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Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION TO OPEN ALL  
GROUND COMBAT UNITS TO WOMEN

Tuesday, February 2, 2016

Washington, D.C.

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HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION  
TO OPEN ALL GROUND COMBAT UNITS TO WOMEN

Tuesday, February 2, 2016

U.S. Senate  
Committee on Armed Services  
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators McCain [presiding], Sessions, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Lee, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, and Heinrich.

1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN McCAIN, U.S. SENATOR  
2 FROM ARIZONA

3           Chairman McCain: Good morning.

4           The Senate Armed Services Committee meets this morning  
5 to hear testimony about how the Army and Marine Corps are  
6 planning to implement the Secretary of Defense's decision to  
7 open all ground combat units to women.

8           We welcome our witnesses this morning: Secretary of  
9 the Navy Ray Mabus; Commandant of the Marine Corps General  
10 Robert Neller; Acting Secretary of the Army Patrick Murphy;  
11 and Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley. We thank you  
12 for being here this morning and for your many years of  
13 distinguished service.

14          This hearing is not about whether women can serve in  
15 combat. The fact is that women have served honorably in our  
16 military for years. They have filled critical roles in  
17 every branch of our military. Some have served as pilots  
18 like Congresswoman Martha McSally who flew combat missions  
19 in Afghanistan. Some have served as logisticians like Joni  
20 Ernst who ran convoys into Iraq. Others have served as  
21 medPics, intelligence officers, nuclear engineers, boot camp  
22 instructors, and more.

23          Many of these women have served in harm's way. Women  
24 like Army Specialist Monica Lin Brown who ran through  
25 insurgent gunfire and saved the lives of her wounded

1 comrades by using her body to shield them from incoming  
2 mortar fire. Women like Army Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester who  
3 led a counterattack that defeated an ambush by 50 insurgents  
4 and saved the lives of her fellow soldiers.

5 Many women have made the ultimate sacrifice in the  
6 service of our Nation, including 160 killed in the wars in  
7 Afghanistan and Iraq. We honor their service and sacrifice,  
8 and we honor them.

9 That is why when then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta  
10 lifted the ban on women serving in combat 3 years ago, I  
11 supported that decision. But as I said then, as this  
12 decision is implemented, "it is critical that we maintain  
13 the same high standards that have made the American military  
14 the most feared and admired fighting force in the world."  
15 We have a responsibility to do the right thing, but we also  
16 have an equal responsibility to do the right thing in the  
17 right way. That is what this hearing is about, ensuring  
18 that as women move into more positions across our military,  
19 the readiness, combat effectiveness, and the safety and  
20 wellbeing of all service members, both men and women, remain  
21 our paramount priority.

22 On December 3rd, 2015, Secretary Carter announced that  
23 the Department of Defense would lift the ban on women in  
24 ground combat units. In advance of this decision, both the  
25 Army and Marine Corps sought to assess the physical and

1 readiness impacts of integrating women into their ground  
2 elements, including through special field studies. The Army  
3 study simulated tasks to determine what the gender-neutral  
4 standards should be for each occupational specialty based on  
5 physical tasks. The Marine Corps simulated the combat  
6 environment with men and women marines living and working  
7 together under combat-like conditions.

8         These studies, while different in their approach, are  
9 complementary in their results. For the first time, they  
10 helped establish objective, scientifically based standards  
11 for the tasks required for ground combat. They found that  
12 certain women could meet these standards. But both studies  
13 also found that when performing brute physical tasks, on  
14 average these higher-performing women were generally  
15 comparable to lower-performing men and that in the process,  
16 women sustained higher rates of injury than men. Indeed,  
17 only two women marines were able to complete the combat  
18 activities simulated in the Marine Corps study due to  
19 extremely high rates of injury to lower extremities.

20         In short, the Army and Marine Corps studies  
21 demonstrated that biological differences between men and  
22 women can have implications when it comes to the sustained  
23 physical activities involved in combat.

24         Rather than honestly confront these realities, some  
25 have sought to minimize them. Indeed, we have even heard

1 attempts to disparage the women marines who participated in  
2 the study at Twentynine Palms as somehow less than our best.  
3 In fact, these women were top caliber marines, self-selected  
4 and chosen to participate based on their aptitude and  
5 physical strength. I hope that Secretary Mabus and others  
6 who have spoken ill of these women will repudiate these  
7 comments.

8 Put simply, I am concerned that the Department has gone  
9 about things backwards. This consequential decision was  
10 made and mandated before the military services could study  
11 its implications and before any implementation plans were  
12 devised to address the serious challenges raised in the  
13 studies. Indeed, our services now have the authority to  
14 begin contracting women for ground combat positions, but the  
15 Congress has yet to receive any implementation plans. Our  
16 witnesses are here today to address these concerns and the  
17 many questions that still remain.

18 For the members of this committee to perform our  
19 oversight responsibilities, we need to know what the gender-  
20 neutral military occupational specialty tests will look  
21 like, when they will be administered, how often they will be  
22 administered, and how they will interact with the current  
23 physical fitness standards which are currently gender-  
24 normed. We need to know how women service members will be  
25 set up for success to serve long and healthy military

1 careers while maintaining high standards. And while the  
2 services are committed to maintaining standards that are  
3 tied to specific military occupational specialties, we know  
4 that over time political pressure will come to bear to  
5 increase the number of women in combat arms specialties. We  
6 expect to hear the witnesses address these important  
7 concerns.

8 Most importantly, we need to hear from a professional  
9 military perspective how integrating women into scout  
10 sections, infantry squads, tank crews, artillery batteries,  
11 and combat engineers will improve the readiness and combat  
12 power of our ground units. After all, that is the  
13 overriding mission of our Nation's military.

14 Recent experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq serve as a  
15 stark reminder that close combat remains brutal and  
16 uncompromising. Warfare has changed over the years, but the  
17 duty of our fighting men and women, from the Second World  
18 War to Vietnam to today, remains the same, to close with and  
19 destroy the enemy. It is conducted in dangerous and austere  
20 environments. No other human activity is more  
21 psychologically straining, morally demanding, and more  
22 physically stressful. High physical standards alone do not  
23 assure success in ground combat. Ultimately these standards  
24 must be devised and implemented in a manner that ensures  
25 that we treat our soldiers and marines fairly, but that we

1 never offer the enemy a fair fight.

2 That is why we must be uncompromising in our insistence  
3 on training to high standards. That is why we must preserve  
4 the small unity cohesion and discipline that ensure small  
5 combat units can win and survive on the forward edge of the  
6 battlefield. Troops in close combat bear the heaviest  
7 burden across the entire Department of Defense. And going  
8 forward, it is the wellbeing of those service members,  
9 whether they be men or women, that must override every other  
10 concern.

11 Senator Reed?

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1           STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE  
2 ISLAND

3           Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.  
4 I would like to join you in thanking our witnesses for  
5 joining us today to provide testimony on how their  
6 respective services will successfully integrate women into  
7 combat occupations and the ground combat forces in  
8 particular.

9           I would like to thank each of you and the services you  
10 represent, as well as the Air Force, which is not  
11 represented here today, on the deliberative processes that  
12 you have taken in studying this issue over the past several  
13 years. Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey initiated this  
14 effort in 2013, and since then, each service has conducted  
15 research and studied performance to validate occupational  
16 standards for every military occupation. While today's  
17 hearing is focused on the difficult and challenging aspects  
18 of integration within the ground combat forces, it is  
19 important to remember that hundreds of thousands of  
20 positions have been opened to service by women over the past  
21 several years. Many of these positions were considered not  
22 too long ago as available for men only for many, many  
23 reasons. This assumption has been disproven by the  
24 performance of female personnel in those occupations already  
25 open to all genders.

1           Now that the decision to open all positions to women  
2 has been made, it is important that we turn our focus to the  
3 successful integration of females into these positions.  
4 Leadership is the key to ensuring both individual and  
5 collective success, as it was when other military  
6 occupations were opened to women. I have every confidence  
7 that each of you will implement this decision smartly and  
8 successfully.

9           Part of this process, as I mentioned, is the statutory  
10 requirement to establish gender-neutral physical, mental,  
11 and technical occupational standards which any service  
12 member, male or female, must meet as a condition to serve in  
13 any particular occupation, including the combat arms. This  
14 is critical. As many members have said over the past  
15 several years, it is important that our warfighting  
16 capability not be reduced. There is a tendency, however, to  
17 equate warfighting capability solely with physical  
18 capability. Fighting and winning wars, as I am sure our  
19 panelists know well, much more so than I, involves much more  
20 than that. I believe that the full and successful  
21 integration of women into the combat arms, for a variety of  
22 reasons, will strengthen and enhance our warfighting  
23 capabilities.

24           Integrating women into ground combat units also must be  
25 reflected in how and who we recruit and how we assess

1 capabilities at the recruit stage to maximize successful  
2 service and minimize attrition. Not all women will be able  
3 or even interested in serving in the combat arms. But I  
4 believe many, particularly those with the required physical  
5 ability and the necessary mental toughness for service in  
6 the combat arms, may now be drawn to the ever greater equal  
7 opportunities provided by military service. I look forward  
8 to hearing how the services plan to recruit and assign  
9 individuals for service in the combat arms, what plans you  
10 have for developing predictive tests at the recruit stage to  
11 assess the potential for success of a given recruit, and  
12 what challenges you face and foresee.

13 Finally, I believe it is important for the services,  
14 but particularly Army and the Marine Corps, to develop plans  
15 and strategies to mitigate the physical stress and toll that  
16 a career in the ground combat profession has on every  
17 soldier and marine, men as well as women. Part of  
18 successful implementation will be ensuring the ability to  
19 serve a full career regardless of gender.

20 I thank you for your time and your expertise and look  
21 forward to your testimony.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Chairman McCain: We would like to begin with you,  
24 Secretary Mabus.

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1           STATEMENT OF HON. RAYMOND E. MABUS, JR., SECRETARY OF  
2 THE NAVY

3           Mr. Mabus: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed,  
4 members of this committee, the issues before us today are of  
5 vital importance, as you have heard, to the future of the  
6 United States Marine Corps, the Department of the Navy, the  
7 Department of Defense, and our Nation as a whole.

8           The question at issue is very straightforward: how do  
9 we maintain and improve the combat effectiveness of our  
10 military as we execute the decision to open all previously  
11 closed positions to women.

12           Serving as Secretary of the Navy is the greatest honor  
13 of my life. Every single decision I make is in support of  
14 maximizing the combat effectiveness of the United States  
15 Marine Corps. For almost 7 years as Secretary, I have been  
16 talking to marines face to face about being marines, about  
17 making marines, and the marines warfighting ethos. I have  
18 seen them at Quantico, at Paris Island, at San Diego, and at  
19 nearly every stop that I have made in the almost 1.2 million  
20 miles I have traveled as Secretary, including every single  
21 forward operating base in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. I  
22 have spent time with marines where they are serving and have  
23 seen firsthand that this decision to open all previously  
24 closed positions to women is putting policy in line with  
25 what is already reality, acknowledging the critical role

1 women play and have been playing in mission success.

2         The Marine Corps is the most formidable expeditionary  
3 fighting force the world has ever known. That legacy is  
4 proven through the Corps' storied history, from the halls of  
5 Montezuma to the valleys of Afghanistan, and that reputation  
6 is unquestioned in America and around the globe. No better  
7 friend, no worse enemy. The strong traditions of the  
8 Marines help make that reputation and among those traditions  
9 is a commitment to evolve, to be flexible, in one of the  
10 common instructions given to young marines, improvise,  
11 adapt, overcome.

12         Throughout its history, the Corps has maintained its  
13 combat power and its lethality by adapting to changing  
14 conditions, evolving training and tactics to meet new  
15 challenges and new threats. Today's School of Infantry is  
16 not the same as it was just 25 years ago during Desert  
17 Storm, and the change is even more dramatic since Vietnam or  
18 World War II. In a world where the threats and the battle  
19 space are all increasingly complex, failing to reevaluate  
20 everything from personnel policies to weapons programs can  
21 be dangerous if not fatal. A response of "that is the way  
22 we have always done it" is not, cannot, and never has been  
23 an acceptable rationale.

24         In the Department of the Navy, we are continually  
25 evaluating the way we operate. After Secretary Panetta and

1 Chairman Dempsey set us in 2012 on the path toward opening  
2 all billets, including ground combat, to women by this year,  
3 the Navy and Marine Corps, along with our sister services,  
4 conducted extensive studies on this issue. These studies  
5 helped inform the Department's recommendation to Secretary  
6 of Defense Carter and his subsequent decision to open all  
7 previously closed positions in all services to women. But  
8 they were not the only source of information that was  
9 gathered in reaching that recommendation.

10         However, the Marine Corps study has drawn special  
11 attention, and at least some of what has made it into public  
12 discussion is less than accurate. Among the misperceptions  
13 is that the Marines relied on just one study. In fact,  
14 their conclusions were based, in part, on a number of  
15 studies and reports. I have spent a lot of time closely  
16 reviewing all of them, especially the Marines' own study.  
17 In addition, I have had numerous discussions with senior  
18 Marine leadership, with junior officers, with enlisted  
19 personnel.

20         First and very importantly, I absolutely commend the  
21 marines who volunteered for this experiment for their work  
22 in assisting the Corps with approaching this integration  
23 process. I also appreciate the thoughtfulness, the  
24 diligence, and the sincerity of Marine leadership. Their  
25 time and effort helped to develop these standards, reinforce

1 the importance of leadership, and set specific metrics for  
2 these demanding ground combat jobs.

3 The most surprising finding of the Marine Corps study  
4 was that standards for many Marine Corps military occupation  
5 specialties, MOS's, just did not exist. An incredibly  
6 important thing that came out of this study was the  
7 establishment of operationally relevant, occupation-  
8 specific, gender-neutral standards.

9 The Marines deconstructed every job in ground combat to  
10 specifically detail its requirements so that individual  
11 members could function better as a team. So what we have  
12 now are a set of standards based on the actual requirements  
13 and demands for every Marine MOS, and the Corps is more  
14 effective and more ready because of this work.

15 As I thoroughly examined the Marine Corps study, it was  
16 clear that the conclusions focused on the average  
17 performance of female marines rather than on individual  
18 abilities. Averages do not tell the abilities and  
19 performance of an individual marine. There were and are  
20 capable women who can meet the arduous standards the Marine  
21 Corps set for ground combat arms units. And we all know  
22 that marines have never been about average.

23 We also know, as Commandant Neller regularly and very  
24 correctly notes and as the chairman in his opening statement  
25 said, this is not about women in combat. Women have been

1 serving in combat and serving with distinction, and they  
2 have been recognized for it. 422 female marines have earned  
3 the Combat Action Ribbon for their service in Iraq and  
4 Afghanistan for the various roles they have played, to  
5 include the Lioness Program and Female Engagement Teams.

6 Female marines have enhanced combat effectiveness by  
7 running convoys and security patrols, flying close air  
8 support missions, and leading engineering platoons. They  
9 have performed exceptionally on the front lines in places  
10 like Fallujah, Ramadi, and Sangin.

11 Chairman McCain: Mr. Secretary, I would like you to  
12 try to truncate your remarks and summarize. We have other  
13 witnesses and questions by the committee.

