

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Dr. Agnes Schaefer
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Duties and Qualifications

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

Answer: The ASA(M&RA) advises the Secretary of the Army and provides overall supervision for manpower and reserve component affairs of the Department of the Army. The ASA(M&RA) establishes strategic direction and oversees human capital functions for the Army's military and civilian personnel. I understand that these functions include but are not limited to developing and overseeing policy and programs for: (1) acquiring, employing, developing, and retaining talented Soldiers and civilians; (2) force structure and workforce mix; and (3) Soldier and family readiness programs.

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

Answer: In my role as a national security researcher at the RAND Corporation over the last 16 years, I have developed deep expertise in a wide range of military personnel issues across the Services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and worked every day to maintain military readiness and find solutions to improve the lives of service members and their families. During my career at RAND, I have conducted more than 60 studies for senior civilian and military DoD leaders, including several studies on military personnel policy that directly informed landmark personnel decisions made by the Secretary of Defense, Service Chiefs, and Reserve Component Chiefs on topics at the top of the Department's agenda. If confirmed, I intend to employ the same sorts of data driven solutions to the Army's challenges.

In addition to my long track record of successfully leading some of the most challenging multi-disciplinary, non-partisan RAND studies for DoD, I also served as the Associate Director of RAND's International Security and Defense Policy Center from 2018 to 2021. In that role, I managed almost 300 researchers who conduct \$30 million worth of research projects sponsored by OSD, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Intelligence Community.

If I am confirmed, I would bring a fresh perspective and unique set of skills and expertise to the ASA(M&RA) position given that I have spent my career assessing issues and problems confronting DoD through an external, objective lens rather than as a DoD insider. However, I am amply prepared for this position not only because of my broad expertise, but also because of my deep understanding of DoD processes, strong network at DoD, and longstanding working relationships with career DoD officials.

Major Challenges and Priorities

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

Answer: One of the biggest challenges confronting the ASA(M&RA) is maintaining readiness for present threats and operational requirements, while at the same time preparing the force to be ready for future threats and operational requirements. This involves ensuring that the Army is able to execute its aggressive modernization strategy, while also maintaining readiness to meet current demands. If confirmed, I would ensure that the Army maintains not only current readiness, but also longer-term readiness so that the Army can meet the objectives laid out in our national security strategy. While this is no doubt a challenging task given the evolving security environment, the Army cannot risk failing at maintaining either current or long-term readiness.

Another critical challenge facing the ASA(M&RA) is rebuilding the trust of the Army's service members, their families, and the American public. Harmful behaviors, such as sexual assault, sexual harassment and domestic abuse, stand in opposition to Army Values and erode trust in the Army's commitment to ensuring a safe work environment. Issues such as unsafe housing erode trust in the Army's commitment to ensuring a healthy, high quality of life for service members and their families. If confirmed, I would work with other Army leaders to bolster and regain trust both between Soldiers and between the Army and its Soldiers by promoting transparency and accountability. I would keep Soldiers and their families informed about efforts to address harmful behaviors and I would also promote efforts to building a climate and culture of dignity and respect. I believe the People First Task Force, the "This is My Squad" initiative, and the Cohesion Assessment Teams are important tools to address command climate shortcomings. However, data show an incredibly worrying trend: the American public's trust in the military continues to decline. The military has historically been one of our democracy's most trusted institutions and it is imperative that the Army's leadership rebuilds that trust both for the sake of our national security and our democracy.

Other challenges facing the ASA(M&RA) include recruiting and retention in the current environment. Competition for good talent is fierce right now, and the Army needs to find new ways to convince the American public that it is a welcoming employer that offers a wide range of opportunities to grow a career. If confirmed, I would sustain and expand the many novel recruiting and marketing efforts that have recently been implemented across the Army in order to reach new audiences and potential recruits. The current environment requires the Army to pivot quickly to make the Army more relatable and to resonate more with the changing priorities of the American public—especially America's youth.

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?

Answer: The principle of civilian control of the armed forces is a cornerstone of our democracy and if confirmed, I intend to ensure that military advice is carefully considered but not afforded

disproportionate influence, and that there is adequate civilian oversight and perspective. If confirmed, I intend to enhance processes that focus on appropriate civilian control mechanisms.

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

Answer: I will ensure that personnel issues are considered in the discussion, debate and resolution of U.S. defense and national security issues by closely advising other senior Army leaders on the critical importance of personnel issues to issues of national security. If confirmed, I will work closely with senior Army leaders, in particular Secretary Wormuth, to provide them with the information they need regarding personnel policy in order to resolve U.S. defense and national security issues. The Army has made it clear that personnel issues are one of its top priorities and if confirmed, I will be the strongest advocate possible for improving personnel readiness in the Army, as well as improving the lives of our service members, the civilian workforce, and their families.

Personnel Policy Implementation

6. If confirmed, what Army 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 Army?

Answer: If confirmed, I will focus efforts on growing talent, building a resilient and ready force, and fostering an atmosphere that builds a safe workplace for all. Further, if confirmed, I will sustain and build on the Army's ongoing efforts to implement innovative strategies to recruit, develop, and retain its military and civilian workforces. These include leveraging new authorities regarding officer career management that Congress gave to the Services in the 2018 and 2019 NDAAs, building and expanding on the ongoing initiatives of the Army Talent Management Task Force, and developing new talent acquisition, development and retention strategies for the Army's civilian workforce in order to remain competitive with the private sector. My efforts would also include employing new tools and technologies to decrease bureaucratic processes for the Army's military and civilian workforces.

If confirmed, I would also focus on initiatives that would enhance readiness, as well as the safety and health of service members and their families. I would ensure that the Army is giving its Soldiers and their families the best quality of life possible so that we can ensure not only individual readiness, but family readiness as well. I would also look for opportunities to increase stability and predictability for military families regarding assignments and deployments, and enhance support to military spouses in key areas such as employment and childcare.

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 Army personnel policies directed by law?

Answer: The Army cannot expect to succeed without the support of Congress, and particularly this Committee. My goal, if confirmed, is to maintain transparent and continuing communication

with the Congress to facilitate oversight. I promise to maintain a productive relationship through my words and actions, proceeding with integrity and positive collaboration.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I intend to maintain constant transparent communication with this Committee and Congress in general on substantive matters. I plan to do this on both a formal basis, via official correspondence with this Committee; and on an informal basis, via direct communication with members and their staff. I will also ensure that members of my staff and subordinate organizations take note of any matters of potential congressional interest in order to keep this Committee properly apprised of any and all developments.

Non-Deployable Service Members

9. In your view, should soldiers 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?

Answer: In my view, Soldiers who are non-deployable for 12 consecutive months should be evaluated for continued service. A prolonged inability to deploy may not be in the best interest of the Army or the Soldier. However, if confirmed, I will advise the Secretary of the Army to ensure that any recommended policy changes balance the need to take care of our people while maintaining a ready Army.

