should be sustained or enriched and which should be eliminated or reduced in scope as ineffective or outmoded?**

I believe that Sailors, Marines, and their families can provide valuable program input regarding what truly works for them, and provide suggestions to enhance and enable new avenues that promote the health and welfare of the Navy and Marine Corps family. If confirmed, I will work with Service leadership to identify the best manner to assess these programs.

**Military Family Readiness and Support**

**79. What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for service members and their families?**

Military Family Readiness is part of the foundation to secure unit readiness and our ability to achieve the National Defense Strategy mission. Sailors and Marines need to know their families are well supported, particularly when they are deployed far from home. If confirmed, I will be dedicated in my support of programs that bolster the military community, spouses, and families, from child care to spouse employment, and other programs that develop life skills like financial management.

**80. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that military families are provided with accessible, high-quality childcare, at an appropriate cost?**

Family readiness is a key component of military readiness, and the ability to access high-quality childcare is a vital part of ensuring family readiness. If confirmed, I will study all the current efforts underway to ensure the Department's families have access to high-quality child care at an appropriate cost. I understand that the Navy and Marine Corps are working multiple strategies to increase access to care both on and off base. Buildings are being renovated and repurposed. Installations are collaborating to nurture community partnerships with local and national agencies, and expand fee assistance for families who rely on community based care. I will examine these initiatives and other innovative ways to address this important issue.

**81. In the past, the Navy has struggled to provide childcare to military families through the fee assistance program. If confirmed, how would you improve the Department of the Navy's childcare fee assistance program?**

Military child care is an important contributing factor to family readiness and military life. If confirmed, I would want to hear directly from families and Senior Enlisted



Advisors, regarding their challenges and needs, and solicit recommendations. With the assistance of Navy and Marine Corps leadership, I would review current Department of Defense and Department of Navy policies for the fee assistance program and look to incorporate best practices from fellow military departments.

**82. If confirmed, how would you ensure that sailors and marines with family members with special needs are assigned to duty stations where services are available to address those needs?**

As a father, I appreciate the importance of ensuring families have the best care and resources available. The Exceptional Family Member Program is one such program that provides families resources, educational support, and information about medical services at their assigned location. Currently, I do not have the necessary information to understand the specific challenges Sailors, Marines, and their families face when relocating. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps stakeholders to assess the challenges and potential solutions to ensure our service members and their families with special needs are provided the support and resources they deserve, regardless of where they are located.

**83. If confirmed, how would you ensure outreach to those military families with special needs dependents so they are able to obtain the support they need?**

Our Sailors and Marines support each other every day, and it is the Department's duty to support them, and their families, in every way possible. If confirmed, I will engage with Navy and Marine Corps leaders, and Exceptional Family Member Program stakeholders to better understand how outreach efforts are executed and identify any barriers to communicating with Sailors and Marines and their families. I will work to understand these barriers and determine the best means to eliminate them.

**Use of Military Leave and Carryover Authority**

**The Department of Defense has authorized enhanced leave carryover authority for service members unable to use military leave due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, effective through the end of fiscal year 2024, despite data showing that the only ranks with leave balances in excess of the existing statutory carryover authority are general officers.**

**84. What is your understanding of the importance of service members using their available leave, even if travel is limited due to COVID or other factors?**

Affording service members a respite from their duties has been shown to be beneficial in maintaining manageable operational stress levels and improving mental health. I believe that although travel has been restricted, time away from the job is still an essential need for Sailors and Marines. To that end, FEMML was recently approved by OSD based on a DON (USMC) request.

**85. Do you believe the use of military leave is important for the mental health of the force, and family readiness, and that it should be used rather than accumulated?**

We place great demands on our Sailors and Marines, creating an increased need for time away to focus on family and themselves when compared to civilian counterparts. I believe that leave and time away from the job are required to recharge and maintain mental health and reduce operational stress levels. I can also understand service members' desires to maintain healthy leave balances to allow for emergency situations that could arise, the ability to take leave for a longer duration, and to provide flexibility when transitioning back to civilian life.

**86. If confirmed, what actions would you take to encourage sailors and marines to use, rather than accumulate, their military leave?**

I believe leaders in the Navy and Marine Corps continue to encourage their Sailors and Marines to take leave to recharge and spend needed time with their families. If confirmed, taking care of the Department's people will be my highest priority. I will work with the Department's leaders to ensure Sailors and Marines are properly educated on the need to take time for themselves and their families to maintain their mental health and operational readiness.

**87. Do you believe that existing leave sell back authorities may inappropriately disincentivize service members from using their leave?**

Providing Sailors and Marines the opportunity to spend time away from their duties to recharge is important. However, operational schedules and other factors sometimes make it difficult for service members to use leave in a manner they value. I believe the authorities granted to service members to sell back leave fairly compensate service members for leave not taken at the end of a contract or at the time of resignation. If confirmed, I will work with Navy and Marine Corps leadership to ensure the authorities to sell back leave are in line with the Department's objectives to encourage Sailors and Marines to take their authorized leave to focus on themselves and their families.