14 Mr. Mabus: The Marine Corps leadership have developed  
15 thoughtful and deliberate plans to execute this transition  
16 effectively. The Corps has already notified the 231 women  
17 who have successfully completed ground combat arms MOS  
18 training at formal learning centers that they can switch to  
19 these previously closed jobs immediately if they chose to.

20 Part of this transition is the evaluation of the  
21 training and education that we provide at every level, from  
22 recruits and officer candidates to the highest levels of  
23 leadership, and the Secretary of Defense highlighted  
24 education and training as a focus area as we begin  
25 implementation of this policy.



1           A point of discussion has been that the Marines are the  
2 only service which separates men and women at boot camp. I  
3 directed the Marines to brief me on a plan to integrate  
4 basic training.

5           The Marines prepared a very thoughtful briefing and  
6 went ahead, which provided timely and informative  
7 considerations as the Department of Defense Implementation  
8 Group do their important work. With the benefit of their  
9 response, we can move forward in a measured and effective  
10 way using the lessons of fully integrated, gender-integrated  
11 OCS and the basic school, as well as lessons learned as  
12 Marines have opened up many MOS's in the past 3 years.

13           With validated, operationally relevant, job-specific  
14 standards, the only test that is important is whether a  
15 person can meet those standards. Now, I know that  
16 suggestions have been made that those standards might be  
17 lowered down the road to achieve some quota, some numerical  
18 goal. But that is unacceptable, unacceptable under the law,  
19 unacceptable to me, unacceptable to every other senior  
20 leader in the Pentagon because it would endanger not only  
21 the safety of marines but the safety of our Nation.

22           Lowering standards would also be unacceptable,  
23 absolutely unacceptable, to every marine, especially those  
24 women who choose to compete for those positions. One thing  
25 is inviolate: standards can never be lowered for any group

1 or any job. Standards will evolve as threats evolve, but  
2 they will evolve for everyone equally. But just as there is  
3 no good argument to lower standards, there is also no good  
4 argument to bar anyone who has met those standards from  
5 serving.

6 That is the American promise. It does not guarantee an  
7 outcome to anyone, but it does guarantee opportunity for  
8 everyone. For those who want to serve in these trying  
9 MOS's, these high standards will not make it easy, nor  
10 should they. But every person will have the opportunity.  
11 And for those who succeed, they will operate side by side  
12 with everyone else who has met the standard to be a marine.  
13 Those marines and this Nation will continue to uphold the  
14 motto that marines have fought and died under for almost 2  
15 and a half centuries: Semper Fidelis.

16 [The prepared statement of Mr. Mabus follows:]

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1 Chairman McCain: Secretary Murphy?  
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1           STATEMENT OF HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY, UNDER SECRETARY  
2 OF THE ARMY

3           Mr. Murphy: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed --

4           Chairman McCain: Your complete statements will be made  
5 part of the record. Please go ahead.

6           Mr. Murphy: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the  
7 opportunity to appear before you today.

8           The Army remains in full support of Secretary Carter's  
9 directive to open every job to every soldier regardless of  
10 gender. Following 3 years of study, then-Secretary John  
11 McHugh recommended that no exceptions be made in the  
12 implementation, and I concur with his recommendation today.

13           This is the right decision for our Army. Our Army  
14 represents America and embodies the best of our values. The  
15 personal courage and selfless service made by women in our  
16 Army is no different than that exhibited by our men. We owe  
17 them the respect and honor to offer them the opportunity to  
18 succeed anywhere in our Army based upon only the merits of  
19 their performance.

20           Practically this is the right decision for our Army as  
21 well. As our Army gets smaller, our success increasingly  
22 depends upon our ability to maximize the contributions of  
23 every volunteer that fills our ranks. A soldier's ability  
24 to meet established standards that contribute to our success  
25 will remain our overriding factor moving forward.

1           Recognizing these imperatives, the Army began  
2 integration efforts several years ago to take full advantage  
3 of America's diverse and deep talent. Practical knowledge  
4 gained from these efforts complemented by several years of  
5 extensive research, collaboration, and practical evaluation  
6 have led us to three primary conclusions.

7           First, that women are capable of performing every job  
8 in the Army. This is not to say that every woman can do  
9 every job, just like every man cannot do every job. But no  
10 job in our Army has standards that cannot be met by women.  
11 Therefore, every soldier will have the opportunity, should  
12 they choose to do so, to compete against established  
13 standards for every position, to include the infantry,  
14 armor, and special forces.

15           Next, we will maintain high individual standards of  
16 performance and professional conduct. These standards will  
17 continue to be based upon the requirements of the position  
18 and nothing else. We will continue to enforce them fairly  
19 and objectively across the force. Our guiding principle for  
20 these standards is and will remain exclusively their  
21 contribution to mission success.

22           Finally, leadership is critical to integration. As  
23 Secretary Carter noted, the performance of teams is  
24 important and integration will change these dynamics. Our  
25 leaders, enabled by comprehensive and deliberate education,

1 will closely monitor these efforts. We cannot anticipate or  
2 control for every impact of integration, but this will not  
3 slow our progress. We will continue to monitor and report  
4 the lessons we learn so that our Army can collectively  
5 integrate the force and share our experiences. But we are  
6 prepared to act and benefit from integration now.

7 Full integration will likely take several years, both  
8 to adjust the culture and to grow individual skills within  
9 our force. But I am confident that every leader in the Army  
10 will understand and respect the increased readiness that  
11 integration will bring. Underpinned by strong, professional  
12 leaders, we will remain true to the values of the Army and  
13 to America and emerge as a stronger, more ready Army as a  
14 result.

15 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 [The prepared statement of Mr. Murphy and Mr. Milley  
17 follows:]

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1 Chairman McCain: General Milley, welcome.  
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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL MARK A. MILLEY, USA, CHIEF OF  
2           STAFF OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

3           General Milley: Thank you, Chairman. Appreciate it.  
4           And Ranking Member Reed and thank you all for the  
5           opportunity to appear before you on behalf of America's Army  
6           and to discuss the Army's implementation plan for full  
7           integration of women.

8           For the record, I fully support opening any military  
9           occupational specialty and all military occupational  
10          specialties in the United States Army to all soldiers  
11          regardless of gender. It is my solemn duty as the Army  
12          Chief of Staff to ensure that the Army remains ready to  
13          defend this great Nation and to do so, we need the most  
14          capable and qualified men and women.

15          Readiness is the Army's number one priority, and I  
16          believe that full integration of women in all career fields  
17          will either maintain, sustain, or improve the overall  
18          readiness of the United States Army and our capability of  
19          the force. If and only if we maintain and enforce rigorous  
20          combat readiness standards, we remain a merit-based,  
21          results-oriented organization and we apply no quotas and no  
22          pressure. We cannot compromise combat readiness and  
23          effectiveness for any reason whatsoever.

24          The Army's implementation plan will be guided by a set  
25          of first principles. We will maintain readiness by



1 adherence very strictly to a set of standards, and we will  
2 not impose quotas on ourselves. We will execute a very  
3 deliberate, methodical, and transparent process. We must  
4 not rush to failure. And in this particular project, I  
5 believe that slow is smooth and smooth will be fast at the  
6 end of the day. We will set conditions by positioning  
7 female leaders and units who are engaged and those units'  
8 leaders will be accountable. These principles are aligned  
9 with the guidance given to us by the Secretary of Defense.

10 The Army has identified several key tasks required for  
11 full gender integration. When the SecDef approves our plan,  
12 we have developed and will implement published, measurable,  
13 gender-neutral standards based on combat readiness  
14 requirements.

15 Next, we will initiate gender-neutral training for all  
16 officers, non-commissioned officers, and junior enlisted.  
17 And to ensure the success, our plan calls for the  
18 deliberate, methodical approach that begins with assessment,  
19 selection, training, and assigning of female infantry and  
20 armor leaders, both officers and NCOs, to units. That is  
21 our leaders' first principle. And then we will assign  
22 junior female enlisted to those units.

23 I estimate that effective female integration into  
24 infantry armor and special forces will require no less than  
25 1 to 3 years of deliberate effort in order to develop the

1 individual skills and grow our leaders. The Army is  
2 currently in the process of ensuring our facilities comply  
3 with law and DOD policies for accession in gender-neutral  
4 living standards at both our basic and individual training.

5       Additionally, we will provide leaders and soldiers with  
6 integration education and training to enhance our  
7 integration efforts over the course of this year. This  
8 spring, female cadets and officer candidates who meet the  
9 gender-neutral standard will be given the opportunity to  
10 request either infantry or armor branches, and that process  
11 is currently ongoing.

12       The Army's integration plan is based on a successful  
13 record of opening occupations previously closed to women.  
14 Since 2011, the Army has opened nine MOS's and approximately  
15 95,000 positions in combat arms units. In fact, today every  
16 single active duty infantry, armor, and field artillery  
17 battalion has women in them. Additionally Task Force 160th  
18 -- the 160th special operation aviation regiment -- was open  
19 to women in 2014, and of course, as you know, the Army's  
20 Ranger School was opened last year. These experiences have  
21 informed and will enable the Army to successfully implement  
22 gender integration to increase our combat readiness.

23       Make no mistake about it. This process is going to  
24 have challenges. But if we proceed with a methodical and  
25 deliberate execution and like all previous integration

1 efforts, it is my belief that the Army will be successful.

2 I have personally witnessed in multiple tours of very  
3 intense ground combat -- I have personally witnessed women  
4 perform, and their tasks were not much different than any  
5 other man that was on that battlefield. I have absolutely  
6 no doubt in my mind in my professional judgment that some  
7 women can perform every single job in the United States  
8 Army, to include infantry, armor, and special forces.

9 Army leaders will continue to assess and we will adjust  
10 the process to ensure that our standards and combat  
11 readiness are maintained and you, the committee, have my  
12 word on this. You also have my commitment that we will move  
13 forward in this endeavor in a very transparent and  
14 collaborative manner with this committee, with the American  
15 people, and with the Department of Defense.

16 Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today,  
17 and I look forward to your questions.

18 Chairman McCain: General Neller?

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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL ROBERT B. NELLER, USMC,  
2           COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

3           General Neller: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed,  
4           in the interest of time, I would ask that my oral statement  
5           be submitted for the record.

6           Chairman McCain: Without objection.

7           [The prepared statement of General Neller follows:]

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1 General Neller: We are ready for your questions, sir.

2 Chairman McCain: Well, thank you.

3 General Neller, you made a recommendation to request an  
4 exception to policy to keep some ground combat elements  
5 closed to women. Is that correct?

6 General Neller: Yes, sir. Commandant Dunford made  
7 that recommendation, and I was witting and I supported that  
8 recommendation.

9 Chairman McCain: General Milley, do you agree or  
10 disagree with General Neller's exception to policy to keep  
11 some ground combat elements closed to women?

12 General Milley: Senator, I made the recommendation to  
13 open up all MOS's.

14 Chairman McCain: I see.

15 Secretary Mabus, your web site has a counter that shows  
16 you traveled over 1 million miles on trips as Secretary of  
17 the Navy. How many of those miles took you to Twentynine  
18 Palms and Camp Lejeune for the purpose of viewing the Marine  
19 Corps Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force study?

20 Mr. Mabus: Senator, I have been to Twentynine Palms  
21 several times, and I have been to Camp Lejeune several  
22 times.

23 Chairman McCain: How many of these took you there for  
24 purpose to view the Marine Corps Ground Combat Element  
25 Integrated Task Force study?

1 Mr. Mabus: I did not, sir.

2 Chairman McCain: So you with a straight face made  
3 claims that the Marine study was flawed and biased even if  
4 you did not even go see the study being performed.

5 The 1,000-page Marine Ground Element Study was released  
6 to you on August 31st, and 1 day after the release of the  
7 report on September 1st -- this is a 1,000-page document --  
8 you gave an exclusive interview with the Navy Times in which  
9 you stated you saw no reason for an exemption to the gender  
10 integration policy. It is important to note you received  
11 the recommendation of the Commandant on September 17th,  
12 2015.

13 General Milley, how were you informed that this  
14 decision was going to be made?

15 General Milley: For the gender integration, I was  
16 informed -- I made my recommendations and then there was a  
17 session with the Secretary of Defense, the service  
18 secretaries, and the service chiefs.

19 Chairman McCain: Well, when were you informed that the  
20 decision was made?

21 General Milley: The decision for this, opening up the  
22 MOS's -- I would have to go back, Senator, honestly and  
23 check the notebooks and give you an exact date, time. But  
24 he made the decision to open it up, and w

25 We had a session and he announced it to us shortly

1 before the announcement.

2 Chairman McCain: General Neller, when were you  
3 informed of this decision?

4 General Neller: Chairman, General Dunford made his  
5 recommendation you said on the 17th. I assumed this office  
6 on the 24th. I do not know the exact date that the  
7 Secretary forwarded his recommendation to Secretary of  
8 Defense Carter. But when that was done, that is when I was  
9 informed.

10 Chairman McCain: One of the areas of some concern that  
11 have been voiced is the integration of basic training, given  
12 the fact that when a person enters basic training, they have  
13 not been exposed to the discipline associated with basic  
14 training. Is that of any concern to you, General Milley?

15 General Milley: Senator, right now for infantry and  
16 armor, the Army does not have integrated basic training,  
17 similar to what the Marines do right now for their recruit  
18 training. It is at Fort Benning.

19 I anticipate that after we set the conditions for this  
20 year, we will probably enter women into infantry and armor  
21 basic training at the maneuver center down at Fort Benning  
22 sometime in the early fall, probably September-October of  
23 this year. So there are concerns and we have got to make  
24 those adjustments between now and then in order to have  
25 women received at that basic training center.

1 Chairman McCain: I move that we require all studies  
2 the Marine Corps and Army conducted and considered for the  
3 decision to open combat units to women be included as part  
4 of the record for this hearing.

5 I move that we include statements from outside  
6 organizations that were submitted in advance of the hearing  
7 today.

8 Senator Reed: Okay.

9 Chairman McCain: So moved.

10 [The information referred to follows:]

11 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman McCain: Senator Reed.

2 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your  
3 testimony.

4 General Milley, I was, as you I think suggested in your  
5 comments, very impressed that three female officers  
6 graduated from Ranger School, very demanding. From your  
7 professional experience and my retrospective experience,  
8 they would seem to be entirely capable of leading an  
9 infantry unit in combat. Is that your conclusion?

10 General Milley: Yes, Senator. I would say that those  
11 three women that graduated could perform satisfactorily in  
12 an infantry unit in combat.

13 Senator Reed: And your approach and I presume the  
14 approach of the Marine Corps also will be moving forward on  
15 a step-by-step basis and integrating what you learned as you  
16 move forward so that it is clear this is going to happen  
17 from your standpoint, but that it is going to happen in an  
18 informed, careful way so that the capability of the unit  
19 combat effectiveness is not jeopardized. Is that fair to  
20 say?

21 General Milley: Absolutely correct, Senator.

22 Senator Reed: One other aspect of this issue too --  
23 and I think it was alluded to in all the testimony, and it  
24 is also reflected in a great deal of academic research  
25 recently -- is that it seems that groups' collective

1 intelligence increased as the number of women joined the  
2 group. And in fact, I think, General Neller, that one  
3 aspect of the Marine Corps study was that in those problems,  
4 those field problems that had more challenging cognitive  
5 elements than just simply brute strength, the study found  
6 that the integrated teams performed as well or better than  
7 the all-male teams. Is that a fair estimate?