10. Under what circumstances would the retention of a soldier who has been non-deployable for more than 12 months be in the best interest of the Army?

Answer: My understanding is that under existing policy, the Army must assess the specific circumstances of a Soldier who is non-deployable for 12 consecutive months and who also wants to remain in the Army. A specific circumstance that could warrant retention is for pregnant Soldiers who may exceed a 12-month non-deployable status in particular cases. Additionally, some Soldiers possess unique skills that may warrant an opportunity for continued service. Certain military occupational specialties where a Soldier could work virtually from a non-deployed environment may also warrant consideration. If confirmed, I would assess the circumstances that may merit retention after periods of more than 12 months of non-deployability, and work with the Secretary of the Army to address the policy as appropriate.

11. In your view, how should this policy be applied to soldiers with HIV?

Answer: I understand that the Army classifies HIV positive Soldiers with a Permanent Profile within Medical Readiness Category 3. Under this category, these Soldiers have deployment and assignment restrictions that are applied to certain geographical areas, but they are not categorized as non-deployable. Decisions made for HIV positive Soldiers are assessed by medical providers on a case-by-case basis.

12. In your view, how should this policy be applied to soldiers who identify as transgender?

Answer: In my view, all Soldiers should be considered deployable unless they have a particular reason, as determined by the Army, that precludes them from deployment. One scenario where this specifically affects a transgender Soldier is if the Soldier is going through a gender transition process. A gender transition process may require a time period during which the Soldier's duties could be limited. In my view, during that period, the transgender Soldier should be treated like any other Soldier whose profile similarly affects deployability.

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.

Answer: As I understand, a “comparable circumstance” could include treatments that entail the adjustment of hormone levels which render Soldiers non-deployable for a period of time. Examples of Soldiers requiring the adjustment of hormone levels include treatments for hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism. Transgender Soldiers who require medical adjustment of hormone levels will be duty limited and non-deployable due to similar circumstances as Soldiers receiving hormone medication adjustment. Another similar circumstance could be Soldiers requiring post-surgical convalescence. In such a circumstance, the Soldier should be stable or recovered and no longer duty limited before being able to deploy. In my view, any Soldier under these circumstances should be evaluated under the same standards.

14. In your view, should a soldier'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?

Answer: I understand that the Army already considers a Soldier's military specialty and the theater of deployment when making a deployability determination. In my view, it is important for the Army to weigh specific missions, functions, and tasks when making these determinations.

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

Answer: I am aware of the challenges the Army's Reserve Components face in addressing medical readiness, and support the Army's work with DoD and Defense Health Agency initiatives like the Reserve Health Readiness Program. These efforts will provide a number of resources that will lead to a more comprehensive medical picture of Soldier health and readiness;

improve the medical evaluation processes; and allow the Army's Reserve Components to quickly address temporary medical conditions that make Soldiers non-deployable for a certain period of time. Another example of these initiatives is the policy that the Defense Health Agency released earlier this year that expands the eligibility of care for Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers in Military Treatment Facilities. If confirmed, I will continue the ongoing work with the Army Reserve and Army National Guard, along with the medical community, to address the challenge of medical non-deployability in the Army's Reserve Components.

Diversity and Inclusion

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

Answer: I believe the Army is trending in the right direction and must work to sustain its momentum. Army data show that the Army has made gains in diversifying its ranks across race, ethnicity, and gender since 2010. The data show that, as of 30 September 2021, 43% of the Total Army Force was comprised of minority Soldiers, 57% of the Army Total Force was comprised of Caucasian Soldiers, and 18% of the Army Total Force was comprised of female Soldiers. Since 2010, Active Component female Soldiers increased by 3% to account for 16% of the force. The Army National Guard experienced the most growth in female Soldiers, increasing by 5%, to account for 19% of the Army National Guard. The United States Army Reserve continues to be the most gender diverse Component, with 25% of the force being female—an increase of 2% since Fiscal Year 2010. Finally, 37% of Department of the Army Civilians are minorities and 38% are female, a decrease of 3% since Fiscal Year 2010—a trend to keep an eye on. While there are positive trends, I believe it is important that we continue these gains. In addition, we also need to ensure that the force is diverse not only across race, ethnicity and gender, but also across geography, experiences, and skills. Efforts to recruit and retain Soldiers with various backgrounds, experiences, and skills will ensure the diversity of our citizens strengthens the Army.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will ensure Army leaders understand the importance of guiding and mentoring to ensure diversity and inclusiveness within Army formations and organizations. I also believe that the Army must continue to work on attracting, and then retaining, talented Soldiers and civilians with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and skills. I also will seek to build trust with underrepresented communities by conducting outreach efforts with community leaders, as well as with affinity groups within the Army. In order to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility across the force, I believe it is important to gain an understanding of these issues from both outside the Army, as well as inside the Army. I would also work closely with the Army's Equity and Inclusion Agency, which maintains frequent touchpoints with groups representing underrepresented communities to build, maintain and regain trust, and assess additional pathways to acquire diverse talent within the Army's military and civilian ranks.

18. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to take action toward the goal of ensuring that the Army, at all levels, especially within the senior officer ranks, reflects the broad diversity of those eligible to serve?

Answer: I believe our Army is at its strongest when it reflects the diversity of our nation. If confirmed, I will commit to ensure that there are no obstacles preventing the best and brightest of our citizens from choosing to serve. From the work I have done at RAND, I understand that the Army's officer corps is the least demographically diverse within the rank structure—unfortunately, this is not new. To ensure diversity in the senior officer ranks, if confirmed, I would review the Army's current understanding of the causes for this trend and determine if additional research is required to identify specific obstacles (such as training and education gaps) that inhibit diversity within the officer ranks. To ensure the Army is at its best, Army leadership must understand the problems creating obstacles to diversity within the ranks and then focus necessary resources accordingly.

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

Answer: The Army's civilian workforce is critical to the Army, ensuring continuity of operations and organizations when military personnel either deploy or transition. The Department's civilian workforce, especially at the senior General Schedule and Senior Executive Service level, must also reflect the diversity of our nation. I understand that a component of the Army People Strategy is the Civilian Implementation Plan, which describes the Army Civilian Talent Management Vision, infrastructure, and concerted unity of effort needed to acquire, develop, employ, and retain a diverse pool of civilian talent in support of Army readiness. If confirmed, I will ensure the Army is implementing the Civilian Implementation Plan and that this Army is appropriately focusing its priorities, identifying senior training and development opportunities, and reaching out to stakeholders to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the Civilian workforce. I will ensure that the Army amends and adopts any policies at the strategic level in pursuit of that goal.

20. If confirmed, to what extent would you seek to increase geographical diversity in the Army—promoting the accession or enlistment of persons from areas of the country and local communities that are currently underrepresented in the military force?