**Department of the Navy Civilian Workforce Matters**

**88. How would you describe the current state of the Department of the Navy's civilian workforce, including workforce morale, as well as the Department's ability to successfully recruit and retain top talent?**

I found the civilian workforce and civilian leadership to be among the best and brightest who have an unwavering commitment and sense of purpose for the mission of the Department of the Navy. To ensure future capabilities, the DON must leverage all the capabilities that we can to secure excellence in its human capital talent. Taking care of its people is paramount to mission success. While I am not aware of the

current morale of the civilian workforce, I am certain that they have been impacted by the effects of the past two years. That said, based on my experience, these men and women are incredibly resilient, committed and talented. They take great pride in what they do and what they contribute; they inspire others to want to come and work for the department, supporting the mission.

**89. In your judgment, what are the biggest challenges facing the Department of the Navy in effectively and efficiently managing its civilian workforce?**

I believe one of the biggest challenges facing the Department of the Navy will continue to be advancing the mission, keeping pace with technology and innovation, while also preparing for the post-pandemic workplace model (as are businesses across the globe). If confirmed, I will work with the leadership toward a model that advances the DON's mission while also positioning them as an employer of choice in recruiting and retaining the best-in-class talent, maximizing the available workplace flexibilities, to ensure they maintain a global competitive edge against our adversaries.

**90. In your view, to what extent would there be value in eliminating the moratorium on the use of A-76 public/private competitions that has been in effect since 2009?**

In my view, eliminating the moratorium on the use of A-76 public/private competitions may be a good approach if targeted toward areas that have become more commercially available since 2009. To achieve the best mix of talent in the total force, DON must have hiring permeability between public and private sectors, across the Department and Services, and between military and civilian workforces. If confirmed, I will continue to enable policies that further these opportunities.

**91. In your view, how could the Department of the Navy better utilize telework, while maintaining supervisory and employee accountability for high quality performance and the appropriate use of official time?**

If confirmed, I will work with the leadership toward a model that advances the DON's mission while also positioning us as an employer of choice in recruiting and retaining the best-in-class talent, maximizing the available workplace flexibilities (incorporating best practices and lessons learned from the public and the private sector experiences gained from the COVID-19 pandemic), and driving accountability to ensure DON maintains a global competitive edge against our adversaries.

**92. In your view, are the various direct hire, extended probationary period, and special compensation authorities provided to the Department of the Navy useful in recruiting and retaining high-quality civilian employees?**

When I served in this position previously, we worked closely with DoD and Congress to identify direct hire opportunities in mission critical areas. This enabled the Department to recruit top talent, expedite hiring and compete with private sector

counterparts. Similarly, there are special compensation flexibilities that enable DON to remain competitive. They need these mechanisms to ensure mission success. Generally, probationary periods provide opportunities for both the employer and employee to ensure a good fit for all, recognizing the importance of candid and informative performance conversations. Our world is increasingly complex and incredibly unpredictable; if confirmed, I will continue to work to maximize departmental flexibilities to recruit, retain and develop the best and brightest talent to proactively tackle emerging requirements.

**93. Would you be supportive of extending and renewing these authorities as necessary?**

If confirmed, I will work with the appropriate offices in the Department, DoD and OPM to maximize flexibilities and authorities to recruit, retain and develop the talent needed and provide the workplace mechanisms to achieve mission success.

**Technical Workforce**

**94. In your view, what are the pros and cons of having active-duty personnel—as opposed to civilian employees—trained and working as scientists, engineers, software coders, and in other technical positions across the Department of the Navy research, development, and acquisition enterprise?**

I believe delivering new capabilities to the Fleet requires a mixed active-duty and civilian workforce in the research, development, and acquisition enterprise. I understand there are multiple factors that contribute to workforce mix decisions. Active duty personnel can apply their experiences as warfighters in the Fleet to the research, development, or acquisition projects to which they are assigned; yet, the extensive technical education and experience may not be available through the typical career progression, requiring a civilian or contractor presence. If confirmed, I look forward to working across the Department to continue to develop an optimally balanced active-duty and civilian workforce in all mission areas.

**Senior Executive Service**

**95. Given that competent and caring leadership is one of the most significant factors in shaping a high-performing civilian workforce, what factors and characteristics would be most important to you in selecting candidates for appointment to the Senior Executive Service (SES)?**

I have found that successful leaders are those that truly care about their people in a multi-dimensional manner. People advance objectives through their daily contributions to the mission. I value leaders who communicate with their employees, who recognize their employees – by letting them know they are valued and appreciated, and who explain some of the contextual drivers for the decisions they

make and how those employees fit into a broader framework. I look for leaders who are comfortable with receiving input from diverse perspectives and different points of view, open to new ideas and who provide an environment that encourages innovation and creativity. I also look for leaders who can tackle the tough, hard issues and are resilient when challenges are uncertain and difficult.