8 General Neller: Senator, in the evaluation we did in  
9 that one particular part of the trial, there was a positive  
10 aspect of problem solving when the teams were integrated.

11 Senator Reed: Right.

12 And I think one of the other aspects -- and again, this  
13 is more observation than conclusion, but we see battlefields  
14 that are increasingly more complex. I mean, what you have  
15 seen in Afghanistan and Iraq is not a force-on-force, front  
16 line of LD -- it is cultural activities. It is integrating  
17 with the community. It is picking up intelligence. It is  
18 doing lots of things that have a much more significant  
19 cognitive development than I would -- again, this is more  
20 anecdotal than anything else -- suggest might have happened  
21 on the battalion versus battalion warfare of World War II  
22 and other combat we have engaged in. That might suggest  
23 strongly that this direction is exactly the right direction  
24 to take.

25 One other aspect, of course, is that -- and I assume

1 this, but I want your response -- if in fact the Marine  
2 Corps is not granted an exemption, you are fully prepared  
3 and expect the Marine Corps successfully will integrate  
4 women into their ranks. Is that correct?

5 General Neller: Senator, the Secretary of Defense has  
6 made a decision that we will not grant an exemption. So we  
7 are in the process and we have a plan, which we submitted,  
8 to successfully integrate women into these previously  
9 restricted MOS's and previously restricted units.

10 Senator Reed: And you are confident that the Marine  
11 Corps will succeed as it always seem to succeed.

12 General Neller: I want every marine to succeed,  
13 Senator. So that is our goal.

14 Senator Reed: Yes, sir. Thank you for that.

15 One of the other aspects going forward with respect to  
16 this issue is that essentially being able to recruit  
17 individuals in a very difficult, for want of a better term,  
18 market -- roughly 25 percent of the young people that are of  
19 enlistment age are physically and otherwise qualified right  
20 now because it is generally looked at as male dominated.  
21 But this would expand -- i.e., giving the options for women  
22 would expand -- the number and the quality, I presume, of  
23 recruits that you could access. Is that a fair judgment?  
24 Then I will ask Secretary Mabus and Secretary Murphy to  
25 comment.

1           Mr. Mabus: That is a very fair judgment, Senator. As  
2 you correctly pointed out, only one out of four Americans  
3 aged 18 to 24 qualify for our military for physical reasons,  
4 educational reasons, or criminal records. And to shrink  
5 that pool deprives us of a lot of talent.

6           Senator Reed: Secretary Murphy?

7           Mr. Murphy: That is correct, Senator, that we do not  
8 want to exclude 50 percent of the potential talent pool in  
9 America. We need all the able bodied men and women, the  
10 best and the brightest and the toughest, to join our ranks  
11 to sustain the all-volunteer force that we have had.

12          Senator Reed: Just a final comment/question very  
13 quickly and that is this is not just about the individual  
14 qualifications, it is also about the group performance. And  
15 that is a concern you all have to take into consideration as  
16 you move forward. But I just reflect, Secretary Mabus, for  
17 the longest time, submarine crews were all male because of  
18 the presumption that in that close, confined, extended tour,  
19 6 months at sea, that dynamic would not work. And you have  
20 successfully and the Navy has successfully integrated the  
21 crews on submarines so that they are both male and female.  
22 And what I am hearing is that the record is very, very good  
23 in terms of performance. Is that fair?

24          Mr. Mabus: That is absolutely correct, Senator. The  
25 decision was made in 2010. Women have been going to sea in

1 submarines since early 2011, and they perform magnificently  
2 and there has been no decrease and we think an increase in  
3 combat readiness for those submarines.

4 Senator Reed: Thank you.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman McCain: Senator Cotton?

7 Senator Cotton: I first want to associate myself with  
8 the views of General Neller and General Milley, that to  
9 discuss women serving in combat is something of a misnomer.  
10 Women have been serving valiantly in combat certainly for  
11 the last 15 years and in reality much longer than that. So  
12 this is not really a question of women being in combat.  
13 This is about a limited number of roles, primarily in the  
14 Army and the Marine Corps, although the Air Force and the  
15 Navy do have some elite special operations forces that will  
16 be impacted. And within those two services, it is primarily  
17 about infantry and a few other combat-related roles.

18 General Neller, since your service had requested an  
19 exemption, I would like to direct this question to you.  
20 Secretary of Defense Carter has said he is confident that  
21 you can address all concerns of implementation. The Ground  
22 Combat Integration Task Force, though, did conclude that  
23 there are irreducible and obvious physiological differences  
24 between men and women. That is one reason why there are  
25 men's and women's athletic events at the Olympics.

1           Could you elaborate a little bit on how you plan to  
2 address these implementation questions?

3           General Neller: Well, Senator, we learned a lot from  
4 the evaluation and the additional studies and other  
5 countries we looked at. So there are a lot of pieces to how  
6 we are going to implement this in a successful way. Part of  
7 it is going to be the standards that have been established  
8 to get into the entry level before you actually enlist, when  
9 you are at recruit training, and then the MOS  
10 qualifications. We are going to look at other ways to  
11 improve the physical capability of not just female but all  
12 infantry marines to reduce injury because incidence of  
13 injury is a concern.

14           But I am not sure how far we can go with that just  
15 based on the simple fact in the infantry, the load-bearing  
16 requirements and the oxygen use, endurance between men and  
17 women -- there are always exceptions. I mean, they are what  
18 they are.

19           So we are going to look at this. We are going to  
20 monitor it. Part of our process is a continued study and  
21 evaluation to see what we can do and cannot do to mitigate  
22 this because at the end of the day, we have to maintain our  
23 readiness and we want every marine to be successful.

24           Senator Cotton: Thank you. I am confident that  
25 whatever the policy direction you receive, you will do the

1 very best job you can, as will General Milley, to ensure  
2 that your marines and your soldiers are set up for success,  
3 men and women alike.

4 Secretary Mabus, I would like to go to an interview  
5 conducted last September about the study the Marine Corps  
6 conducted. You said, quote, it started out with a fairly  
7 large component of the men thinking this is not a good idea,  
8 and women will not be able to do this. When you start out  
9 with that mindset, you are almost presupposing the outcome.

10 Which men in the Marine Corps had that mindset?

11 Mr. Mabus: What I based that on, Senator, was some of  
12 the conclusions drawn from that study that were presented to  
13 me, which was that the marines that were chosen, the marines  
14 who volunteered and who I brag on for doing that -- they did  
15 a great job in terms of establishing standards.

16 However, some of the conclusions that were drawn was  
17 that male marines did not know how to -- had not had any  
18 experience --

19 Senator Cotton: Well, Secretary Mabus, the conclusions  
20 speak for themselves. You are questioning the motives of  
21 the Marine Corps leader in that statement it sounded like to  
22 me.

23 Mr. Mabus: No, sir, I am not. I am speaking to the  
24 conclusions that were drawn, that the male marines in that  
25 experiment -- most of them had had no experience working

1 with women in these occupations, and they simply did not  
2 know how to do that. And that was one of the conclusions,  
3 and that was one of the conclusions that said you had to  
4 provide that leadership, which is part of the implementation  
5 plan, that leadership, to make sure that all marines, male  
6 and female, know how to deal with the other gender in these  
7 very demanding roles.

8 Senator Cotton: Well, let us speak about the female  
9 marines in that study. You also were quoted in that  
10 interview as saying, I mean, in terms of the women who  
11 volunteered probably should have been a higher bar to cross  
12 to get into the experiment. Do you owe an apology to the  
13 women that participated in that study?

14 Mr. Mabus: Senator -- and I have the entire interview  
15 here. I know exactly what you are talking about. What I  
16 kept talking about was there were no standards for any of  
17 these when you started out. So the only thing that the  
18 women --

19 Senator Cotton: The women in the Marine Corps'  
20 physical fitness test -- the women in that study  
21 outperformed the average female marine, as compared to the  
22 man performing the average male marine. So the women were  
23 actually out performing the average female marine as  
24 compared to men in that study.

25 Mr. Mabus: On the generalized physical fitness test,



1 combat fitness test, nobody had had to meet a standard for  
2 these ground combat units. Nobody. There were no standards  
3 in there. One of the ways that General Neller just talked  
4 about that you ensure the integration is successful is by  
5 training to these very intense physical standards and  
6 starting at recruit training, starting at MOS schools,  
7 starting there and not just going to the very basic physical  
8 fitness test or combat fitness test.

9 Senator Cotton: Thank you. My time has expired.

10 Chairman McCain: Senator McCaskill?

11 Senator McCaskill: Thank you.

12 I think one of the questions we have to address now is  
13 registering for the selective service. As some of you may  
14 know, there was a Supreme Court decision back in 1981 when  
15 in fact the question was put in front of the Supreme Court  
16 whether women should be required to register for the  
17 selective service under current law. Justice Rehnquist  
18 wrote, the existence of combat restrictions clearly  
19 indicates the basis for Congress' decision to exempt women  
20 from registration. The purpose of registration was to  
21 prepare for a draft of combat troops. Since women are  
22 excluded from combat, Congress concluded they would not be  
23 needed in the event of a draft and therefore decided not to  
24 register them. So in other words, the rationale that  
25 Rehnquist used for saying there was no requirement of women

1 to register for the selective service has now been  
2 eliminated.

3 And I guess I want to ask all of you your sense of  
4 this. Part of me believes that asking women to register, as  
5 we ask men to register, would maybe, possibly open more  
6 recruits as women began to think about, well, the military  
7 is an option for me. And if you would briefly go down the  
8 line and give me your sense as to whether or not Congress  
9 should look at requiring selective service registration for  
10 all Americans.

11 General Neller: Senator, it is my personal view that  
12 based on this lifting of restrictions for assignment to unit  
13 MOS, that every American who is physically qualified should  
14 register for the draft.

15 Senator McCaskill: Secretary Mabus?

16 Mr. Mabus: Senator, I think you correctly pointed out  
17 this needs to be looked at as part of a national debate,  
18 given the changed circumstances.

19 The one thing you did say, not selective service-  
20 related, but that we do believe that this will open up  
21 recruiting, that more women will be interested in -- I will  
22 just talk about the Marines -- in the Marines because these  
23 last restrictions have been removed.

24 Senator McCaskill: Secretary Murphy?

25 Mr. Murphy: Senator, I believe that, yes, there should

1 be a national debate and I encourage the legislative body to  
2 look at that. I would say that unlike the decision in 1981  
3 where we are now in the longest war in American history over  
4 the last almost 15 years, that we have had over 1,000 women  
5 killed or injured in combat. Now, with this implementation,  
6 if you can meet the standard, you are on a team no matter  
7 what MOS it is. So I highly encourage that national debate,  
8 ma'am.

9 Chairman McCain: You would encourage what?

10 Senator McCaskill: The debate.

11 Mr. Murphy: The national debate, Mr. Chairman.

12 Chairman McCain: You were asked for your opinion, Mr.  
13 Secretary.

14 Mr. Murphy: Yes.

15 Senator McCaskill: General Milley?

16 General Milley: Senator, I think that all eligible and  
17 qualified men and women should register for the draft.

18 Senator McCaskill: Well, I do too. I think it is the  
19 right thing going forward.

20 I know that the Air Force has established a goal of  
21 having 30 percent of its active duty applicant pool be  
22 women. Have there been any goals established in either the  
23 Army or the Navy?

24 Mr. Mabus: No, Senator.

25 Senator McCaskill: Secretary Murphy or General Milley,

1 either one?

2 Mr. Murphy: Senator, approximately 14 percent of our  
3 soldiers are women. At West Point, when I was a professor  
4 there in 2000, 16 percent were women. Now it is 22 percent  
5 are women. But the Army looks to be reflective of our  
6 society.

7 General Milley: Senator, you asked about goals.

8 Senator McCaskill: Right, just a goal.

9 General Milley: The short answer is no. We have not  
10 set a goal for women in the infantry or the armor in terms  
11 of numbers or percentages whatsoever.

12 Senator McCaskill: Okay.

13 General Neller: Senator, could I just --

14 Senator McCaskill: Sure, sure.

15 General Neller: Right now, just under 8 percent of the  
16 Marine Corps are female marines, officer and enlisted. Even  
17 prior to this decision, I directed our recruiting to look at  
18 the possibility of increasing the number of women in the  
19 Marine Corps to 10 percent and to see if we can make that  
20 goal.

21 Senator McCaskill: I want to briefly give a shout-out.  
22 I do think there is some culture here. Nobody here wants  
23 the standards to be lowered. And I think frankly the people  
24 who really do not want the standards to be lowered are  
25 women. The last thing in the world a woman needs is to join

1 a unit with everyone looking over their shoulder saying,  
2 well, you are not the same as we are. So I do not think  
3 anybody here thinks that standards should be lowered.

4 And I want to point out that the sapper course at Fort  
5 Leonard Wood -- I do not think that anybody think that  
6 sappers -- that course is easy. Obviously, you are combat-  
7 trained in that course. For people who are not aware, this  
8 is for specially trained combat engineers. And they have  
9 been taking women since 1999 at Fort Leonard Wood for this  
10 course. And it is tough.

11 Now, the interesting thing about that, while there have  
12 not been a lot of women that have taken it, the percentage  
13 of women who have completed is identical to the percentage  
14 of men who have completed, 50 percent. So I would certainly  
15 urge all of you to take a look at what Fort Leonard Wood has  
16 done and how they have done it in one of the toughest  
17 physical challenges. You know, it is not the same as combat  
18 training, but they have to be combat-ready to graduate from  
19 the sapper course. So I certainly wanted to give a shout  
20 out to what I think is great work being done at Fort Leonard  
21 Wood.

22 Chairman McCain: Senator Wicker?

23 Senator Wicker: Thank you very much.

24 And let me just say there is a real risk for anybody  
25 discussing this issue to appear insensitive or politically

1 incorrect. And I really appreciated the way the chairman  
2 began the discussion this morning by outlining the very  
3 significant role that women, including members of this  
4 committee, have made for the military in terms of aviation,  
5 in terms of very, very difficult and demanding jobs. And,  
6 Mr. Chairman, I appreciated you pointing out that is not  
7 what this hearing is about.

8         What this hearing is about and what this change is  
9 about is the very demanding subspecialty of close combat.  
10 And as the chairman pointed out, close combat is brutal. It  
11 is physically brutal. The training for that is physically  
12 brutal. And so the question is how can we open this to a  
13 group of people when the physical realities seem to indicate  
14 that this is really a departure from what can work.

15         Let me ask General Neller and General Milley. General  
16 Neller, let me start with the infantry officer course.  
17 Women have entered this course. Am I correct? But no women  
18 have passed this course. Am I correct there?

19         General Neller: Yes, sir. 29 marine officer females  
20 have attempted and have not yet successfully completed the  
21 course.

22         Senator Wicker: Why is this test so rigorous? Why is  
23 it necessary it be so rigorous?

24         General Neller: It is an MOS-producing school.

25         Senator Wicker: And for the benefit of people watching

1 that might not know all of our jargon, tell us what MOS --

2 General Neller: Military occupational specialty. This  
3 is where a marine officer goes to become MOS qualified to  
4 lead an infantry platoon, rifle platoon, or a weapons  
5 platoon. So the standards that exist there involve tactics,  
6 physicality, physical fitness, understanding weapons, and it  
7 is a very tough and demanding course.