Answer: I believe that geographic diversity is essential to fostering an Army that reflects the Nation and that the Army needs to increase its recruiting efforts outside of the traditional “southern smile” region where most accessions come from. I understand the Army is working to improve military accessions from underrepresented locations across the country. If confirmed, I will work with other Army leaders to better understand the currently unrepresented areas of the country, and identify policy and resourcing options that could help to improve the Army's appeal to potential recruits in these areas. I will work with the Army's accession-focused agencies to leverage their resources to ensure outreach to geographically diverse communities through an array of means, including the increased presence of Army representatives at public events, and

through engagement with civic, academic, and industrial leaders by Army leaders. The priority of effort within these areas is to “shape the market” for increased future recruitment success, while at the same time increase near-term recruitment success.

Extremism

21. What is your view of the prevalence and effect of extremism within the Army?

Answer: I believe the vast majority of Army personnel serve honorably, however, even in small numbers extremist activities are intolerable because they are corrosive and harmful to trust, morale, and unit cohesion, and represent a workplace safety issue that the Army must continue to fully address. I understand that currently within the Army, active participation in extremist behavior is not prevalent compared to other forms of criminal activity. I have been informed that in FY 2021, Army investigations of Soldiers involved in extremist activities represented only a fraction of one percent of all criminal investigations conducted. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Army continues to focus on eliminating extremist behavior in the Army’s ranks.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I would recommend that the Secretary of the Army fully implement the recommendations of the Department of Defense Countering Extremist Activity Working Group, released in December 2021. Implementation of those recommendations will further refine and enhance long-standing Army policy, systems, and processes to counter extremism within the ranks. These recommendations include further refinement of the Army’s extremism policy with respect to civilian and contractor employees, enhancing the Insider Threat Program’s effectiveness, updating Army efforts to prevent, assist, respond to, and counter violence in the workplace, and increasing counter-extremism training to raise awareness, which is a key factor in countering, and ultimately eliminating, extremism in the ranks. I would also recommend that the Army continue to focus on actions and behaviors, not ideology or politics.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

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

Answer: While I understand the Army continues to make strides in preventing and responding to sexual assault, sexual harassment and associated retaliation, there is no doubt that more work needs to be done to eliminate these harmful behaviors from the force. If confirmed, I will fully support the Army’s implementation of the recommendations from both the DoD Independent Review Commission and the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee. The recommendations from these two reviews focus on many aspects of the Army’s response to these negative behaviors, including recommendations for updating policies, programs, and training. As the Army leadership has made People its number one priority, it is essential to promote a culture of dignity and respect, where these incidents do not occur.

24. If confirmed, to what extent would you take actions to increase focus on the prevention of sexual assaults in the Army?

Answer: I understand the Army is continuing to place an increased emphasis on the prevention of sexual assault, sexual harassment, associated retaliation and other harmful behaviors. The Army is implementing the recommendations, including those focused on prevention, from the DoD Independent Review Commission and the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee. Army initiatives that stem from these recommendations include the development of a prevention strategy and the creation of new positions focused on prevention efforts. If confirmed, I will provide oversight of the execution of the initiatives within my purview and I will work with the Army Senior Leadership to ensure they are properly resourced and funded. Lastly, I will monitor the implementation of these initiatives, as well as review and assess data resulting from these initiatives to ensure they are having their intended effects and identify those areas where continued reforms are necessary to eliminate these negative behaviors from the force.

25. What is your assessment of the Army's implementation of protections against retaliation—most notably social ostracism and reputation damage—against soldiers who report sexual assault?

Answer: It is my understanding that reports of sexual harassment and sexual assault have increased for five consecutive years. Army surveys indicate the increase in reporting is directly tied to confidence in Soldiers' chain of command and the response system. The Army's efforts in this space have helped send a positive message to the force that these negative behaviors have no place in the Army. However, it is my belief that concerns regarding potential reprisal, social ostracism, and reputational damage are still barriers to reporting. If confirmed, I will ensure commanders and leaders have the resources and training needed to develop and sustain healthy command climates and facilitate unit cohesion, while also ensuring Soldiers are aware of the mechanisms they can utilize to report instances of sexual harassment and assault without fear of retaliation. Eliminating these behaviors must be done at the lowest level, but will only happen if it is clear Army senior leaders stand together against these divisive behaviors and appropriately resource efforts to eliminate them from the ranks.

25a. 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?

Answer: I understand that significant changes were made to the way certain offenses, including sexual assault, will be investigated and prosecuted, in particular the removal of commanders as the initial disposition authorities for those offenses. I know the Army is working on an implementation plan for the creation of The Office of The Special Trial Counsel, making the necessary revisions of policy and procedures that will be required over the next two years, and transforming Army Judge Advocate personnel resources. While the new office will report directly to the Secretary of the Army without intervening authority, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Secretary, the General Counsel, The Judge Advocate General, and the Director, Criminal Investigation Command to ensure that this critical effort meets the needs

of victims, addresses good order and discipline, and preserves due process. To the extent structural personnel reforms are necessary, I look forward to supporting those efforts as well.

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.

26. In your view, do military and civilian leaders within the Department of the Army 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?

Answer: My understanding is that the Army has dedicated substantial resources, training, and authorities to hold subordinate commanders and supervisors accountable for the prevention of and response to sexual assault and retaliation. DoD and the Military Services are working to implement the recommendations of the DoD Independent Review Commission and the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee, as well as the changes enacted in the FY22 National Defense Authorization Act (many of which are intended to bolster this effort). If confirmed, I will work closely with the Army Resiliency Directorate, the Office of the General Counsel, and the Office of The Judge Advocate General to ensure that our leaders have every tool necessary to address the scourge of sexual assault and can be held accountable for any failures to do so.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will work closely with the Army's legal and training communities to ensure that commanders are receiving the highest quality training on their legal responsibilities. I understand how critical this aspect of commander training will be, given the substantial changes in the FY22 NDAA, and I will assist Secretary Wormuth in providing any necessary resourcing or oversight required. By providing an impartial and outside review, GAO provided valuable recommendations to improve commander legal education. I understand that the Army is in the process of implementing the GAO's recommendations, which involved training record reconciliation and identifying additional opportunities for junior commanders to access legal training. If confirmed, I look forward to leading in the process of implementing these changes in order to provide our commanders the education and training they need to successfully accomplish the legal aspects of their duties.

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.

28. In your view, do Army 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 Army?

Answer: Based on my current understanding, the Army has several efforts designed to inform, educate, and prevent instances of harassment/discrimination. There are policies for tracking, resolution, trend analysis, and prevention measures for harassment, in addition to the Army program for processing equal employment opportunity complaints. While these policies and processes should provide an accurate picture of the prevalence of harassment and discrimination, if confirmed, I intend to conduct a more comprehensive assessment. Understanding the scope and prevalence of these harmful behaviors is essential to a strategy of prevention.

29. Do the Army'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?

Answer: I understand that the Army has policies and procedures to comply with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission instructions, and that assessment and reporting are an annual practice. As such, the Army appears to possess the tools to collect data and information, identify trends, and address those trends through plans of action. If confirmed, I will assess whether these tools enable the Army to effectively identify repeat perpetrators of harassment or discrimination.