**96. If confirmed, how would you ensure that SES personnel under your authority are held accountable for both organizational performance and the rigorous performance management of their subordinate employees?**

Based on my experience, members of the DON's senior executive cadre are remarkable group of men and women who made the conscious decision for a higher calling – to serve the Navy and Marine Corps team as a civilian leader, serving the public good, improving our services, ensuring the infrastructure, and managing large, complex organizations. They undergo a rigorous process to get these critical positions and annually must meet tough performance standards that demand they deliver results, ensure performance management that develops and ensures accountability, while also providing an environment for employees to thrive, innovate and tackle challenges for mission success. If confirmed, I will work with the senior executive cadre to provide them with the opportunity to continue to develop the skills and expertise they need to lead and sustain high-performing teams.

**Acquisition Workforce**

**97. In your view, in what ways could the Department of the Navy better train military and civilian personnel to be acquisition professionals?**

The Department of the Navy's Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan provides the building blocks to shape and inform the priorities of the Acquisition Workforce (AWF) and guide efforts to train the over 71,000 members of the AWF community. The academic skills taught at the Defense Acquisition University are robust, comprehensive and have demonstrated clear utility in the development of the military and civilian acquisition workforce. However, I understand that the Navy is also leveraging commercial best practices, expanded training opportunities, modern training tools, and experiential learning to build a workforce that can compete and win. If confirmed, I will work with OSD and across the Department of the Navy to utilize all available tools to further elevate the professionalism of the Navy's AWF.

**98. In your opinion, to what extent should acquisition workforce management policies be modified to make and hold leaders accountable for cost overruns on procurement contracts?**

It is essential that the acquisition workforce is properly trained and incentivized, fully empowered to meet their responsibilities, and held accountable for their performance. If confirmed, I will carefully review the Department's acquisition workforce

management policies and work with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition to make any necessary modifications.

**99. In your judgement, how should acquisition program offices decide which tasks are best accomplished by government civilian employees, military personnel, and support contractors?**

The construct of determining military essentiality and inherently governmental function related to military and civilian billet management is codified in 10 U.S.C. §129; 2017 and 2019 NDAA's; and DoDD 1100.4. This policy clearly outlines when a function is required to be performed by a military member and if not, addresses the question of whether a position performs inherently governmental functions such as government decision making. Any work determined to be neither military essential or inherently governmental is eligible to be contracted.

**Laboratory, Science and Technology, and Test Range STEM Personnel**

**100. If confirmed, specifically what would you do to support the maximum use of the personnel flexibilities provided by Congress to improve the quality of the Department of the Navy's STEM workforce?**

I understand that the Department of the Navy has been extremely successful in using the personnel flexibilities authorized by Congress to support the hiring of a technical workforce, including those from STEM programs. There are a number of Direct Hiring Authorities that target those completing post-secondary education and recent graduates. The Domestic Defense Industrial Base (DDIB) and the Major Range Test Facilities Base (MRTFB) authorities are two examples of the kinds of authorities available. If confirmed, I will work to maximize the use of these authorities to attract top STEM talent.

**101. If confirmed, what approach would you take to delegating authority for the use of these flexibilities to the lowest appropriate level in the organization, so they can be exercised with the speed necessary to compete with private sector hiring practices?**

It is my understanding that the authorities granted by Congress reside at the command and/or HR Operations Center levels and are available for use today.

**STEM Educational Opportunities for Military Dependents**

**102. What role do you think the military services should play in supporting STEM educational opportunities for military children?**

In my view, the Department of the Navy has a vital role in supporting STEM educational opportunities for the children of military families from kindergarten through graduate school. STEM programs not only inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers, but are also deliberate investments in the future Navy workforce. If confirmed, I will support efforts to connect military service members with local STEM educational opportunities to ensure that military children, as well as children located near military bases, benefit from the Navy's STEM education and outreach activities.

**103. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to work with the Department of Defense research and development organizations to increase STEM educational opportunities for children of military personnel?**

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is the umbrella organization that unites efforts to provide quality educational opportunities and services to military dependents around the globe. If confirmed, I will seek opportunities to enhance collaboration between the Navy's research and development organizations and DoDEA to increase STEM opportunities for children of military personnel. This will be among one of my highest DON priorities.

**Congressional Oversight**

**In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.**

**104. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

**105. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to provide this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

**106. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Please answer with a**

simple yes or no.

Yes.

**107. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

**108. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

**109. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this committee? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.

**110. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.**

Yes.