8 Senator Wicker: Why?

9 General Neller: Because they are going to lead their  
10 marines in combat, and they have to be able to lead from the  
11 front and they have to be able to understand all aspects of  
12 their profession. And they have to be physically fit enough  
13 and strong enough to be able to withstand the rigors of  
14 combat. And so the attrition is 25 percent of the men that  
15 go to this course. So it is a very tough, demanding course.

16 Senator Wicker: General Milley, would you comment on  
17 that in the same vein, sir?

18 General Milley: I would agree with General Neller in  
19 that the rigors of ground combat are brutal and they are  
20 hard, and we have very, very high standards and they are  
21 directly related not to gender. They are related to the  
22 combat tasks that you are expected to execute engaged  
23 against the enemies of our country. And we have developed  
24 and the Marines have developed very, very rigorous standards  
25 over many, many years. So those that make it, great. And

1 if they do not, then they do not.

2 Senator Wicker: You know, we have had testimony from  
3 Secretary Mabus that reducing the standards would be  
4 unacceptable. Members of this committee have reiterated  
5 that. That is absolutely something that must not be done.  
6 But it is hard to imagine down the road, 5 years from now,  
7 10 years from now, if we do not have successful graduations  
8 from this physically demanding program -- it is hard to  
9 imagine that this conversation will not take a different  
10 tone. And I do not see how we can guarantee that in the  
11 future, these standards will not be diminished.

12 And so I would just say, you know, I realize that you  
13 are in a tough spot, and you two generals have given us your  
14 best military judgment and that is what we are asking you in  
15 the testimony here.

16 But as Senator McCain mentioned, we have an overriding  
17 mission, and that is to overwhelm the enemy however we  
18 engage them. And in this special part of combat where it is  
19 close combat, it never needs to be a fair fight. We need to  
20 put our strongest and we need to put our best and we always  
21 need to have the best people.

22 Let me ask you this, General. When people who are  
23 unlikely to pass the test are admitted, are we expanding the  
24 pool of candidates to accommodate women candidates for the  
25 infantry officer course? Are they keeping someone who might



1 pass from getting a shot at this? Is that a consideration  
2 that we need to think about at all?

3 General Neller: Senator, any officer at the basic  
4 school who wants to compete for an opportunity to be an  
5 infantry officer has the opportunity to do that.

6 Senator Wicker: Are there limited numbers of slots?

7 General Neller: There is a number per course, but if  
8 the course were full, they would be able to elect to stay.  
9 But each graduating class has a certain number. And there  
10 is a period of time. Sometimes the course is full and we  
11 allow a group of officers to stay and prepare. There is  
12 actually a preparation time because of the rigors of the  
13 course. So there is no effort to deny anybody an  
14 opportunity to compete.

15 Senator Wicker: Well, I appreciate the task that you  
16 have been given as somebody who takes orders, and I wish you  
17 the best. We want to work with you, but I must say I have  
18 serious misgivings about moving to this particular point in  
19 our military.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen?

22 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 I hope my good friend from Mississippi is not  
24 suggesting that if all of the positions are opened up to  
25 women, that standards will automatically decline over time.

1 That is what it sort of sounded to me like you were saying.

2 So I hope that is not --

3 Chairman McCain: I am sure the Senator can give you an  
4 explanation in private.

5 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 I was pleased to hear everyone who has spoken today  
7 talk about the performance of women on the battlefield time  
8 and again and pleased to hear most of you say that if a  
9 woman meets all the standards for the position, that she is  
10 qualified and that she should be allowed to serve and that  
11 should be the end of the discussion and that now the  
12 important thing is to focus on implementation of this  
13 policy. So I appreciate that and hope that on this  
14 committee and in Congress, we can do everything possible to  
15 support you in that effort.

16 Secretary Mabus, you have received criticism, as has  
17 been indicated this morning, for your support of combat  
18 integration. And I wonder if you could elaborate. You  
19 alluded to why you think this is so important. But can you  
20 elaborate on why you think it is important and how you think  
21 it could strengthen our all-volunteer force?

22 Mr. Mabus: Senator, a more diverse force, as you heard  
23 from the question from Senator Reed, diversity of outlook,  
24 diversity of experience is a stronger force. We have proven  
25 it over and over again. When we integrated the armed forces

1 in the late 1940s, we came out with a stronger force. The  
2 same thing when we began to recruit larger numbers of women  
3 in the 1980s, we came out with a stronger force. The same  
4 thing when you repealed Don't Ask, Don't Tell, we came out  
5 with a stronger force at the end. And as long as you keep  
6 the standards and as long as those standards are not  
7 arbitrary, that they are operationally relevant, they are  
8 job-related, then gender ought to be irrelevant because what  
9 a marine on the line wants to know about any marine on  
10 either side is did they have to meet the same standards. Do  
11 they have to do same things that I had to do to be here?

12 And that is why I believe that this will strengthen the  
13 armed forces, that this will strengthen the Marine Corps.  
14 Senator Reed asked about submarines. We have seen how it  
15 has strengthened Navy units that are fully integrated, and  
16 it is virtually every one. So I do believe that a more  
17 diverse force, not about quotas, not about gender, but just  
18 about experience and perception, is a stronger force. And  
19 that is all of our jobs, is to make this a more effective,  
20 more lethal fighting force.

21 Senator Shaheen: Thank you very much.

22 Secretary Carter directed the services to provide their  
23 final detailed implementation plans no later than January  
24 1st of 2016. General Neller and General Milley, can you  
25 confirm that those implementation plans have been provided?

1 And do they have to be approved, and has that been done yet?

2 General Neller: Senator, we provided our plan to the  
3 Secretary of the Navy, and he forwarded it to the Secretary  
4 of Defense. We are still waiting for those plans to be  
5 approved, and we expect that that is going to happen here  
6 shortly.

7 Senator Shaheen: General Milley?

8 General Milley: Same thing, Senator. We provided our  
9 plan to the Secretary of Defense, and we are waiting on  
10 approval.

11 Senator Shaheen: And you expect that to happen in the  
12 near future?

13 General Milley: I really do not know when. I do  
14 expect it at some time in the relatively near future, but I  
15 do not know when.

16 Senator Shaheen: Again, part of that directive  
17 required the services to begin implementation no later than  
18 April 1st, 2016. So are we assuming that we are on course  
19 to do that? Is everybody in agreement with that?

20 General Milley: Well, it is no later than 1 April  
21 pending approval. So the Secretary had a session with us  
22 and he told us execute when I have approved your plan. The  
23 target date is 1 April, but we are not supposed to execute  
24 prior to his approval.

25 Senator Shaheen: General Neller?

1           General Neller: The same thing, Senator. As General  
2 Milley said, this is not going to happen 1 April that we are  
3 going to see -- I mean, some of it has already happened. We  
4 have got 239 females in what were previously restricted  
5 units in MOS's they already hold, and we have been doing  
6 that for several years. So that is already ongoing. But  
7 beginning to recruit those that can meet the standards that  
8 now exist before you go to recruit training, while you are  
9 at recruit training, and the MOS standards at school -- that  
10 has not yet begun, and that is going to take some time.

11           Senator Shaheen: I am out of time, but my final  
12 question was, does part of the plan address a response to  
13 concerns that may be raised by other folks who are part of  
14 this effort about fully implementing the policy? We will  
15 submit that for the record to ask you to respond to that.

16           [The information referred to follows:]

17           [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman McCain: Senator Ernst?

2 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have a  
3 statement followed by questions.

4 Chairman McCain: Without objection, your statement  
5 will be made a part of the record.

6 [The prepared statement of Senator Ernst follows:]

7 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 Let me be clear. I fully support providing women the  
3 opportunity to serve in any military capacity as long as  
4 standards are not lowered, our combat effectiveness is  
5 maintained. But in order to ensure women are fully  
6 integrated into these previously closed positions, the  
7 implementation strategy must be fully developed and  
8 methodically and deliberately carried out. It must include  
9 an understanding of second- and third-order effects to  
10 ensure that we do not set women or men up for failure.  
11 These are the men and will be the women who meet our enemies  
12 in close combat. Their lives depend on it.

13 That is why over the past few weeks I have visited Fort  
14 Bragg, North Carolina and Marine Corps Base Quantico,  
15 Virginia to speak directly with Army and Marine infantrymen  
16 about this topic. I spoke with groups comprised mostly of  
17 mid- to senior-level NCOs and junior officers, the service  
18 members who over the past 14 years of war have met the enemy  
19 in close combat and who will do so again in the future with  
20 their female counterparts.

21 After those conversations, it is clear that we need to  
22 ensure that we are taking into account the impacts on  
23 women's health, lodging, physiological differences between  
24 men and women which could lead to female physical fitness  
25 test scores on average being lower than their male

1 counterparts and how that could affect their ability to  
2 compete for promotions, schools, and senior command  
3 positions.

4 I would encourage all of the members of this panel and  
5 our witnesses to go talk to our service members, hear for  
6 yourselves what their concerns are, and help ensure we  
7 ultimately get this right.

8 Our combat armed soldiers and marines are the best we  
9 have. They have taken the majority of casualties since the  
10 founding of our Nation and on battlefields from Yorktown,  
11 Gettysburg, Iwo Jima, and Normandy. They have made the  
12 difference between Americans enjoying life, liberty, and the  
13 pursuit of happiness or being subjugated by foreign powers.  
14 Their lives mostly involve suffering and hardship, and they  
15 honorably carry that physical and mental burden not only in  
16 service but afterwards as well. We must honor them by  
17 ensuring this process moves forward in a thoughtful and  
18 methodical way.

19 General Neller, I would like to start with you, sir.  
20 As you know, some of our female marines have voiced concerns  
21 that they anticipate there will be pressure to lower  
22 standards if not enough of them are able to qualify to serve  
23 in combat positions. While I am glad that lowering the  
24 standards for greater female participation is against your  
25 best military advice, I agree with these women that pressure



1 may come likely from civilian leadership who may have  
2 motives other than supporting gender integration to enhance  
3 our Nation's ability to destroy our enemies on the  
4 battlefield.

5 Also, in order to boost participation, some female  
6 marines have voiced that leadership and training will not  
7 solve physiological differences between men and women, and  
8 some are worried that they will be involuntarily assigned to  
9 combat MOS's or even assigned to an infantry unit in a  
10 support position which would require them to meet the higher  
11 physical standards for infantry units.

12 Do you share these concerns, sir? And what concerns do  
13 you have regarding the retention of our best female marines  
14 who may now be assigned to combat arms MOS or units?

15 General Neller: Well, Senator, as the committee  
16 members in unanimity have talked about today, we would have  
17 to do everything possible to not lower standards. In fact,  
18 we should be looking at how we can raise the standards to  
19 improve our capability.

20 Right now, there is no intent to involuntarily assign  
21 anybody who wants to compete in any of these MOS's. A  
22 little more problematic is the assignment of a marine in a  
23 non-combat MOS but assigned to one of these units because in  
24 the past, because it was restricted to men, we did not ask  
25 the communicator or a supply marine if they wanted to go to

1 an infantry battalion. So we have established an assignment  
2 policy, which has a minimum physical standard, before we  
3 would do that.

4 So we are working our way through that and that is part  
5 of the implementation process. But we are aware of that.  
6 That is kind of an outlier that was not considered as part  
7 of this decision.

8 As far as career progression, there are a lot of things  
9 we do not know and we are going to find out and we will have  
10 to continue to monitor. We are looking at this as a decade,  
11 minimum, long study to see how this all turns out, what  
12 effect is there on propensity to enlist, propensity to  
13 reenlist. What is the competitiveness for promotion? What  
14 is the injury rate for all marines? Because we really have  
15 not looked at this in the past because there were enough  
16 people, and there are still enough people.

17 So those are concerns, but they are concerns about  
18 something we do not know the answer to. So there are a lot  
19 of different views, as you found, when you talked to people.  
20 So we are taking all of this into consideration. We are  
21 going to try to mitigate as much of this as we can. And  
22 then we will come back and report, and we will keep the data  
23 and we will be able to have a better analytical view on how  
24 this is all working as we go through this in a very  
25 methodical, objective way.

1           But the three lenses we are looking through in this  
2 whole process is the effectiveness and readiness of the  
3 unit, the health and welfare of all the marines, and the  
4 ability to manage the talent.

5           I think one of the things that I am confident is going  
6 to be -- in fact, I know it has already happened -- is the  
7 assignment of female marines to previously restricted units  
8 in the MOS's that they have. In the past, if you were an  
9 infantry or armor battalion commander and the best -- pick  
10 an MOS -- intelligence officer, communications officer,  
11 motor transport officer in the division was a woman, she  
12 could not work in your unit. So now you have the  
13 opportunity to have her serve with you. So the talent pool  
14 has expanded, and that should make the unit better.

15           Senator Ernst: Very good. Thank you, General.

16           General Milley, many of the command positions -- with  
17 those positions, most of our Army senior leaders have served  
18 in various elite units. You have served in a special forces  
19 capacity. Many of those advancing to very high levels  
20 within the Army have served in Ranger regiment and other  
21 high-performing infantry type units.

22           While there have been three female graduates of Ranger  
23 School in the Army, which I applaud -- I think that is  
24 tremendous -- the unfortunate truth is an infantry officer  
25 without a Ranger tab is often looked down upon by their

1 fellow infantrymen, and tabless infantry officers are often  
2 not as competitive for senior leadership positions, just  
3 like many of those that will serve in these elite type units  
4 with very, very high standards.

5         So as you branch female officers to infantry and  
6 potentially accept branch transfers for captains and field  
7 grade officers, how will this affect their ability to  
8 integrate into the infantry community and be competitive for  
9 those higher levels of command?

10         General Milley: A couple of points, Senator. One is  
11 you are correct. There is an institutional bias, especially  
12 in the infantry, if you do not have a Ranger tab, on career  
13 progression. So we encourage all infantry officers to  
14 attend Ranger School, a very demanding school, as you well  
15 know. And for women, it would be the same thing. If they  
16 go in the infantry, we would encourage them to go to Ranger  
17 School because it does enhance your performance and skills,  
18 but it also enhances your credibility with peers, superiors,  
19 and your subordinates as well. So Ranger School is a very  
20 important school especially for the infantry.

21         As far as long-term goes, the core business, the CORE  
22 business, of the United States Army is to close with and  
23 destroy the enemies of our country in close combat. And  
24 that means infantry and armor, supported by attack aviation  
25 and aviation and combat engineers. But infantry and armor

1 is the very essence of the United States Army. And those,  
2 as we note and we are here discussing, have been previously  
3 closed. So the senior officers of the Army over many, many  
4 years have been infantry and armor officers because that is  
5 the essence of their business, so to speak. So I would  
6 expect that over time, 25-35 years sort of time, we will see  
7 women in infantry and armor units eventually rise to  
8 command.

9 We opened up Apache helicopters 25 years ago and  
10 recently we now have Apache battalion commanders that are  
11 female. So I think the same phenomenon will occur over an  
12 extended period of time.