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

Answer: I understand that the Army is currently creating a working group to develop a policy that covers training, data collection, addressing harassing behaviors in the workplace, and responses to allegations of harassment. If confirmed, I will work with the Army's leadership to ensure that this working group has the resources necessary to staff and execute this policy. I will also work with the Army's leadership to ensure this policy is effectively utilized to address harassing behaviors. The Army must work to eliminate these behaviors to maintain a safe work environment and maintain readiness.

31. 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 ASA(M&RA)?

Answer: Upon receiving, or learning of, a complaint of sexual harassment, discrimination, or other harassment from an employee, I would ensure all employees involved receive information regarding their rights, due process and avenues of redress; put them into contact with appropriate officials for intake and processing (in accordance with Federal law, as well as EEOC, DoD, and Army policy); support any inquiry or response necessary to address the matters at issue; and take appropriate corrective or disciplinary action as warranted. Further, I will ensure all necessary and appropriate policies and resources for prevention, reporting, and response are in place. Finally, I will ensure that all training and education requirements and standards are met.

United States Military Academy

32. What is your assessment of the diversity of cadets at the United States Military Academy (USMA)?

Answer: Diversity across race, ethnicity, gender, and geography in the Corps of Cadets at the United States Military Academy (USMA) ensures that graduating cadets reflect the Army they will lead. I understand that West Point has a rigorous application and nomination process that allows the Army to attract cadets that are representative of the Nation. I understand that West Point's diversity is on a promising trend, with recent graduating classes that better reflect the diversity of the Nation and the Army. As West Point is an important avenue for diversity within the Army's officer corps, if confirmed, I look forward to working with leadership at West Point to continue to acquire the high-quality talent from underrepresented populations that is so crucial to the Army's success.

33. In your view, are additional measures warranted to increase diversity at USMA? If so, please explain.

Answer: I understand that USMA is successfully taking steps to increase diversity. Its leaders are dedicated to developing and maintaining a diverse and inclusive team, striving for a diverse and inclusive Corps of Cadets, staff, faculty, and coaches that reflect the Nation and the Army. I also understand that recent recruiting efforts have been successful in increasing diversity. If confirmed, I would look forward to assessing USMA's efforts dedicated to acquiring and maintaining the diversity of talent necessary to best educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets; and I would continue to look for additional measures to increase diversity.

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

Answer: I am aware that USMA has devoted significant resources to developing and implementing a comprehensive prevention and assessment plan that addresses risk and protective factors for a spectrum of harmful behaviors, including, but not limited to, sexual harassment and assault. I also understand that USMA has a dedicated prevention workforce that has implemented essential prevention components, including mechanisms to stop instances of retaliation, ostracism, and reputation-damaging rumors. These prevention professionals have implemented numerous policies directly supporting the Academy's prevention efforts. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Army and USMA continue to maintain a culture of prevention and an environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

35. What is your assessment of the efficacy of suicide prevention programs at USMA?

Answer: I understand that USMA provides a vast system of behavioral health support and suicide prevention training for its community. USMA's efforts include campus-wide suicide

prevention discussions, as well as monthly and quarterly health and wellness councils. I also understand that USMA’s psychologists offer clinical counseling and behavioral health treatment, and that performance psychologists provide education, support, and coping techniques to manage stress. Furthermore, I understand that there are counselors embedded within the Corps of Cadets who provide non-medical counseling services. In addition, I am aware that USMA has trained “peer support Cadets” within each company who can provide support to their fellow cadets and, if needed, communicate directly with a clinical psychologist when assistance or treatment is needed. While I have not had the opportunity to assess the efficacy of these and other suicide prevention programs, if confirmed, I would do so and I would ensure that leadership within the Army continues to provide USMA with the necessary resources to further support comprehensive efforts to prevent suicide.

36. 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?

Answer: I am aware that recent data show that approximately 70% of USMA graduates serve longer than the 5-year minimum. I am also aware that a recent pilot study showed that by increasing the active duty service commitment by one year, USMA and the Army would lose talent—especially from women and underrepresented minority groups, with a more than 10% reduction in appointment acceptance. As such, in my current view, the five-year minimum active duty service commitment for USMA graduates is a good return on investment for both the Military and the American taxpayer.

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

Answer: I understand that USMA provides approximately 22% of all active duty Army officer accessions, but also provides nearly 40% of the officers with undergraduate STEM degrees into the force. Additionally, I am aware that USMA graduates also account for 35% of the Army General Officer Corps. Additionally, it is my understanding that the marginal cost of accepting and graduating an additional cadet at USMA is similar to the additional cost of a four-year ROTC scholarship cadet. Given this information, my current view is that USMA’s value to officer accessions is commensurate with its costs.

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

Answer: I understand that the existing DoD professional sports program allows certain Military Service Academy cadets and midshipmen the opportunity to graduate, defer their commission, and then enlist in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) so they can participate in professional sports. I also understand that in order to qualify for the program, each athlete must graduate, be able to sign a professional contract, enhance recruiting and marketing efforts of the Army at the national level, and be willing to serve as a commissioned officer (or pay recoupment of educational benefits) after completion of their professional sports endeavors. If confirmed, I intend to assess this policy and advise the Secretary of the Army accordingly.

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

39. If confirmed, what criteria will you use to determine whether a cadet who violates the honor code deserves to be expelled from USMA?

Answer: While I am not an expert on the United States Military Academy's Cadet Honor Code and the process USMA currently follows to determine whether a violation warrants expulsion, I do believe commissioned officers must have integrity and demonstrate exemplary conduct. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the USMA Superintendent in order to understand USMA's current procedures for addressing Cadet Honor Code violations, and the process for determining whether violations warrant expulsion or some other form of action.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will apply the framework required by law, policy, and regulation, and consider each instance on a case-by-case basis. I understand that there is a well-established process for determining whether a disenrolled cadet should be enlisted or required to reimburse the government for the cost of their education. If confirmed, I will continue to work with USMA to ensure that we continue to retain those best qualified for service in the Army, while remaining proper stewards of the Army's limited resources.

41. Do you believe that the current honor program at USMA successfully trains, and when necessary, rehabilitates and improves the integrity and ethical behavior of cadets? Why or why not?

Answer: At this time, I have not conducted an assessment of USMA's honor program, but I understand the central role of the Cadet Honor Code in the process for developing leaders of character. I understand that integrity and ethical behavior are developed through cultural influence, teaching, and the motivation of each cadet. If confirmed, I look forward to understanding USMA's honor program more fully, and how it trains and enhances integrity and ethical behavior in cadets.

Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC)

42. In your view, to what extent is the Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC) program a viable source of officer accessions for the Army?

Answer: It is my understanding that SROTC is the single largest source of commissioned officers in the Army each year, with 274 host programs and more than 600 extension units and affiliates. In my view, SROTC allows the Army to recruit future officers from diverse backgrounds across the country and ensures that the Army continues to be representative of the Nation it serves.

