

Good morning Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of the Committee. I am deeply honored to come before you today as President Biden's nominee for Secretary of the Army. I am grateful for your consideration of my nomination. I am also grateful to the Committee for its long and bipartisan commitment to our national security. Your commitment to ensuring our armed forces have what they need to protect and defend our Nation is essential.

Thank you Secretary Hagel for being here in person today to introduce me so warmly to the Committee. It was a privilege to work with you when you were Secretary, and it is a particular honor to be introduced today by the first and only Secretary of Defense who also served our country during the Vietnam War as an Army sergeant. If confirmed I hope to follow your example of leadership that never lost sight of the brave military members and their families who serve our nation and are at the heart of everything we work for in the Army and the Defense Department.

To my husband Drew, a retired Navy officer, thank you for your love, optimism and support no matter what comes our way. My daughters Rachel and Madeleine are off in college now but they are my greatest joy and are always in my heart. I have been blessed with a strong and wonderful family who have taught me to strive, lifted me up, and modeled service to others. Thank you Mom for being here today and every day and thank you Jennifer for all that you do as a caring and capable surgeon.

My mother's father, Arthur Dean Wilkens, was a World War II Army veteran. My father-in-law, Bill Kuepper served in the Army during the Korean War. My sister serves today in the U.S. Army Reserves and my stepson-in-law serves in the National Guard. While I have not served in uniform, I chose to serve in a different way, as a career civil servant in the Department of Defense and later had the honor of serving as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. It has been the privilege of my career to work alongside and see first-hand the sacrifices soldiers and their families make, as well as everything they have achieved in answering the Nation's call, time and again. I could not be more humbled and proud to have the opportunity to serve as Secretary of the Army and ensure that we continue to provide the Army what it needs to succeed.

Title 10 gives the Secretary of the Army many responsibilities, but fundamentally the job of the Secretary is to lead the Army—to lead change in the Army—to be a strong advocate for the value of land power, both inside and outside the Department of Defense, and to build strong relationships with you, Congress, who ultimately provides the Army with the resources and authorities it needs to fulfill its mission. If confirmed, I will focus each and every day on these solemn responsibilities, working closely with the Chief of Staff of the Army and other Army leaders. I will strive to always provide candid and considered advice to Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks on matters affecting the Army.

More than at any previous point in my professional life, the United States appears to be at a strategic inflection point. We have a window to make needed changes to ensure that the Army continues to be the best fighting force in the world. but that window will not be open indefinitely. If confirmed, my goal will be to help the Army continue to transform to be able to compete, deter, and if necessary fight and win. Together with this Committee and others, we

need to carefully examine our operational concepts, align them to meet the challenges posed by the adversaries we face, use them to drive what new, advanced capabilities we acquire, and then organize, train and equip our soldiers to employ those capabilities successfully in competition and conflict, if necessary. The Army has embarked on its most ambitious modernization program in 40 years to enable it to stay ahead of the challenges posed by the realities of high-intensity, technologically advanced warfighting. Seeing these modernization programs through successfully, while also maintaining readiness to meet the demands of current operations will be a top priority for me, if confirmed.

Fundamental to the Army's readiness is its people – Army Soldiers, whether active, Guard or reserve, their families, Army civilians and our Army veterans. General McConville and former Secretary McCarthy placed the Army's people at the center of their efforts and, if confirmed, I intend to prioritize the full range of people issues. To ensure our Soldiers and civilians have the best quality of life possible, I will strive to continue improving our Army housing, healthcare, childcare, and spouse employment opportunities. I will focus on ensuring the Army can recruit, develop, and retain the diversity of talent the Army needs to remain the world's premiere land force. And I will do everything in my power to ensure we have a healthy command climate at every Army installation that fosters Army values ensures and the well-being of all our people. There is no place in our nation's Army for sexual harassment and assault, domestic violence, racism, and extremism. or other harmful behaviors that inhibit readiness.

Members of the Committee, if confirmed, I will seek to lead as a hands-on Secretary that works closely with the Army's uniform leadership at all levels, empowers our staffs, models ethical and transparent leadership, and who demonstrates care day in and day out for the entire Army team. I will be the strongest possible advocate for the Army inside the Pentagon and out. And finally, I would consult closely with this Committee, because without regular and constructive dialogue and partnership, we will not succeed in transforming the Army to meet future challenges.

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