13 Senator Ernst: Very good, gentlemen. I appreciate  
14 that.

15 I do have one question and I would just like a response  
16 for the record, follow-up. But, Secretary Mabus, I was  
17 disturbed to read that the Director of Naval Intelligence  
18 has not had active clearance for over 2 years. Your  
19 decision to keep him in a position with such great  
20 responsibility without access to critical information sets a  
21 terrible example for our sailors and makes a travesty out of  
22 naval intelligence and our national security. And for the  
23 record, I would like to know what is preventing you from  
24 having a sailor with an active security clearance in this  
25 position today. And I would like a follow-up on that, sir.

1 Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

2 Chairman McCain: Do you want to respond now?

3 Mr. Mabus: Senator, I am as frustrated as you are  
4 about this particular individual. There is an investigation  
5 ongoing. We have no information one way or the other as to  
6 whether anything improper happened. But because of the  
7 sensitive place that he occupied, I felt that I had to  
8 withdraw his access to classified information until the  
9 investigation was finished. The investigation has drug on  
10 and on and on. And we are in the process of putting up  
11 another officer to take that person's place.

12 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. 2 years is a  
13 very long time not to have access. And I do believe that  
14 there should have been another officer assigned to that  
15 billet.

16 Mr. Mabus: Senator, I agree with you. This has been a  
17 very long, very drawn-out process, and it has been  
18 frustrating for everybody involved.

19 Chairman McCain: Senator Heinrich?

20 Senator Heinrich: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 What I find fairly remarkable in this conversation is  
22 the amount of consensus from both our witnesses and from  
23 people on the dais here that we should simply set MOS  
24 standards based on the performance that we need for the job  
25 and then let the chips fall where they may. And sometimes

1 in the case, for example, of the military infantry officer  
2 school, that is going to be some very, very difficult  
3 standards to meet. That said, I have no doubt that some day  
4 a woman is going to meet those standards.

5 So, General Neller, I wanted to ask you, given your  
6 previous support for a waiver, do you have any concerns with  
7 that kind of approach of simply setting the bar where it  
8 needs to be for the performance that you need and then  
9 letting the chips fall where they may?

10 General Neller: Well, Senator, it was brought up by  
11 Secretary Mabus -- and it is a fact -- that part of the  
12 value of the evaluation we did was to come up with these  
13 standards. So now we have these standards. I mean, there  
14 were always standards. There were standards because any of  
15 these marines that were involved in the evaluation completed  
16 an MOS school which had task admission standards to which  
17 they had to successfully complete. So it was not like there  
18 were no standards. To get into the school, the females had  
19 to go and pass the male scoring on the male PFT and CFT.

20 So where we are now is we have a decision. We provided  
21 our best military judgment based on what we learned in an  
22 evaluation involving teams, crews, and squads, something  
23 that has never ever been done, not just in the history of  
24 the United States, but from what we can tell, nowhere. No  
25 one ever looked at it in this way.

1           That said, we have a decision and we are in the process  
2 of moving out, and we have established a process to where  
3 any marine who wants to serve in these physically demanding  
4 MOS's has to meet a certain standard. And we will see where  
5 the chips fall.

6           Again, our hope is that everyone is successful, but  
7 hope is not a course of action on the battlefield. So we  
8 will learn and we will study and we will do everything we  
9 can because it is important, as General Milley brought up  
10 and everybody has brought up, that we have to be successful  
11 on the battlefield. And marines have always been successful  
12 on the battlefield, and I am confident we will in the  
13 future.

14           Senator Heinrich: General, as you heard, Secretary  
15 Mabus brought up the fact that there were surprising gaps in  
16 set standards for some of these MOS's. Do you have an  
17 opinion as to what the impact on the service is going to be  
18 simply on the Corps of clearly articulating the standards in  
19 all of these MOS's and how that will impact overall  
20 performance for the Corps moving forward?

21           General Neller: I think, based on the fact that we  
22 have set these standards and that the overall quality of the  
23 marines that serve in these MOS's should be higher than it  
24 was in the past.

25           Senator Heinrich: Thank you.



1           Secretary Mabus, I was hoping you could expand a little  
2 bit on what Senator Reed brought up around the transition  
3 particularly within attack submarines, how that is going on  
4 the USS Mississippi, and how you feel about that process  
5 overall.

6           Mr. Mabus: The process of integrating women onto all  
7 of our submarines -- as you know, it started with ballistic  
8 missile strategic submarines and guided missile submarines.  
9 It is now moving to attack submarines. It has gone fine.  
10 In all of these, the first two have completed a lot of  
11 cruises now. We have got a lot of experience under our  
12 belt. We have seen that women earn their dolphins at the  
13 same speed as men do in the submarine service.

14           It is part of the implementation experience that we can  
15 bring to bear for this, having a detailed implementation  
16 plan, having a well thought-out way to do it, having a  
17 deliberate but timely way to do it. The attack submarines  
18 were done last because of the closer quarters, and a few,  
19 but only a few, physical changes had to be made. And we are  
20 very pleased not only with the integration of women  
21 officers, but the beginning of the integration of women  
22 enlisted on all types of Navy submarines.

23           Senator Heinrich: Well, thank you, Secretary, for your  
24 work on that.

25           Chairman McCain: Senator Lee?

1           Senator Lee: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to  
2 all of you for your service to our country and for your  
3 testimonies today.

4           This is a subject like so many others that we cover on  
5 this committee that is of exceptional importance to our  
6 country, to our national security. As we approach this  
7 issue, which is fraught with a lot of opinions, a lot of  
8 facts, a lot of details, I hope that we will maintain our  
9 focus on maintaining the readiness and the capability of our  
10 men and women in service and especially on the safety of the  
11 men and women who protect us.

12           First of all, General Milley, I wanted to follow up on  
13 a question that was asked by Senator Ernst to General  
14 Neller. She asked General Neller whether women might be  
15 involuntarily transferred into some of these combat  
16 positions against their will. Do you want to provide an  
17 answer from the Army perspective?

18           General Milley: I am going to have to give you "it  
19 depends." Right now, we have no requirement because we are  
20 filling our needs for the infantry in both officer and  
21 enlisted, and currently we do not involuntarily put anyone  
22 in the infantry, but again, we are meeting our needs. 10  
23 years, 15, 20 years in the future, it depends. So look back  
24 at World War II. A lot of people were involuntarily put in  
25 the infantry. But right now, we do not and I do not

1 anticipate that situation at any time in the near future.

2 Senator Lee: Okay. Thank you.

3 General Neller, the Marine Corps report stated that  
4 there were some noticeable differences in performance  
5 between all-male squads on the one hand and those that were  
6 gender integrated, not just squads, but teams and crews as  
7 well. In your professional military opinion, could you tell  
8 us what were the most notable reasons for these differences  
9 and then also whether these are factors that could easily be  
10 remedied through training and improved techniques and  
11 processes?

12 General Neller: Senator, when we put together the  
13 Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, there were  
14 infantry and in infantry you have mortars, you have machine  
15 guns, you have rockets, you have TOWs. There were tank  
16 crews, artillery crews, amphibian vehicle crews, and light  
17 armor vehicle crews. So in each of those, there were some  
18 number of differences between the integrated and the all-  
19 male crews, squads, or teams, but the two that were most  
20 significant, what we would call load-bearing units or the  
21 infantry, march under load with a weighted load over a  
22 distance. And then the other was during a fire and movement  
23 drill with load, as you get fatigued, the effect on your  
24 accuracy when you fired your weapon.

25 So the study showed two things. Under the march under

1 load, the heavier the load, the more degraded the ability of  
2 the integrated squads. And then when you would do movement  
3 to contact, the accuracy of the integrated squads and the  
4 firing of females due to physiological things that are  
5 documented was lower.

6 Senator Lee: And are those things that can be remedied  
7 through improved training and techniques?

8 General Neller: I think to some degree but a lot of it  
9 is -- we learned that being -- and the same applies to any  
10 one of a smaller stature. Being big, strong, having a  
11 certain body mass gives you an advantage. So one of the  
12 things I have heard as I have gone around and talked to the  
13 female marines is, hey, I am out working out, I am lifting  
14 weights, I am getting bigger, and now I am outside the  
15 height and weight standards. Are you going to change the  
16 height and weight standards? And we are looking at that  
17 right now. So we know that mean body mass has an effect on  
18 your ability to carry a load.

19 As far as the conditioning and your ability to have a  
20 higher level of energy and exert yourself, that is what we  
21 are going to find out, what we are going to learn.

22 And again, we did this for just 5 months. We do not  
23 know what is this going to do over years and years and years  
24 of being in these particular occupational fields. We know  
25 anecdotally what the effect is on the male body, and we do

1 not have data yet, and eventually we will, of what the  
2 impact is on the female.

3 Senator Lee: My understanding is that one of the  
4 findings in the report that was released by the Marine Corps  
5 indicated some evidence of higher injury rates among women  
6 than men when asked to perform the same tactical tasks. Can  
7 you tell us how this factor, when extrapolated across combat  
8 units in the Marine Corps -- call you tell us how that might  
9 impact your overall military readiness and capability and  
10 how you could deal with that?

11 General Neller: We know from data that we have now for  
12 certain points of training that female marines suffer a  
13 higher incidence of injury, normally lower body injury, than  
14 men. So part of the review, not just for body size and  
15 height and weight, is also conditioning. So the one way we  
16 believe we can do this is through better preparation, better  
17 conditioning to mitigate that. So that is something that we  
18 do not know what we do not know. And that will be one of  
19 the things that we are going to have to continue to study  
20 and monitor as we go through this.

21 Senator Lee: Thank you.

22 Chairman McCain: Senator King?

23 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24 Before beginning my questions, I cannot resist pointing  
25 out that 40 years ago I sat back where you folks are

1 sitting, and my boss, Senator Bill Hathaway from Maine, led  
2 the effort to open the military academies to women, which at  
3 the time was a radical idea. So there is some history here  
4 for me in this conversation.

5 It seems to me that this is really about talent pool.  
6 Mr. Secretary, you mentioned that. Mr. Secretary, you also  
7 mentioned it. We need the best people we can get, whoever  
8 they are, wherever they come from. And the shocking figure  
9 that we have already discussed today is that only one out of  
10 four young people is qualified for military service either  
11 for physical or other kinds of intellectual issues. We need  
12 people. And the secret of the success of this country in my  
13 opinion is access and opening up access to more and more  
14 people. And I have no doubt that limiting access to  
15 virtually any job, eliminating 50 percent of the talent pool  
16 is always a bad policy.

17 The question, it seems to me, though is how do we  
18 design gender-neutral standards that are in fact gender-  
19 neutral but also meet the requirements of the job. And that  
20 is going to be the challenge. General Neller, I thought  
21 your exchange with Senator Lee was very informative. And  
22 the issue, for example, of weight. I visited the Marine  
23 Corps officer school in Quantico and saw what those young  
24 people have to carry. As I recall, the lightest pack was  
25 something like 75 pounds and they go up from there. I think

1 your response was an important one, that this could be a  
2 question of, A, who physically can do it regardless of  
3 gender and, B, training and readiness over a period of time.

4 I think the great danger, though, is that we do not let  
5 the standards diminish in order to meet some kind of  
6 arbitrary requirements. The word "goals" has been used  
7 here. Goals, unfortunately, can often turn into quotas.  
8 And, Mr. Secretary, I presume that that is not your  
9 intention in any way, shape, or form.

10 Mr. Mabus: Absolutely not, Senator. Number one, it  
11 would go against the law. But number two, you cannot lower  
12 standards. This is not about quotas. It is not about  
13 equality of outcome. It is about equality of opportunity.  
14 And you have got to keep those standards. You have got to  
15 keep them job-related. You have got to keep them very  
16 rigorous, and you have got to evolve those standards as our  
17 threats and as our challenges evolve, but they have got to  
18 evolve for everybody.

19 Senator King: I would assume that the performance of  
20 women in these very rigorous top-end MOS's, Ranger School,  
21 Marine training, will improve over time as they are given  
22 the opportunity to set their sights on that career. General  
23 Milley, would you agree with that?

24 General Milley: I would expect that to be true over  
25 time as women's experience in those skills is expanded over

1 time. Absolutely.

2 Senator King: And it seems to me, General Neller, that  
3 may be one of the answers to the data that you developed in  
4 this initial study because it was an initial study. In  
5 other words, you did not have 2, 3, 4, 5, 10 years of women  
6 who had worked through this process. Would you agree that  
7 that may be the case?

8 General Neller: We would have liked to have had more  
9 time to look at this because I think anyone that does this  
10 type of analysis would tell you that a year-long is not  
11 enough to draw a lot of conclusions. We have the data that  
12 we have. So that is why, Senator, part of our  
13 implementation process is to continue an analysis of a whole  
14 number of variables and factors.

15 And I do, though, agree that the women that are in the  
16 Marine Corps today are very different, not that the ones  
17 that were there before were not of quality and great  
18 Americans and served our Nation well, but the overall  
19 quality of marines in general is much higher than it was  
20 when I joined this organization 40 years ago. And our hope  
21 is people will maybe see this as an opportunity and then  
22 they will want to compete in whatever it is.

23 So I think -- I mean, I have got a daughter. I raise  
24 my daughter in the way I raise my daughter. She is very  
25 competitive. And I think people raise their girls, females,



1 Americans. They do different things than they did 30 years  
2 ago. It is a different place. So we will find out.

3 That said, there are certain physiological differences  
4 that exist. There are always going to be people that are  
5 outliers.

6 I think what Senator Ernst asked me was a fair  
7 question. Where does the top of the women capability  
8 overlap with the male capability, and is that going to make  
9 them competitive in the long run? We are going to find that  
10 out, but that is part of what we do not know.

11 Senator King: And it seems to me part of what this  
12 whole --

13 Chairman McCain: Your time has expired.

14 Senator King: I am sorry.

15 Chairman McCain: Senator Fischer, with Senator  
16 Sessions' indulgence.

17 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my  
18 thanks to Senator Sessions. I need to get to the chamber to  
19 preside, but I did want to ask a few questions here.

20 When we are going to be looking at monitoring the  
21 implementations, how well prepared do you think we are at  
22 that process specifically with regard to making changes? If  
23 I could ask Secretary Murphy and Secretary Mabus about that.  
24 How do the services plan to track the outcomes of the  
25 changes and ensure that when we see any unintended

1 consequences come forward that we can act on those promptly  
2 and be able to address any concerns that we see? Secretary  
3 Murphy, if you would like to begin.

4 Mr. Murphy: Thanks, Senator.

5 As we said, Senator, we are going to have gender-  
6 neutral, operational-relevant standards with no quotas  
7 whatsoever. But as the Army, we assess everything as we  
8 move forward. We assess physical fitness, how you are doing  
9 your job, OER's, et cetera. So we will continue assess this  
10 as we move forward and make sure we are doing what is  
11 necessary to accomplish our mission, and that is to fight  
12 and win our Nation's wars.

13 Senator Fischer: And do you have that in your  
14 implementation plan? It is always good to say you are going  
15 to be flexible, you are going to be able to address it, but  
16 are there really steps that are laid out in your plans?