43. What is your assessment of the diversity of officers provided by the Army ROTC program? Are additional measures necessary to increase diversity in Army SROTC?

Answer: In my view, the SROTC program is vital to ensuring a diverse Army. The Army must continuously aim to recruit and commission the most promising of America's youth and given a footprint that covers the entire United States, the SROTC program provides the Army with the ability to draw recruits from all parts of the country. A diverse force begins at accessions, and the Army's reach through SROTC gives the Army the broadest ability to tap into diverse talent across the country.

44. In your view, should the Army 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.

Answer: I believe any decision to terminate a program should be made carefully, with full consideration of the investment the Army has made into the program and the potential loss of talent that a specific program provides. It is my understanding that Army SROTC is offered at approximately 900 colleges and universities across the country. In my view, each program contributes to the Army's unique and diverse officer corps based on its geographic location, university characteristics, and student population. For those programs that struggle to meet their minimum annual commissioning requirements, I think the Army should work with those host programs to ensure that the limited resources dedicated to the SROTC programs are applied effectively, and that the future officers these programs train and commission are ready to lead Soldiers.

45. 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?

Answer: As I currently understand, the Army's National SROTC Scholarship program is one of the most competitive scholarships in the country and continues to attract top high school talent with the potential and desire to serve in the Army. Additionally, I understand that the Army uses "on-campus" scholarships to attract talent currently on a school's campus. If confirmed, I look forward to assessing the program to see what additional authorities or modifications may be necessary to improve its effectiveness. I also look forward to advising the Secretary on ways to ensure the SROTC scholarship program continues to commission top talent into the Army.

46. To what extent would you seek to modify the SROTC program to enhance geographic diversity in Army officer accessions?

Answer: The Army must continuously evaluate new ways to improve geographic diversity in Army Officer accessions. I see underrepresented locations across the country as markets that SROTC programs must tap into. Additionally, the Army must continuously look at ways to shift its resources to follow the geographic shifts of the U.S. population. I am aware that the Army is

piloting SROTC diversity recruiting initiatives in an attempt to leverage the population growth in locations such as Texas, California, and Florida. If confirmed, I intend to assess other options for how the SROTC program can enhance the Army's geographic diversity.

Military Compensation

47. 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?

Answer: Yes, I do. Both pay and benefits are important components to attracting talented recruits and retaining skilled personnel. It is imperative that pay, allowances, and non-monetary benefits are sufficient for Soldiers and their families to maintain a high standard of living.

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

Answer: It is my understanding that every four years the Secretary of Defense is required to conduct a review of military compensation through an independent commission to evaluate whether the Department of Defense's military pay package is adequate. If confirmed, I will review the results of the latest Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation and make any necessary recommendations.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will examine whether changes to the current military pay and benefits package are necessary for the Army to meet its mission. In addition, the Army must work diligently to improve Soldiers' understanding of their pay and benefits.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense Comptroller and the Military Departments to eliminate inefficiencies. Although most of the military personnel costs are set by statute or Department of Defense policy, the Army should continue to look for non-monetary ways to motivate Soldiers to serve and continue serving.

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.

51. If confirmed, to what extent would you take actions to improve the quality of the Army's professional education programs?

Answer: I believe strongly in professional education and lifelong learning and, if confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for the Army's Professional Military Education (PME) program. I understand there have been significant changes to PME since the publication of the 2018 National Defense Strategy, with the most significant change being the adoption of Outcomes Based Military Education (OBME). OBME has shifted the focus from inputs and classroom-learning activities to outcomes of knowledge, skills and behaviors on wartimes duties, confirmed with authentic assessments that replicate the duties. If confirmed, I will ensure that this focus—especially the emphasis on case studies, authentic assessments, and great power competition—is sustained. I will also ensure that the Army's PME program keeps pace with the next National Defense Strategy.

End Strength

52. Is the Army's current end strength sufficient to meet current national security objectives and execute the associated operational plans? If not, what end strength do you believe is necessary? Please explain your answer.

Answer: It is my understanding that the Army's end strength is sufficient to meet current national security objectives and execute the associated operational plans. If confirmed, I will work with Army leaders and staff to assess Army end strength requirements to meet the needs of the National Defense Strategy and operational plans. This will allow me to provide a more informed and detailed assessment of the Army's required end strength.

Recruiting and Retention

53. 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?

Answer: My understanding is the primary reasons that disqualify American youth from military service are: being overweight, medical/physical concerns, and mental health concerns. I believe the Army is conducting several pilot programs that examine ways to expand upon the eligibility pool of applicants, providing more individuals with an opportunity to serve. I am fully supportive of these types of initiatives and, if confirmed, I will investigate other innovative means to increase the pool of applicants. Recruiting to meet end strength has been, and always will be, a primary national security imperative.

54. 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?

Answer: My understanding is that some of the reasons for decreasing propensity include: perceived misalignments between the military and young people's job aspirations (e.g., stability, safety and security); misperceptions about military pay and benefits, and job stability; and distrust of the military. All of these reasons deeply concern me and if confirmed, addressing these misperceptions will be one of my primary efforts. I will commit to identifying and using all available tools to tell the Army story in a manner that today's youth can relate to and build trust

in the Army with not only the 17 to 24 year-old population, but with their parents and those who influence their job choices.

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

Answer: I have not assessed whether current testing policies disadvantage non-native English speakers from qualifying for military service. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense on their continued efforts to modernize the Department's assessment processes and ensure that those processes do not discriminate against those who wish to serve in the military.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I will review this important issue and support initiatives within the Office of the Secretary of Defense that will increase the opportunities for non-native English speakers to serve, fully recognizing the importance that all who serve be able to speak, read, and write in English.

57. 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 the cyber workforce?

Answer: Army medical experts have informed me that DoD medical and other qualification standards do not adversely impact the quality of the force or the ability to recruit and sustain the Army. I am committed to ensuring the Army maximizes its ability to recruit and retain the talent it requires and, if confirmed, I will work with DoD and Congress to look more closely at the medical and qualification standards required for certain high demand specialties.

Suicide Prevention

58. If confirmed, what actions would you take to prevent suicides in the Active Army, the Army Reserve, and the Army National Guard, and in the families of soldiers across all Components?

Answer: The loss of a Soldier, teammate, spouse or child to suicide is not only devastating to families and units, it has far-reaching impacts throughout a community. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to ensure the Army's Suicide Prevention Program is adequately resourced and leaders are equipped with the training and tools necessary to effectively implement the Army's program, foster unit cohesion, promote connectedness, and encourage help-seeking behaviors.

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

Answer: It is my understanding the Army has effective procedures in place for tracking and reporting family member deaths by suicide. This process includes collaboration with the

Department of Defense and other agencies. If confirmed, I will assess the effectiveness of these procedures and recommend improvements, if needed, to ensure leaders are equipped with the necessary resources, training, and tools to support those affected by suicide.

