

## Opening Statement for Dr. Agnes Schaefer

Good morning, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished Committee Members. I am deeply honored to come before you today as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. I am grateful for your consideration of my nomination, and for your long-standing and bipartisan commitment to our national security. I would like to thank President Biden, Secretary Austin, and Secretary Wormuth for the confidence and trust they have placed in me through this nomination. I also want to thank my husband, who is here with me today, for his enduring love and support across the seasons of our amazing life together. Unfortunately, my mother and three siblings could not attend today, but they are watching from various places across the country, and they know how much I love them for their part in shaping who I am.

I sit before you today as an example of the realization of the American dream. In 1956, as a young couple, my parents fled to Austria from Hungary when the Soviet Union invaded their homeland and quashed the Hungarian revolution against communism. They were eventually granted asylum by the United States—something for which my parents, siblings, and I are forever grateful. This gratitude has deeply ingrained the importance of service in my family. My father, an oceanographer by training, dedicated his life's work to U.S. national security by using his expertise to better detect Soviet submarines so that we could eventually win the Cold War. One of my brothers and my nephew have served in the Air Force, and my sister has spent more than 30 years working in the defense industry.

I deeply honor the risks taken and sacrifices made by my brother, nephew, and other Service members, civilians, and contractors who bravely serve our nation. Watching my family, friends, and colleagues navigate the challenges and opportunities posed by a life of service, with a steadfast commitment to our shared mission, has inspired me to work to find solutions to those challenges, expand opportunities, and strengthen our national security.

That inspiration has guided me on my path as a national security researcher. I grew up in the Washington DC area and, upon finishing college in Miami, I completed my PhD at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and then a fellowship at Princeton University, before being hired by the RAND Corporation. Over the last 16 years as a researcher at RAND, my focus every day has been on improving our military's readiness to meet the objectives of our national security strategy, and to improve the lives of our active and reserve component members and their families. If confirmed, these will continue to be my priorities in service of our soldiers, civilians, contractors, and their families. I can think of no better way to continue working on these issues than by helping the Army succeed in the face of varied, complex challenges.

As our nation confronts myriad national security threats, we must maintain current and future readiness by putting people first. We must look for creative ways to ensure that our military and civilian workforce have the education, training, and skills necessary to meet both current and future threats. Additionally, we need to ensure that our military and civilian workforce have safe and healthy work environments free from harmful behaviors such as sexual assault and harassment, domestic abuse, and suicide. Finally, we owe it to our workforce and their families to help them enjoy the highest quality of life possible.

Members of the Committee, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you to address the needs of the Army's Total Force, including its active and reserve component military and civilian workforce, as well as their families to ensure the readiness of our Army to meet not only today's national security challenges, but tomorrow's as well.

I look forward to your questions and thank you again for opportunity to be with you today.