17 Mr. Murphy: Yes, ma'am. I would also like if the  
18 Chief could respond as well, that would be helpful.

19 Senator Fischer: If we could have Secretary Mabus  
20 first please.

21 Mr. Mabus: As part of the formal process of looking at  
22 this continually, one of the things that is required by the  
23 law and one of the things that is in everybody's  
24 implementation plan is that the inspector general of each  
25 service will look at, number one, whether these standards

1 continue to be validated, job-oriented, mission-specific,  
2 gender-neutral, but number two, what are the results of this  
3 integration. The first report is to be undertaken this year  
4 as we begin the integration process, and each service has  
5 already ordered that review to go forward.

6 Past that, as Secretary Murphy has very correctly  
7 pointed out, we are always looking at every single standard  
8 as threats evolve. As I said in my opening statement,  
9 infantry school today is very different than it was just 25  
10 years ago because our threats have changed, and we are going  
11 to continue to do that. And that is one of the things I  
12 think that marines do exceptionally well. They adapt. They  
13 improvise and they overcome.

14 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

15 And, General, would you like to have any comments?

16 General Milley: Just briefly. We have developed  
17 explicit written, gender-neutral tasks, conditions, and  
18 standards for every MOS in the United States Army right now  
19 today. And when we execute for the infantry, armor, and  
20 special forces, those will be implemented. They will be  
21 tested and they will be validated and they will be monitored  
22 closely. The Secretary of Defense has established a  
23 Secretary of Defense level organization to monitor  
24 implementation. We have done the same thing at the  
25 Secretary of the Army, the Department of the Army Secretary,

1 and we will be doing routine monthly and quarterly  
2 monitoring of implementation and execution of this.

3 Training and Doctrine Command, United States Army, has  
4 primary responsibility for phases one and two. Our plan has  
5 four phases. And phases three and four primary  
6 responsibility is General Abrams and Forces Command, which  
7 is the operational force. That will be coming up next year  
8 and the year after that. So it is a very, very rigorous  
9 program of implementation and monitoring.

10 Senator Fischer: And thank you for that very clear  
11 explanation. I appreciate it.

12 General Neller, you had mentioned before that the  
13 Marines had studied some foreign militaries and what they  
14 have done with the integration of their women into the  
15 combat positions. Can you comment on any of the findings  
16 that you had?

17 General Neller: We looked at the Canadian, the  
18 Australian, the UK, and the Israeli militaries. The first  
19 three have integrated these MOS's. The numbers are very  
20 small, but the lessons they learned in speaking to the  
21 service members there that were part of that was leadership,  
22 maintenance of standards, setting up a cohort or some number  
23 of people to support so that the individual females in this  
24 case did not go down there completely cold. But the number  
25 one thing was the standards. They also mentioned the

1 potential benefits of gender-separate recruit training.

2 The Israelis I believe had done this at one time, and  
3 then they have walked away from it. They do have one  
4 predominantly female border unit. But they do not allow  
5 women to be assigned in these combat MOS's, infantry, armor,  
6 or airborne.

7 Senator Fischer: What would be their reasons for that  
8 with the Israelis? Is it due to the standards that are in  
9 place, or is it concern about the neighborhood they live in?

10 General Neller: I think there are a number of reasons,  
11 Senator, but I think one is they are just trying to take and  
12 make the best use of the talent of the population that they  
13 have. So if you go to an Israeli school that teaches these,  
14 the majority of the instructors are females teaching ground  
15 combat things.

16 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir, very much.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator  
18 Sessions.

19 Senator Reed [presiding]: On behalf of the chairman,  
20 let me recognize Senator Kaine.

21 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

22 And to all of our witnesses, this is an important  
23 issue, and I echo what Senator Heinrich said about the  
24 degree of consistency among the witnesses and folks here  
25 serving.

1           A story that I find relevant. Women were not allowed  
2 to run the marathon in the Olympics until 1984. There was a  
3 belief that physically they would not be able to run it.  
4 The longest race for women in the 1980 Olympics in Moscow  
5 was a 1,500-meter, and even that was somewhat recent. It  
6 had been an 800-meter was the longest race a woman could  
7 run.

8           Today, 30 years later, the men's world record in the  
9 marathon is 2 hours and 3 minutes, and the women's world  
10 record in the marathon is 2 hours and 15 minutes. There is  
11 an advantage to men. But that women's world record time  
12 would have won the gold record in the men's marathon during  
13 most of the history of the Olympics.

14           And now -- and this is a joke -- the marathon is for  
15 wimps now because now there are ultra-marathons. One common  
16 ultra-marathon event is a 2-day run, 48-hour run. Men have  
17 the edge on the track. The women's record is 370 kilometers  
18 in 2 days, and the men's record is 430 kilometers in 2 days.

19           But there is another one that is kind of interesting to  
20 me. How fast can you through-hike the Appalachian Trail,  
21 2,200 miles? And there is a record for doing it all on your  
22 own, not having support, having to carry everything, big  
23 backpack carried. The men's record is 58 days and the  
24 women's record is 54 days. The woman has the record for  
25 having to carry it all.

1           Combat and military service is different. But what  
2 this tells me is -- and, General Neller, you kind of talked  
3 about it. Daughters raised today are going to be raised  
4 different than daughters 30 years ago. When there is a  
5 social cap or ceiling or limitation, that sort of gets  
6 absorbed by people and they do not even focus on what they  
7 might be able to do. They get raised in a particular way  
8 with the thought that that cap is going to be there. When  
9 the cap is lifted, all of a sudden there are all kinds of  
10 possibilities and people start to focus on opportunities  
11 they might have and train themselves up for them. And just  
12 like when you lift the ban on running the marathon in the  
13 Olympics and allow women to do it, suddenly there are  
14 fantastic marathoners, ultra-marathoners, AT hikers with  
15 packs.

16           Parenthetically the physiological difference in women  
17 in carrying weight leads a lot of backpack manufacturers to  
18 make different packs for women that can actually erase some  
19 of that physiological difference.

20           I have a high confidence -- a high confidence -- in the  
21 American military and all the service branches to do this  
22 because you are always are super can-do and you always  
23 figure it out. I mean, I have that confidence in you.

24           One of my kids, as some of you know, has been through  
25 ROTC and OCS and TBS and IOC with women. It is more of a

1 norm now than an earlier generation of Marines. And he  
2 understands how hard it is for everybody and that this will  
3 be a challenge to implement. But this is a can-do operation  
4 that is going to figure it out. I have complete confidence  
5 in them.

6 I am kind of interested in the topic of standards  
7 setting. And, General Neller, you talked a little bit about  
8 this. I tried to write this quickly down. You talked about  
9 in preparing for integration of women in MOS's and studying  
10 it, you did a lot of studies of the standards. I think you  
11 said because of our standards setting, our overall quality  
12 will be higher for men and women.

13 I would kind of like to ask all of you. Was the  
14 standards setting that you did and analyzed around the  
15 integration question, set aside integration of women into  
16 MOS's -- did it have strong, independent value for your  
17 service branches to do that standards setting and analysis  
18 exercise in terms of figuring out what the right  
19 requirements for the MOS's are given the nature of  
20 contemporary warfare? And that is a question I would like  
21 each of you to address.

22 General Neller: The standards that we established were  
23 established on 30 September, actually before the decision  
24 was made, because we recognized, as part of the analysis,  
25 that whether there was going to be an exception granted or



1 not, we needed to have a more performance-related standard.  
2 I mean, there's training on the things you did. So we  
3 actually codified it. And so since that time, the men that  
4 have gone through infantry training battalion, armor school,  
5 artillery school, engineer school have been getting their  
6 MOS qualification based on the standard. And the completion  
7 rate has been 99-plus percent. So that just goes to the  
8 overall quality of the marine that we are getting now.

9 So I have every confidence that if there is a female  
10 marine out there who can meet the other standards before  
11 they come into recruit training or what they have to do at  
12 entry level training and recruit training, we will find out.  
13 We will know because the females that did go through this  
14 training and get awarded the MOS -- they did not have to do  
15 this. So, again, Senator, we do not know yet what we do not  
16 know. There are things you can train to, but you have to  
17 have the physiological capability to move fast and bear a  
18 load and lift heavy weights.

19 Senator Kaine: I see my time has expired. Thank you.

20 Senator Reed: Thank you. On behalf of the chairman,  
21 Senator Sessions.

22 Senator Sessions: Thank you very much. And I thank  
23 all of you for sharing your thoughts with us on this  
24 important matter.

25 General Neller, the Marine Corps did a study and

1 completed it in 2015. Is that correct? And what was the  
2 purpose of that study?

3 General Neller: Senator, the purpose of the study was  
4 after Secretary Panetta in January 2013 stated that there  
5 was going to be no exception for gender to assignment to  
6 MOS's in unit and gave the services a period of time to take  
7 a look at this. It was the final process of what we did.  
8 We first put female marines in previously restricted units  
9 and MOS's that they had. We sent 448 females through  
10 infantry training battalion to see how they would do, and  
11 then we realized we could not assign them to a unit, so we  
12 had to create a unit and we wanted to see how they did in  
13 the context, not just meeting individual standards but how  
14 they would function within a squad, team, or a crew.

15 Senator Sessions: And do you feel like that was, as  
16 reasonably as you can, a fair analysis of the challenges  
17 that you would be facing if you moved to integration of  
18 combat units?

19 General Neller: The evaluation was designed to try to  
20 replicate, as best we could in a live fire environment,  
21 those types of skills or tasks that you would have to do in  
22 combat.

23 Senator Sessions: Now, the purpose of the report says  
24 this. Quote: Central to this historic research effort has  
25 been the clear recognition that the brutal and extremely

1 physical nature of direct ground combat, often marked by  
2 close interpersonal violence, remains largely unchanged  
3 throughout the centuries of warfare despite technological  
4 advancements. Close quote.

5 Now, you served a long time in the Marine Corps. Do  
6 you agree with that?

7 General Neller: The character of war may have changed  
8 with the overall nature of war, depending upon the fight you  
9 are in, at the end of the day can still come down to that  
10 type of an environment. Yes, Senator.

11 Senator Sessions: Now, the report said this. The  
12 Marine Corps fights as units. Therefore, developing and  
13 maintaining the most combat-effective units must always be  
14 at the forefront of any contemplated institutional change.  
15 Do you agree with that?

16 General Neller: I do.

17 Senator Sessions: And do you agree with the report's  
18 finding, quote, combat effectiveness, the health and welfare  
19 of individual marines, and talent management, close quote,  
20 are key evaluating factors on the performance?

21 General Neller: Those are three of the major lenses  
22 through which we looked at the report and looked through  
23 implementation.

24 Senator Sessions: Well, here are the summary of the  
25 research findings. See if they are inconsistent with your

1 experience in the Marine Corps. Overall, quote, all male  
2 squads, teams, and crews demonstrated higher performance  
3 levels on 69 percent of the tasks evaluated -- that is 134  
4 tasks -- as compared to gender-integrated squads, teams, and  
5 crews. The integrated squads were superior in two events  
6 out of the 134. The rest I guess were equal. Do you  
7 dispute that or is that consistent with your experience?

8 General Neller: That is the data that we derived from  
9 the evaluation.

10 Senator Sessions: Speed is important in combat.

11 Quote: All male squads, regardless of infantry MOS, were  
12 faster than the gender-integrated squads in each tactical  
13 movement.

14 Lethality. All-male 0311 squads -- that is the rifle  
15 infantry, rifleman squads -- quote -- had better accuracy  
16 compared to gender-integrated squads. There was notable  
17 difference between genders for every individual weapons  
18 system except the probability of hit and miss with the M-4.  
19 That is the individual carbines. Is that what the report  
20 found, and do you dispute that?

21 General Neller: No, sir. That is accurate as to what  
22 we found.

23 Senator Sessions: Also it found all-male infantry  
24 crew-served weapons teams engaged targets quicker and  
25 registered more hits on target as compared to gender-

1 integrated infantry crew-served weapons teams with the  
2 exception of M-2 accuracy. Was that part of the report?

3 General Neller: It is.

4 Senator Sessions: All-male squads, teams, and crews in  
5 gender-integrated squads, teams, and crews had a noticeable  
6 difference in their performance of the basic combat task of  
7 negotiating obstacles and evacuating casualties. So that is  
8 the combat lethality question.

9 Health and welfare of the marines themselves. You put  
10 them in very stressful positions. Quote: In addition to  
11 performance, evidence of higher injury rates for females  
12 when compared to males performing the same tactical task  
13 were noted. Within the research at the infantry training  
14 battalion, females undergoing that entry level training were  
15 injured at six times the rate of male counterparts. Is the  
16 injury rate a factor you need to consider when you put  
17 people through training?

18 General Neller: Yes, Senator.

19 Senator Sessions: During the assessment, quote,  
20 musculoskeletal injury rates were 40 percent for females  
21 compared to 18 percent for males.

22 And one more thing that people talk about. We cannot  
23 let it dominate our thinking. But how do you evaluate all  
24 of that? I mean, how do you evaluate the risk of injury and  
25 the ability to perform effectively on the battlefield when

1 you consider the integration of combat forces? You made  
2 your recommendation, but how do you evaluate that?

3 General Neller: Well, Senator, when we evaluate it, we  
4 are going to find out. This is part of what we found out  
5 and also what we found out, that we believe that there are  
6 ways that this can be, to some degree, mitigated. How much?  
7 Again, we do not know what we do not know. So the physical  
8 capability of the individual marine, their susceptibility to  
9 injury, their overall fitness, this is all part of the  
10 evaluation that everyone has talked about. And General  
11 Milley stated it on there. We have got very specific  
12 questions in areas that we are going to monitor as we go  
13 through this implementation process.

14 Senator Sessions: Well, I have served in an Army  
15 Reserve unit for 10 years with fabulous women, soldiers and  
16 officers. The commander of that unit now is the first one  
17 that has received two stars in the unit's history. She is a  
18 two-star general and doing a great job, and we have  
19 tremendous military soldiers and officers who are women.  
20 And it is an important part of the military. And I think  
21 you are wise to do this careful evaluation and let us see  
22 how we can continue that tradition in the most smartest way.

23 Senator Reed: On behalf of the chairman, Senator  
24 Hirono.

25 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1           You were just asked a series of questions relating to  
2 differences in performance of women and men. And I think,  
3 General Neller, you indicated that there may be ways to  
4 mitigate these performance differences. But I am wondering.  
5 Did you come to the conclusion that -- and we always have to  
6 worry about attributing cause and effect to any performance  
7 differences. So did you come to a conclusion that there is  
8 something innately about being a female that causes these  
9 kinds of differences in performance? Have you come to that  
10 conclusion?

11           General Neller: Senator, I think the data, not just  
12 from this evaluation but data that exists throughout the  
13 sports world or other place is that there are physiological  
14 differences between the average male and the average female.  
15 Now, the question is to what degree can we mitigate that.  
16 So the conclusion, if we have come to anything, is, hey,  
17 these are things that we need to pay attention to. Now,  
18 whether they will manifest themselves in the future or not,  
19 we will find that out.

20           Senator Hirono: So in those instances where what we  
21 are measuring is something that requires physical strength  
22 -- I mean, there will be some women who are physically a lot  
23 stronger than men, but as a general proposition that where  
24 physical strength is measured, women will come out -- they  
25 will be less able to perform. That is the conclusion you

1 have drawn.