U.S. Army Alaska has experienced 47 suicides from 2016 through 2022. Of these, 26 soldiers assigned to Fort Wainwright committed suicide. Of the total number of these soldier suicides in Alaska, 68 percent occurred off-post, 81 percent died by gunshot wound, and 34 percent were infantry soldiers. Army leadership has taken steps to improve the quality of life for soldiers in Alaska, particularly at Fort Wainwright, and to provide more mental health resources for soldiers, but suicides continue.

60. If confirmed, what additional steps would you take to improve the Army's suicide prevention efforts in Alaska?

Answer: I am extremely concerned about the suicides among Soldiers in Alaska. It is my understanding that the Army is working with U.S. Army Alaska to provide additional behavioral health resources to Soldiers and family members. These resources include the addition of Military and Family Life Consultants (MFLCs) and military, civilian, or contracted behavioral health providers. In addition, I am aware that the Army is continuing to implement Quality of Life initiatives for Alaska that were identified after the 2019 Epidemiological Consultation. If confirmed, I will ensure commanders and leaders have the policies, resources, and training to develop effective prevention strategies, and improve services and quality of life issues in Alaska and at other Army installations.

Department of the Army Reserve Components

61. 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?

Answer: I have spent much of my career at RAND examining issues related to reserve component issues. In my view, the reserve components currently serve as both an operational reserve and a strategic reserve, depending on the mission. As such, the reserve components should be supported by increased training, improved equipment, and high levels of resourcing for readiness. Given that the reserve components have become a critical element of the Army's ability to meet its current and future missions, they should be manned, trained, equipped and resourced appropriately.

62. In your view, to what extent should actions be taken to improve permeability between the active and reserve components in the Army?

Answer: Improving permeability between the active and reserve components has been a topic of focus during my career at RAND. I think that this topic is of even more importance currently as more of the American public is looking for flexible career paths. Our work at RAND has found that barriers to AC-RC permeability include: cultural differences across the components;

statutory and funding constraints; lack of recognition or reward for serving in cross-component assignments; and prescriptive and rigid career development paths that inhibit cross-component talent management strategies. Over the last several years, I have also been deeply involved in providing analysis to the Department's ongoing effort to reform the reserve component duty status system, which if enacted, would significantly increase permeability. If confirmed, I would address barriers to permeability and seek to continue to make progress on structural changes such as addressing legal and regulatory barriers to integration and implementing system changes that could facilitate permeability and cross-component integration. Such actions would set the foundation for any further efforts to increase permeability between the active and reserve components and to achieve the development of a stronger Total Force culture.

63. 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?

Answer: I am aware that over the last few years, concerns have been raised by the Reserve Policy Forces Board and others regarding the requirements for Reserve Component officers becoming a Joint Qualified Officer, and that the requirements for Reserve Component officers continue to evolve. I have not examined the current state of this issue in-depth, therefore I am hesitant to comment on whether current requirements should be revised to better meet the needs of reserve component officers. However, if confirmed, I will look into this issue more deeply, and I will work with the Congress, Joint Staff, the United States Army Reserve, and Army National Guard to ensure that the requirements are appropriate for reserve component officers and that those requirements meet the intent of joint qualification.

64. In your view, is the current Army PME system appropriate for Army reserve components? If not, what changes would you recommend, if confirmed?

Answer: I do not have enough information at this time to determine if the Army's current PME system is appropriate for the Reserve Components, but I have been advised that the leadership of the Army National Guard and Army Reserves currently believe that it is. Education is critical in every professional organization. If confirmed, I will review the Army's PME program holistically, including how the Army provides this important component of education to the Reserve Components.

Mandatory Vaccination for COVID-19

65. 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?

Answer: I support the Secretary of Defense's directive that all service members are vaccinated against COVID-19 unless they meet established exemption criteria. The Army has issued initial guidance that will ensure compliance with the Secretary's directive. If confirmed, I will continue to review Army processes and procedures to ensure continued adherence to the Secretary of Defense's directive. Vaccination is a readiness, health, and welfare priority for the Total Army.

66. In your view, should soldiers who decline to be vaccinated be separated, even if they have skills and experience that the Army needs?

Answer: My understanding is that according to the Secretary of Defense's directive, all Soldiers, regardless of skill and experience, are required to be fully vaccinated with a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine unless they have a pending or approved medical or administrative exemption. Vaccination is critical to ensuring operational readiness and protecting the entire force against COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined that vaccination is the best way to minimize the public health effects of the virus, which enables the Army to protect the health of the force. The Secretary of Defense's order that all Soldiers be vaccinated for COVID-19 unless they meet exemption criteria is a lawful order. If I am confirmed, I will continue to review processes and procedures to ensure continued adherence to the Secretary of Defense's directive, as well as Army Directive 2022-02, released on January 31, 2022.

67. In your view, is the Army policy that doesn't require vaccination of Army Reserve and Army National Guard soldiers until June 2022 appropriate? Why or why not?

Answer: Based on what I currently understand, the Army's policy establishing the timeline for vaccination of Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers is appropriate, though I believe all units should strive to complete vaccination programs in shorter timeframes where possible. The Army National Guard and the Army Reserve are part-time forces that are geographically dispersed and often meet just one weekend each month. Allowing a June 30, 2022 deadline gives Reserve Component commanders the maximum time necessary to counsel Soldiers on the vaccination process and to provide guidance. It also allows Reserve Component Soldiers more time to request a medical or administrative exemption (including a religious accommodation), as needed. The time also accounts for updates to national and DoD guidance related to COVID-19. Despite the June 2022 deadline, I understand that over 81% of the Army Reserve is fully vaccinated, which aligns with the national vaccination rates.

Thousands of soldiers have requested a religious exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine requirement. The Army has not approved any such requests to date.

68. If the Army continues to deny requests for religious exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccine mandate and separate soldiers who refuse the vaccine, at what point would you become concerned about the Army's ability to achieve required end strength?

Answer: I understand that the Army has not separated any Soldiers yet for refusing the COVID-19 vaccination. While the Army has recently directed commanders to initiate separation proceedings, affected Soldiers have every opportunity to receive the vaccination. For the Soldiers that are separated only for refusing the COVID-19 vaccination, I understand they will have the opportunity to rejoin the Army if they receive the vaccine after separation. As the Army reaches higher rates of vaccination through counseling and education the number of Soldier separations may decrease. However, if confirmed, I would carefully monitor trends in the number of

vaccinated and unvaccinated Soldiers, the number of requested and approved exemptions, as well as the number of separations and I would advise the Secretary of the Army on any potential impacts on end strength.

69. As the Army 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?

Answer: I believe it is necessary to review each request for an exemption on an individual basis. My understanding is that commander recommendations regarding religious exemptions consider military necessity, which include case-specific facts such as duty position, job requirements, and unit mission. I am aware that other factors in determining whether to grant a religious exemption include the sincerity of a Soldier's religious beliefs regarding the vaccine and the impact on public health/readiness of the force.

