

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JACK REED
RANKING MEMBER, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**SD-G50
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
Thursday, February 25, 2016**

To consider the nominations of:

**Honorable Brad R. Carson to be Under Secretary
of Defense for Personnel and Readiness;
Ms. Jennifer M. O'Connor to be General Counsel
of the Department of Defense; and
Mr. Todd A. Weiler to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.
(As Prepared for Delivery)**

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I join you in welcoming our nominees, and I thank you for holding this hearing to fill important civilian vacancies in the Department of Defense, all of which directly or indirectly impact our service men and women, and the civilian workforce of the Department. The positions for which these individuals have been nominated involve significant and challenging duties.

Mr Carson, who has been nominated for the position of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, has significant experience in the private sector and government that should prepare him for this position, including service as the General Counsel of the Army and the Under Secretary of the Army. Mr. Carson is a Rhodes Scholar who served on active duty in the Navy as recently as 2009 when he was deployed to Iraq.

Ms. O'Connor, nominated as the next General Counsel of the Department of Defense, is currently serving as a Deputy General Counsel for the Department, giving her significant insight into the legal challenges the Department faces. Prior to that, she was Deputy White House Counsel where she worked with attorneys from the Department of Defense and other Federal

agencies on a wide variety of legal issues. Ms. O'Connor has extensive service in government and in the private sector, all of which will serve her well as DOD General Counsel. The DOD General Counsel is the primary legal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, and as such, it is extremely important that this position be filled as soon as possible.

Mr. Weiler, nominated to be the first Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs since the position was reorganized in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, also brings significant government and private sector experience that will serve him well in this new position. Mr. Weiler is an Army combat veteran, serving in the Gulf War prior to serving as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs in the Clinton Administration. For the past 16 years, Mr. Weiler has worked in the private sector, but has continued his involvement with wounded warrior and suicide prevention programs, which will serve him well in his new position.

Again, I thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.