2 General Neller: On the average, yes.

3 Senator Hirono: So when we talk about gender-neutral  
4 standards -- let me turn to that because nobody here is  
5 talking about lowering of standards. But there are some  
6 concerns that some of these standards that relate to  
7 performance necessary for the job may be unnecessarily high  
8 or inaccurate. We are not talking about lowering of  
9 standards.

10 So my question is how are these standards validated.  
11 Who validates these standards for the Marines, for the Army?  
12 Secretary Mabus, would you like to respond to that?

13 Mr. Mabus: The uniformed head of each service  
14 validates that they are occupationally relevant, that they  
15 are mission-oriented, and that they are gender-neutral.

16 Senator Hirono: I think, though, that may be difficult  
17 really to measure. So I think what I heard you saying is  
18 that the implementation and to make sure that these  
19 standards actually are required for a performance on the  
20 job, that there will be monitoring and reevaluation of these  
21 standards because one hopes that standards are somehow set  
22 by a neutral objective body.

23 So in addition to the physical standards that must be  
24 met, I assume that in a combat situation, one also cares  
25 about things such as the mental state of the person or the



1 judgment of the person. Are those part of the MOS  
2 standards?

3 General Neller: The MOS standards for the entry level  
4 -- there is a basic general technical classification test  
5 score that you have to meet. And so when you go through  
6 your academic part of your training -- and there is  
7 academics in any of these. Some for gunnery and artillery  
8 and tanks is very complicated. It involves mathematics and  
9 things. So there is an intellectual piece to this, and you  
10 are going to find out some people may be superior in this  
11 area. But at the basic level, at the entry level, whether  
12 it is an infantry platoon commander or a junior marine or  
13 soldier in a squad, the physical requirements that they have  
14 to perform are -- you cannot ignore those facts.

15 Now, as people become more senior, then it starts to  
16 balance out, and your ability to exercise judgment and your  
17 ability to make decisions -- that may become more important,  
18 but it does not remove the requirement for the physical  
19 requirements that you have to perform.

20 So to the point on who validates, we have looked at  
21 this. We have training commands who have an analyst and  
22 people that do this for a profession. We know exactly from  
23 every step what you have to do to load a Howitzer, to load a  
24 tank, to lift -- you know, it is very mundane stuff,  
25 Senator, like, hey, you have to lift an artillery round that

1 weighs 98 pounds up to the truck. So there are certain  
2 fundamental tasks to be part of a tank crew, a gun crew, to  
3 be in a rifle squad. And so those were the things that we  
4 looked at that we thought were the mission-essential tasks  
5 to be effective in these MOS's. And we have had third  
6 parties look at this because we wanted to ensure that the  
7 standards were valid and they were not too high or too low.

8 Chairman McCain [presiding]: Senator Tillis?

9 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 Actually I want to continue maybe along that line of  
11 questioning.

12 One of the things that I have had in my discussions  
13 with some of you and others is that this process has been  
14 good and that it has really made you think about documenting  
15 and setting standards for things that you kind of knew you  
16 had to do but you had not articulated them. So that is  
17 healthy.

18 And I have heard other discussions. And when we have  
19 looked at it, maybe we need to raise the standards a little  
20 bit. To what extent do we run the risk of being able to do  
21 that because it appears to be lessening or diminishing our  
22 opportunity to provide women more opportunities in combat  
23 positions, which I happen to support? General Neller, do  
24 you want to start with that?

25 General Neller: Senator, I think the standards -- I

1 cannot speak for the Army, but I looked at their standards  
2 and their standards are different but they are also I think  
3 fairly demanding and would show a high probability of being  
4 able to be successful in any of these ground combat MOS's  
5 whether they be load-bearing MOS's or non-load-bearing.

6         So whether they are too low or too high, we have done  
7 an analysis as to what is kind of the average. We are  
8 producing a large number of marines to do these things. In  
9 the Army, an even larger number. So we are looking for that  
10 point to where you have to do this in order to be effective  
11 and be effective within the team. And there are always  
12 going to be individuals that fall across the spectrum on  
13 that scatter chart.

14         Senator Tillis: And, General Milley, maybe if you  
15 respond to that, you could share whether or not -- as you  
16 are going through this and thinking about women having  
17 increasing opportunities in combat roles, can you think of  
18 any physical standards that you think should be lowered?

19         General Milley: No, not physical standards.

20         But let me make a comment on standards, though. I do  
21 not want anybody on the committee to think that either the  
22 Army or the Marines or the Navy or the Air Force did not  
23 have standards until we suddenly went through this. The  
24 United States Army has standards since Baron von Steuben  
25 showed up at Valley Forge. We are a standards-based Army.

1 We are a standards-based military. Always have been. And  
2 they are written down and they are codified and we adjust  
3 them over time based on the realities of battlefield, new  
4 technologies, et cetera, et cetera.

5 In this particular case, for infantry and armor, we  
6 have developed a new set of gender-neutral standards. And  
7 those are measured against one thing, neither male nor  
8 female. They are measured against the requirements of  
9 combat. And to answer Senator Hirono's comment, those have  
10 been rigorously reviewed. We will be glad to provide them.  
11 Peer-reviewed through all kinds of technical analysis. But  
12 we are definitely standards-based. These are rigorous, and  
13 they will be fairly applied to both males and females.

14 Senator Tillis: General Neller, the Marines have the  
15 entry-level recruit training that is segregated I guess. It  
16 is on a glide path to be integrated. Do you believe that is  
17 a good idea?

18 General Neller: I would not describe it as segregated.  
19 At entry level, at recruit training at MCRD Paris Island --

20 Senator Tillis: That is a great point

21 General Neller: -- we allow our female marines to  
22 train separately, and then as they get further into the  
23 training, they do more and more integrated training with the  
24 male recruits.

25 Senator Tillis: What in your professional military

1 opinion are the benefits of that approach?

2           General Neller: Because of the data we have on the  
3 physical differential and because of the opportunity for  
4 these female recruits to be led by female drill instructors  
5 and female officers, they see females as role models. There  
6 is no distraction and they are allowed to compete. They see  
7 other women that can lead and compete. They get an  
8 opportunity to improve their physical fitness, and then that  
9 gives them an opportunity to gain some confidence before  
10 they would then be put in -- is there going to be eventually  
11 -- I mean, once they graduate as marines, every part of our  
12 training from marine combat training to our MOS training of  
13 the operational force is fully integrated, men and women  
14 serving side by side.

15           Senator Tillis: Do you agree, as some do, that it sets  
16 them up to actually better compete for those positions as  
17 they progress through their training?

18           General Neller: My personal view right now is at the  
19 beginning that initial part is critical and sets them up for  
20 success.

21           Senator Tillis: And, Mr. Chair, I will just close with  
22 this comment. I would like to get from the Secretaries,  
23 given the work that has been done, the policy that is being  
24 implemented, some understanding of what the long-term cost  
25 could potentially be as we implement this program, anything

1 from MILCON costs to health care costs, a number of other  
2 factors. We have heard numbers about injury rates, a number  
3 of other things. I am assuming that that was looked at  
4 before the policy recommendations were put into place, and I  
5 would like to get that information. We will make a request  
6 to your agencies.

7 Thank you.

8 Chairman McCain: Senator Blumenthal?

9 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
10 you for holding this hearing.

11 I want to thank all of the witnesses who are here today  
12 for your extraordinary service to our Nation and for your  
13 very thoughtful and insightful testimony today.

14 In the military, as elsewhere, women are breaking down  
15 barriers and proving they are equally capable professionally  
16 and personally. And I happen to believe that our military  
17 will be made stronger by the policies that you are  
18 implementing, policies that are the result of planning an  
19 action that began in 2012, and our military will be made  
20 stronger as we open billets to women without lowering  
21 standards and without imposing quotas.

22 And I think, Secretary Mabus, you made that point  
23 extremely well, and I am going to quote it again. Lowering  
24 standards would be unacceptable to every marine, especially  
25 those women who choose to compete for these positions. I

1 think that is a very profoundly important point here, that  
2 women do not want standards lowered. They do not want  
3 outcomes dictated or quotas for positions. It is simply  
4 about equal access, in fact with higher standards not lower  
5 standards.

6 And the other point that you made very well I thought,  
7 Secretary Mabus, is that this is not about women in combat.  
8 Women have been serving in combat and have been proving  
9 themselves in combat. In fact, they served, for example, in  
10 Iraq in the Lioness Program where female marines and  
11 soldiers volunteered to join combat troops at checkpoints  
12 and conducted outreach operations with Iraqi women. I  
13 remember listening to Admiral McRaven describe the role that  
14 women play with his special forces teams in both Iraq and  
15 Afghanistan. And I am very proud of the work that they have  
16 done in the Army as well. U.S. Army Special Operations  
17 Command created an all-woman cultural support team to work  
18 along with Green Berets and Army Rangers in combat zones.  
19 And just last year, women again proved they are capable of  
20 competing in combat positions by meeting the grueling  
21 gender-neutral standards required to pass Army Ranger  
22 Schools, including a native of Connecticut, Orange,  
23 Connecticut, Captain Kristen Griest.

24 I want to ask a question that focuses on a different  
25 part of this process, as the ranking member of the Veterans

1     Affairs Committee, whether we are doing enough to plan --  
2     both the Department of Defense and the VA -- for the  
3     cooperation that is necessary to meet the needs of our women  
4     veterans after they leave the service. Connecticut just  
5     opened a women's health care center within the West Haven  
6     facility, a profoundly important step forward, but many  
7     facilities, hospital facilities and others, around the  
8     country have failed to provide those women-oriented health  
9     care centers. And they require specialties that are not  
10    present for men. So I would like to ask that question  
11    generally of this panel, whether there has been sufficient  
12    planning, what more should be done for our women veterans.

13           Mr. Mabus: Well, Senator, as you very correctly  
14    pointed out, women have been serving for a long time with  
15    distinction and are becoming an ever-increasing part of our  
16    veterans community. And we owe all of our veterans that  
17    have served us so well that standard of care.

18           And I think that speaking for the Defense Department,  
19    we are trying to make it more seamless as you leave the  
20    service and you move into the VA system. We are trying to  
21    make it an easier process, a process that does not put the  
22    members under stress. To a point that Secretary Murphy made  
23    a good bit earlier, now 18 percent of Navy is female. At  
24    the Naval Academy, this year it is 29 percent that are  
25    female, and it is going up every year. And so that is



1 something we have got to pay very close attention to not  
2 only while people are in but as they transition back to  
3 civilian life.

4 Chairman McCain: Senator Ayotte?

5 Senator Ayotte: Thank you, Chairman.

6 I want to thank each of you for your leadership and  
7 service to our Nation.

8 I fully support giving women the opportunity to both  
9 meet and exceed the high standards set by each of our  
10 branches of the military. But as the chair of the Readiness  
11 Committee, what I would like as a commitment from each of  
12 you is that as we implement this policy, that we ensure that  
13 individual and unit standards are focused solely on combat  
14 readiness and nothing else. And I think the women of this  
15 Nation would want that. I think the women who are going to  
16 have the opportunity and who have served so admirably and  
17 defended this Nation already in combat would want that. So  
18 I want to make sure that I have the assurance of each of you  
19 that that will be the case.

20 General Neller: Yes, Senator.

21 Mr. Mabus: Absolutely.

22 Mr. Murphy: Yes, ma'am.

23 General Milley: Yes, Senator.

24 Senator Ayotte: Thank you.

25 I want to bring up an issue, when we talk about women

1 serving in our military, that is really one that has  
2 bothered me, and that is that we have women guards who are  
3 guarding the prisoners and terrorists at Guantanamo. And  
4 they are women who are fully qualified, capable to guard  
5 anyone there. Yet, there has been a court order in place  
6 since January of last year for, in particular, the 9/11  
7 terrorists that essentially says that the women who are  
8 guards there are not permitted to actually transport the  
9 9/11 five to legal meetings and commission proceedings. And  
10 Senator Ernst and Senator Scott and I went to Guantanamo.  
11 We met with the women guards there. And I can assure you  
12 what they told us is we just want to do our jobs.

13 So as we are here having a hearing today on giving  
14 women an opportunity in all billets in the military, here we  
15 have a billet that women are already serving and yet there  
16 is a court order in place that I believe OSD has not stepped  
17 up aggressively enough to stand up for the rights of our  
18 women in the military to perform their jobs and that we have  
19 essentially let terrorists dictate terms that are completely  
20 unreasonable, not based on any religious views, even though  
21 they are claiming it. And your predecessor -- not your  
22 predecessor but the former Commander of SOUTHCOM, General  
23 Kelly, was very upset about this, brought this to my  
24 attention. Previously Secretary Carter has been before this  
25 committee and also described this as outrageous.

1           So I would like to know, especially General Milley --  
2 most of these women guards serve in the Army -- and  
3 Secretary Murphy as well, but all of you, what do you think  
4 about this. And should we not be more aggressively standing  
5 up for the rights of our women in the military to do their  
6 jobs rather than what exists right now, which is the right  
7 of the 9/11 terrorists that are bogus in terms of the  
8 ability of our women to do their jobs in the military? So I  
9 want to get your comment on this.

10           General Milley: I personally think it is ridiculous  
11 that these women are not allowed to do that job. I probably  
12 have other words that cannot be said behind this microphone  
13 right now about how I feel about that whole situation. I  
14 agree with you, Senator.

15           Mr. Murphy: Senator, I concur with the Chief. And let  
16 me be clear. We do not take orders from the terrorists but  
17 there was a court order here and we take an oath to support  
18 and defend the Constitution.

19           But I will tell you, ma'am, that I will go back -- I am  
20 now 4 weeks into this job. I will go back and meet with our  
21 general counsel, Mrs. Starzak, and look at this issue and  
22 report back to you.

23           Senator Ayotte: I would appreciate it because I have  
24 been completely unsatisfied, having been a former prosecutor  
25 myself, with the level of defense that has been given and

1 advocacy on behalf of our women in the military here. So I  
2 hope you will do that, please.

3 Secretary Mabus?

4 Mr. Mabus: I share exactly your words. It is  
5 outrageous. Women need to be able to do the jobs that they  
6 are qualified to do.

7 General Neller: Senator, I agree with the rest of the  
8 panel.

9 Senator Ayotte: Thank you all, and I do appreciate  
10 your willingness to pursue this, Secretary Murphy, because I  
11 think we can do a much better job for standing up for their  
12 rights as opposed to what is in place right now. To me, to  
13 let these 9/11 terrorists dictate what our women in the  
14 military can do is outrageous. Thank you.

15 Chairman McCain: Senator Gillibrand?

16 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 We have had a lot of discussion about the Marine Corps'  
18 assessment, and I want to clarify something. I think we can  
19 all agree that the women who volunteered to do the Ground  
20 Combat Element Integrated Task Force assessment were  
21 exceptional in their willingness to participate in a study  
22 that they were not specifically trained for and did not have  
23 the experience necessary to actually compete in that study  
24 effectively.

25 The design of the research overall was very flawed.

1 First of all, these female marines were screened for the  
2 basic physical fitness test, but were competing in a large  
3 part with male marines who had years of experience and  
4 training and many of them in combat positions.

5 Further, there was no bar that the groups competed had  
6 to meet. Rather, they were competing against each other.  
7 So all we really know from the study is that groups that had  
8 the right experience and training and more training did  
9 better. We do not actually have data that can be used  
10 because these women who were asked to participate did not  
11 have the same training and experience as those who had been  
12 doing it for a long time.