70. What impact will the discharge of several thousand soldiers who refuse the vaccine have on Army readiness?

Answer: Given that the Army has not discharged any Soldiers for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine and it is unclear how many Soldiers will choose to be discharged rather than receive the vaccine, at this time, it is difficult to discern what impact, if any, vaccine refusal will have on Army readiness. However, if confirmed, I would carefully monitor trends in the number of vaccinated and unvaccinated Soldiers, the number of requested and approved exemptions, as well as the number of separations and I would advise the Secretary of the Army on any potential impacts on readiness.

Military Quality of Life

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

Answer: If confirmed, I would prioritize those MWR programs that are most important to service members and their families, and those that are most utilized. In order to identify which MWR programs are most important and most utilized, I would ensure that perspectives from service members and their families are collected, as is data on utilization of MWR programs. Some of these programs are incredibly important to service members and their families, therefore, I would utilize a deliberate, data driven approach to identifying which programs should be prioritized.

72. 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?

Answer: As indicated in my answer above, I would utilize a deliberate data driven approach to identify which MWR programs should be prioritized, sustained or enriched, and which should be eliminated or reduced in scope. This approach would involve both collecting feedback from service members and their families on these programs, as well as collecting data on the utilization of MWR programs.

Military Family Readiness and Support

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

Answer: In my view, the most important family readiness issues are child care, spouse employment, and safe housing. Like all families, military families are struggling with finding available and affordable child care options—especially during the COVID pandemic. If confirmed, I would examine ways to increase access to affordable child care options for military families. Spouse employment is also a critical issue that can erode family readiness and retention—especially with frequent and sometimes unpredictable moves. If confirmed, I would continue to expand on existing ways to support military spouses and help them maintain continuity in their careers, even with frequent moves. This includes building on recent efforts to enable more flexible credentialing across state lines for military spouses, and making moves more predictable for military families. Safe housing is also a critical enabler of family readiness. The nation owes it to our service members and their families to have high quality, safe housing. If confirmed, I will work with other Army Senior Leaders to ensure that the issue of unsafe housing is fixed and that we regain the trust of our soldiers and their families on this issue.

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

Answer: Access to quality childcare is a key enabler to Army readiness. If confirmed, I will review the Army's plan to sustain and improve military family access to affordable, high quality childcare. This includes seeking ways and means to address childcare capacity, such as additional infrastructure, improved compensation and incentives for staff, further investment in the Family Child Care (FCC) program, and fee assistance to buy down the cost of off-post care. I will also work with OSD and the other Services to increase availability of accredited community childcare providers and monitor the pilot program to provide childcare services in a child's home.

75. If confirmed, how would you ensure that soldiers with family members with special needs are assigned to duty stations where services are available to address those needs?

Answer: It is my understanding that all Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves for Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) enrolled Families are coordinated in advance with the Army's Medical Command (MEDCOM). This ensures that required medical care is available at the location where the family is move to. Based on my current understanding, the Army should not direct a Soldier to a location if MEDCOM does not recommend travel. I understand

that compassionate actions are also available to Soldiers who believe they are not receiving adequate care at their current location. If confirmed, I will help ensure that Career Managers strictly follow these policies and provide service members with EFMP family members with a full range of acceptable PCS options.

76. 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?

Answer: It is imperative that families with special needs dependents receive the coordinated care and support they need to retain them in the Army. I am committed to a comprehensive and all-inclusive approach that leverages community support, medical, educational, housing, and personnel services. I am equally committed to robust outreach to ensure that these families are aware of the various services available to them. I am aware the Army is developing an Enterprise Exceptional Family Member Program system that integrates key components and support services for families with special needs. If confirmed, I will support this important initiative and work to reduce the burden on these families.

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.

77. 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?

Answer: I believe it is extremely important that Soldiers of all ranks take leave for their overall mental and physical wellbeing.

78. 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?

Answer: Yes, I do. I understand that the Army encourages all Soldiers to use 30 days of leave each year because time off contributes to mental and physical wellbeing, improved performance and increased motivation. Soldiers should utilize their earned leave to the maximum extent possible.

79. If confirmed, what actions would you take to encourage soldiers to use, rather than accumulate, their military leave?

Answer: If confirmed, I will reinforce the Army's current policy with commanders and senior leaders. The current policy is to ensure maximum use of earned leave by providing Soldiers with opportunities to take frequent periods of leave, with at least one extended leave period annually.

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

Answer: I do not believe so, based on my current understanding. Soldiers make decisions about when and how to use their leave throughout their career. Selling back leave upon discharge from the military (or taking transition leave) may provide them with what they need to get settled into the civilian world. Given the statutory restrictions on the amount of carryover leave available, this provides them the means to delay a benefit until a later time when they believe they need it more. I believe the flexibility in the law is appropriate to ensure Soldiers use their leave, or sell it back, while equally ensuring they will not be disadvantaged by mission requirements when they cannot take leave.

Department of the Army Civilian Workforce Matters

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

Answer: I believe the Army is successful at recruiting and retaining top talent in a number of diverse and high demand professions. It is my understanding that the Army civilian workforce is comprised of Army professionals who provide technical expertise, leadership, and stability to the Army mission. I understand that positive levels of employee engagement continue to increase as reflected in the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. If confirmed, I will explore ways to increase levels of employee engagement and further assess the state of the civilian workforce's morale. If confirmed, I will also maximize all available authorities, tools, and programs, and pursue new efforts to recruit and retain top talent.

82. In your judgment, what are the biggest challenges facing the Army in effectively and efficiently managing its civilian workforce?

Answer: In my view, one of the biggest challenges is the need to modernize the way in which the Army recruits, develops, and retains its civilian workforce. The civilian workforce is a critical part of the Army's Total Force, and if confirmed, I would find ways to modernize talent management in the civilian workforce in the same way that the Army has done in its military workforce. In order to meet the national security challenges of the future, the Army must ensure that its civilian workforce has the right skill sets and capabilities to enable the Army to fulfill its current and future missions. If confirmed, I would ensure that the Army remains competitive with the private sector so that it can recruit the best talent. I would also expand recruiting strategies for the civilian workforce so that the Army can reach and acquire the best talent. And I would identify and address concerns within the civilian workforce to ensure that the Army can retain the best talent.

83. 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?

Answer: It is my understanding that an A-76 moratorium repeal would give the Army more flexibility to choose between different sources of labor to potentially achieve significant cost savings. However, there is a lack of in-house (or private sector) expertise in running competitions which the Army would need to develop in order to properly reap the benefits of A-76 competition. Otherwise, the public-private competition process can be disruptive and may not yield savings in the long term. Consequently, there may initially be substantial personnel costs after the moratorium is lifted.