13 And similarly, on the injury rates, for those women who  
14 did do this, they only had the basic standard PT test. They  
15 did not do specific training to do these missions and to  
16 complete them.

17 So I just want my colleagues to fully understand that  
18 this assessment is not designed to give us the data that we  
19 actually need. I think it is fundamentally flawed.

20 So, Secretary Mabus, I would like your view on that,  
21 and then, General Neller, I would like your view on that.

22 Mr. Mabus: When Secretary Panetta and Chairman of the  
23 Joint Chiefs Dempsey set us on this road, they said that the  
24 default position -- that the assumption was that every  
25 position would be opened and that any sort of exception

1 would have to be very narrowly tailored and would have to be  
2 based on job-specific individual standards.

3 And the Marine test, as I have said here before, did  
4 one great thing that General Neller has talked about, and  
5 that is it codified the standards that each individual  
6 marine in a unit had to meet in order to get that MOS.

7 But I think we have to focus on individuals. If an  
8 individual meets that standard, if an individual meets the  
9 gender-neutral, combat-specific, job-specific standard, then  
10 that person should get to do the job.

11 Senator Gillibrand: Well, I just think that too many  
12 of the Senators who were listening to that summary of what  
13 the Marine study showed are having a misimpression. We are  
14 not comparing average women to average men. We are talking  
15 about extraordinary women. And if you look at the three  
16 women who just completed Ranger School, these three women  
17 are extraordinary women. And so if we were to assess can  
18 they do the job, yes, they can do the job. But again, to  
19 base too much or to rely too much on a study that did not  
20 have that level of training and rigor ahead of time so that  
21 they had the same experience, the same background, it is  
22 unfair to draw too many conclusions from it is all I want to  
23 say. I just hope you do not draw any conclusions.

24 And also, no one mentioned the fact that when they  
25 actually tested for complex problem solving tasks, the mixed

1 units did better. So there is an area where women are  
2 improving the results of these units.

3 And we all know that combat is going to continue to  
4 become more and more complex over time. Warfare is going to  
5 continue to become more and more complex over time. So  
6 please do not lose sight of the assets that these  
7 extraordinary women are going to bring to your missions.  
8 They have skills beyond what a typical marine may have. And  
9 so that is going to enhance what you will be able to do  
10 long-term.

11 General Neller, I would love your thoughts too.

12 General Neller: Well, Senator, first of all, I think  
13 it would be unfair to any of those marines, but particularly  
14 the females that participated in the GCEITF, to say they  
15 were not trained. They all went to MOS school, and so they  
16 received and have now received the MOS whether it is  
17 infantry, artillery, armor.

18 When I look at their physical data, the male PFT,  
19 pretty consistent. The one differential was in pull-ups.  
20 But as you said, these were exceptional female marines.  
21 They did not have to do this. They volunteered. They did  
22 our Corps, our country a great service, and we owe them a  
23 debt of gratitude. And that is one of the reasons their  
24 unit received a meritorious unit accommodation at the  
25 conclusion of their training.

1           Now, after they went to the MOS training, they formed  
2 into this Ground Combat Element Task Force for 4 months of  
3 preparatory training where they trained with men and  
4 developed the skills that they needed to go do this  
5 evaluation.

6           Senator Gillibrand: But the 4 months does not compare  
7 to the years that a lot of these units had been already  
8 working together doing this MOS.

9           General Neller: None of these marines had been in this  
10 unit. This was a formed unit. But it is fair to say -- I  
11 will agree with you -- that their experience in these MOS's  
12 was probably not up to the level of their male counterparts.  
13 But in every other standard that I can tell, I would say  
14 that they were as good, if not better, in overall quality in  
15 their service as their male marine counterparts.

16           Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

17           Chairman McCain: So do you believe that the study was  
18 fatally flawed?

19           General Neller: Sir, I do not. We have had the study  
20 peer-reviewed by numerous groups.

21           Chairman McCain: So you think it was a legitimate  
22 study.

23           General Neller: Within the time we had, yes, Chairman.

24           Chairman McCain: Senator Sullivan?

25           Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I



1 appreciate the hearing.

2 I appreciate all of you testifying today on a very,  
3 very important issue, but I think from your testimony and  
4 the questions you are seeing from the members of this  
5 committee, it is certainly not an easy issue.

6 You are talking about schools. I happen to have been  
7 through the Marine infantry officer course, a recon school,  
8 SERE school. These are very difficult schools that most men  
9 have a hard time with because it is about a tough  
10 profession.

11 I think Sergeant Major LeHew, when he was talking about  
12 this recently, the Marine Corps sergeant major put it very  
13 succinctly. In regards to infantry, there is no trophy for  
14 second place. You perform or die. Serious, serious  
15 discussion here.

16 And I am a Marine infantry officer but like General  
17 Neller mentioned, I am also someone who has three daughters,  
18 three teenage daughters. All their lives, my wife and I  
19 have been telling them that if they work hard, earn  
20 something, that they should be able to do anything anyone  
21 else does -- anyone.

22 So I support the opportunity for women to serve in any  
23 capacity in the military as long as the standards are not  
24 lowered. And I think you are seeing that as a consensus  
25 here.

1           One thing that has not been talked about enough -- I  
2           want to talk a little bit about the process. We know that  
3           Secretary Panetta allowed the services to request an  
4           exemption, and after thorough study with hundreds of marines  
5           and men and women serving gave their all to put together a  
6           study.

7           Secretary Mabus, I have to tell you I have been very  
8           disappointed in terms of the process, how you have dealt  
9           with the Marine Corps' desire to look at this really  
10          difficult issue. As soon as the Marines published their  
11          study, within 24 hours of this 1,000-page study, you came  
12          out and said you saw no reason for an exemption. Did you  
13          read the study?

14          Mr. Mabus: Senator, what I said, I said countless  
15          times, since the time that Secretary Panetta and Chairman  
16          Dempsey had set us on this path, that the presumption was  
17          that we were going --

18          Senator Sullivan: You said I do not see any reason for  
19          an exemption the day after the study was published. Based  
20          on what?

21          Mr. Mabus: The conclusions.

22          Senator Sullivan: Did you read the study?

23          Mr. Mabus: I have read the study.

24          Senator Sullivan: Did you read the study before you  
25          stated that?

1           Mr. Mabus: I had read the conclusions that the Marines  
2 drew from the study prior to that, and those conclusions  
3 which were based on averages and not on individual marines  
4 --

5           Senator Sullivan: Let me ask another question related  
6 to the study. And Senator Gillibrand just talked about it.  
7 You then implied that the women marines involved in the  
8 study were not the top-flight marines. General Neller I  
9 think just said that was not the case.

10           And then on public radio, you essentially told the  
11 American people that the Marines were not looking at this in  
12 an objective manner. You said, quote, it started out with a  
13 fairly large component of the men in the Marine Corps  
14 thinking that this is not a good idea and women will never  
15 be able to do this. When you start out with that mindset,  
16 you are almost presupposing the outcome. I think the only  
17 person presupposing the outcome in this entire process was  
18 you.

19           General Neller, were you presupposing the outcome on  
20 this after millions of dollars and hundreds of marines to  
21 put together this report? Is that what you were doing, sir?

22           General Neller: We were all waiting for the results of  
23 the study, but I think we had been out and visited and we  
24 had seen some things. But there was a lot of analysis that  
25 had to be done, and it was a short period of time. No, I

1 was not presupposing it.

2           Senator Sullivan: Let me just make another point. I  
3 think, Secretary Mabus, for whatever reason you have seemed  
4 agitated, annoyed about what the Marines have been doing  
5 about their study -- your public statements. And yet, they  
6 were the only service, as far as I can tell, doing the hard  
7 research on a very, very difficult issue. To me it seems  
8 like you might want to think about complimenting the  
9 leadership of the Marine Corps as opposed to implying that  
10 they were not taking this seriously. They were clearly  
11 taking it seriously. In my view, they were probably the  
12 service that was taking it the most seriously.

13           Let me ask one final question that relates to this. On  
14 January 1, you directed the Marines to come up with a  
15 detailed plan to integrate boot camp within 15 days. Now, I  
16 am a little biased here, but I think it is commonly known  
17 that the Marine Corps probably has the best basic training  
18 of any service in the United States military, probably any  
19 service in the world.

20           I have been on this committee for a year. I do not  
21 think I have seen a more outrageous or ill-advised order  
22 from a service secretary to tell the Marines that they are  
23 going to take boot camp, which has been honed and put  
24 together for the benefit of the American people over decades  
25 -- and you are going to tell them and order them to get a

1 detailed plan in 15 days. Is that even remotely possible?  
2 And why did you issue such an order when nobody on this  
3 committee thinks that that was remotely possible to  
4 integrate boot camp? Did you read the Kassebaum-Baker  
5 report, unanimous committee?

6 Mr. Mabus: Senator, it was not only possible, but the  
7 Marines met that. They had been working on this for months  
8 and years --

9 Senator Sullivan: Did you read the Kassebaum --

10 Mr. Mabus: -- how boot camp is organized. And you  
11 will be happy to know, Senator, that they met that deadline.  
12 They fully briefed me on January 14th and came up with --

13 Senator Sullivan: That is because the Marines are a  
14 can-do organization, Mr. Secretary.

15 Mr. Mabus: The Marines are an incredibly capable  
16 organization. I am in awe of the Marine Corps and of  
17 individual marines and the sincerity and the service and the  
18 work that they have done on behalf of this country. And as  
19 I said in my opening statement, it is the greatest honor of  
20 my life to lead the United States Marine Corps and the  
21 United States Navy.

22 What we have come to, because the Marines did such a  
23 good job of coming up with this, is the Marines have  
24 developed a very deliberate plan, a very ordered plan to  
25 begin to look at lessons learned and how they can more fully

1 integrate boot camp to give us better marines, which they  
2 have done. As Commandant Neller and I have talked about  
3 several times, boot camp has changed over and over and over  
4 again and always with the same aim and that is to make  
5 better marines, to make a better Marine Corps, and have a  
6 more lethal, more effective Marine Corps.

7 Senator Sullivan: How does your order square with the  
8 Kassebaum-Baker unanimous committee recommendation on the  
9 integration of our boot camps in the military?

10 Mr. Mabus: Well, Senator, I looked at all sorts of  
11 reports, but I also have gone on my almost 7 years --

12 Senator Sullivan: It does not. Does it? I mean, it  
13 directly contradicts the unanimous recommendation of that  
14 committee. Right? Just for the record.

15 Mr. Mabus: I think that is a completely irrelevant  
16 point, Senator.

17 Senator Sullivan: It is not irrelevant.

18 General Neller, do you think in your professional  
19 opinion having 14 days, because -- you probably did not take  
20 the day off on New Year's Day because you got an order and  
21 you were probably working on it. Do you think having 15  
22 days to put together a detailed plan to integrate the Marine  
23 Corps boot camp, an issue that has been studied, debated, on  
24 one of the most incredibly important institutions in not  
25 only the Marine Corps, in my view the United States military

1 -- do you think that was a reasonable request? It sounds  
2 like you did it, which does not surprise me. That is the  
3 Marine Corps ethos. Was that a legitimate request to do  
4 that within 14 days, one of the biggest issues I am sure the  
5 Corps as an institution has been struggling with for years  
6 -- 14 days to do that?

7 General Neller: Senator, what we did is we briefed the  
8 Secretary on how we do recruit training, and in part of that  
9 discussion, I believe -- I am not going to speak for him,  
10 but he understands and has a better view of why we do it the  
11 way we do it. And as he stated, part of that discussion is  
12 that we are always trying to get better, and we will  
13 continue to look at ways that we can further improve recruit  
14 training.

15 Chairman McCain: You are not answering the question,  
16 General. You are not answering Senator Sullivan's question.  
17 Repeat the question.

18 Senator Sullivan: Was it a reasonable order, given the  
19 years and years and years that the Marine Corps has been  
20 looking at this and studying this and committees like the  
21 Kassebaum-Baker unanimous committee said it was not a good  
22 idea, to have 14 days to come up with a, quote, detailed  
23 plan to integrate Marine Corps boot camp? I just think it  
24 was outrageous, but I am wondering in your professional  
25 military judgment.

1           General Neller:  When we briefed on the 14th, we did  
2 not provide a plan of fully integrated recruit training but  
3 talked about how we do conduct recruit training.

4           Chairman McCain:  Well, it is unfortunate.

5           Your time has expired.

6           You know, Secretary Mabus, this would have been a lot  
7 easier if you had not called in the press immediately and  
8 debunked what many of us view was a legitimate study without  
9 even reading it, and I do not believe that you read a 1,000-  
10 page document in one day.  I am sorry.  But I do not believe  
11 it.  And so your handling of this issue has really  
12 complicated the whole situation for those of us who fully  
13 support the integration of women in the military.  It was  
14 done on a peremptory, "go to the media first" fashion.

15           General Neller, I would just like to ask.  Do you want  
16 to, for the record, articulate the concerns that you have  
17 about this entire evolution?

18           General Neller:  Senator, there are a lot of concerns  
19 that we have talked about, and General Milley articulated  
20 them.  There are a lot of things we do not know.

21           I will tell you that one of my biggest concerns is that  
22 the perception, which is totally inaccurate, that the Marine  
23 Corps does not value the service of the females that serve  
24 in the Marine Corps.  As I stated earlier, we are looking at  
25 how we can increase the number of females in the Marine



1 Corps. This is about combat effectiveness. This is about  
2 health and welfare of the force. This is about talent  
3 management, putting every marine in the place where they can  
4 best contribute.

5 So we have been given an order to integrate. We have,  
6 we believe, a fully detailed plan to integrate. We are  
7 going to give every marine the opportunity to compete. We  
8 have the standards that we think will allow them to be  
9 successful.

10 Chairman McCain: I asked if you had concerns, General.

11 General Neller: I have concerns about retention. I  
12 have concerns about injury rates. I have concerns about  
13 propensity to reenlist, career progression. I have concerns  
14 about what is going to happen if the numbers are low, which  
15 they probably will be at the beginning. But I think the  
16 plan that we have -- again, I have concerns about things I  
17 do not know what the answers are going to be too, Chairman.  
18 But I think we have a plan in place where we can monitor  
19 that. And I would ask that we continue to be required to  
20 come back to this committee and report on how we are doing  
21 on implementation.

22 Chairman McCain: Senator Reed?

23 Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Senator, so I believe that Kassebaum report was done in  
25 1997.

1           Senator Sullivan: I believe it was 1998.

2           Senator Reed: 1998. So we are looking at an evolving  
3 situation. I just want to make that clear in terms of  
4 reference to the report.

5           The final point I want to make is that what I have  
6 discerned from the entire panel is this is going to be a  
7 very careful, orchestrated, multiyear process, which will be  
8 reviewed, should be reviewed, should be reported back to the  
9 committee, and that the ultimate test will be the  
10 effectiveness of units. And that rationale is because that  
11 is what makes Marine regiments work, its platoons,  
12 companies, battalions that function, and that will be the  
13 test. And I think unless anyone disagrees with me, I will  
14 conclude with that point.

15           Chairman McCain: I thank the witnesses.

16           The hearing is adjourned.

17           [Whereupon, at 12:38 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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