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

Answer: There is no “one-size fits all” solution for an organization as large and varied as the Army. It is important that Army leaders understand the shifting paradigm in the digital workforce and that the Army remains competitive in acquiring the brightest talent in society. If confirmed, I would first ensure that Army leaders are equipped with maximum flexibility to use telework and remote work to attract and retain the best talent. To help maintain supervisor and employee accountability, I would ensure supervisors are trained and equipped to better manage employees in a virtual and hybrid environment. This could include adapting supervisor communication methods to better work with virtual employees, developing a better understanding of how to measure and account for virtual performance, and providing more clarity about how to carry out fair and equitable performance management for hybrid teams. I believe effective communication between supervisors and employees, as well as improved supervisor training, are keys to establishing an environment of trust and accountability in a hybrid work environment.

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

Answer: I understand that the Army leverages the use of many tools to recruit and retain high-quality civilian employees, including direct hire authorities and special compensation authorities. I believe the Army should continue to maximize use of these tools to recruit and retain a highly-skilled civilian workforce. While the Army’s special compensation authorities are very useful, I understand that in some cases they may be too limited for certain career fields and geographic locations. The STEM, cyber, irregular warfare and intelligence occupations are key areas of the workforce where I understand that additional authorities and flexibilities may be necessary to maintain the Army’s ability to hire top talent in a competitive hiring market for these specialized skill sets.

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

Answer: If confirmed, I would support extending and renewing use of the Department’s direct hire authorities and special compensation authorities if I determine they are required to attract top-tier talent in key areas of expertise. However, it is my understanding that the two-year probationary period of the Department of Defense employees has been repealed in the FY22

NDAA. If confirmed, I intend to assess the authorities the Department currently has and identify what, if any additional authorities and flexibilities may be necessary to ensure the Army can recruit and retain high-quality talent.

Technical Workforce

87. 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 Army research, development, and acquisition enterprise?

Answer: To be successful, I think the Army must recruit and retain an active-duty and civilian workforce with the skill sets and experience to develop and field advanced technologies and capabilities. Active Duty personnel with operational experience and a technical background provide the Army with long-term benefits across key domains, nurturing essential competencies that the Army requires. The main challenge, in my view, is retaining Soldiers with highly specialized and marketable skills. Another challenge is balancing the operational and readiness requirements of Active Duty personnel with the separate training and educational requirements to maintain these highly specialized skills. If confirmed, I look forward to exploring ways for the Army to ensure it maintains key talent in the research, development, and acquisition enterprise.

Senior Executive Service

88. 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)?

Answer: In my view, the Army must ensure that its senior executives have a diverse portfolio of experiences and strong skills to lead and operate effectively. It must attract the best civilian senior executives to lead its workforce through the myriad challenges the Army faces. The Army must remain committed to recruiting individuals with a strong foundation in strategic leadership, business transformation and enterprise ethics, culture, and management. To this end, in my view, the Army must continue to focus resources on building a strong bench of future Army Executives from within its diverse ranks. If confirmed, I intend to ensure that the Army's talent management programs continue to select future civilian executives from a pool of strong, experienced candidates.

89. 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?

Answer: I understand the Army utilizes comprehensive performance plans to provide clear and achievable performance metrics supporting organizational goals, mission statements, and strategic plans. This process is designed to hold senior executives accountable for their work and their impact on organization performance. The degree to which senior executives are successful—in a true “pay for performance” environment—has a direct result in annual

compensation outcomes. I understand that all SES performance plans include a critical performance element of leading people. This performance element requires these senior executives to rigorously manage their employees. In my view, by successfully leading people, an executive can connect an organization both horizontally and vertically and foster high standards, as well as a sense of responsibility among their subordinate employees to meet the organization's vision, mission, and goals. The degree to which executives are successful reflects in their performance results and in successfully accomplishing the Army's mission. If confirmed, I will fully utilize these tools to ensure that those SES personnel under my authority are accountable for both the performance of the organization and the management of their employees. Additionally, I intend to deliberately address any subpar performance that may occur and ensure such outcomes are transparent to facilitate trust between Senior Executives and their subordinate employees.

Acquisition Workforce

90. In your view, in what ways could the Army better train military and civilian personnel to be acquisition professionals?

Answer: From what I understand, the Army is undergoing several efforts to better train its military and civilian personnel to be acquisition professionals. The Department is implementing the new "Back-to-Basics" certification framework for the acquisition workforce to foster a culture of lifelong learning oriented on rapid delivery of capability. Further, I understand the Army is leveraging career broadening assignments and training with industry opportunities to propagate best practices and better equip our acquisition professionals. If confirmed, I will work with the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology) (ASA(ALT)) to ensure the Army is maximizing every opportunity to improve acquisition workforce training.

91. 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?

Answer: In my view, acquisition professionals are stewards of taxpayer funds and must be held to a high standard of accountability for outcomes in the acquisition process. If confirmed, I would work closely with the ASA(ALT) to assess Army acquisition workforce policies, training, and management programs to determine if any modified or supplemental changes are needed outside the scope of the ASA(ALT)'s existing authorities to manage the acquisition workforce.

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

Answer: I think acquisition tasks require all three categories—military, civilian, and contractor—in its workforce. Each brings different training, skills, and experience that should be considered and leveraged when assigning work. Unless the task is inherently governmental in nature, which must be done by civilian or military personnel, the appropriate category of employee for a given task should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Laboratory, Science and Technology, and Test Range STEM Personnel

93. 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 Army's STEM workforce?

Answer: The Army must maintain a top-tier STEM workforce to facilitate its modernization efforts. I understand that there are specific authorities provided by Congress to provide Army research laboratories and engineering centers with the flexibility and tools necessary to compete with the private sector and attract, recruit, train and retain an elite STEM workforce. If confirmed, I will work to ensure full utilization of these authorities to improve the quality of the Army's STEM workforce, and if necessary, seek new authorities to further enable the Army to attract and retain the best and brightest personnel.

94. 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?

Answer: It is my understanding these authorities are already delegated to the directors of Army research laboratory and engineering centers, which provides them with the ability to remain competitive with the private sector in attracting and retaining the highest quality scientific and engineering personnel. If confirmed, I will work with the Army science and technology enterprise to ensure these authorities are delegated to the appropriate level and fully utilized.

STEM Educational Opportunities for Military Dependents

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

Answer: It is my understanding that the Army supports STEM educational opportunities for military children through the Army Educational Outreach Program (AEOP), which offers students and teachers a collaborative, cohesive portfolio of Army sponsored STEM educational programs to engage, inspire, and attract the next generation of STEM talent and expose them to DoD STEM careers. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Army sustains efforts like the AEOP that provide STEM education opportunities for military children.

96. 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?

Answer: If confirmed, I would work to increase STEM educational opportunities for military children, and I look forward to working with the Department of Defense research and development organizations on this effort.

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.

97. 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.

Answer: Yes

98. 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.

Answer: Yes

99. 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.

Answer: Yes

100. 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.

Answer: Yes

101. 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.

Answer: Yes

102. 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.

Answer: Yes

103. 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.

Answer: Yes