

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Lieutenant General Steven S. Nordhaus, ANG
Nominee for Appointment to be Chief of the National Guard Bureau

Duties

Section 10502 of title 10, U.S. Code, describes the duties and functions of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and requires that the officer nominated for appointment to the position have had a level of operational experience in a position of significant responsibility, professional military education, and demonstrated expertise in national defense and homeland defense matters commensurate with the requirements of the position.

What is your understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau?

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB) serves as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and a military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. As a member of the JCS, he has the specific additional responsibility of addressing matters involving the National Guard, to include non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions. The Chief is also a principal advisor to the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force and the Chiefs of Staff of both Services on matters related to the National Guard, Army National Guard of the United States and Air National Guard of the United States. If confirmed, I will provide my best military advice and judgment in exercising these duties to ensure the responsibilities and capabilities of the National Guard are considered in a planned and deliberate manner in accordance with law and national strategy. I will continuously engage with our Federal and State partners, the Adjutants General (TAG), and the Services to ensure all defense requirements are readily met by the soldiers and airmen of the National Guard.

Section 10502(c) of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Chief of the National Guard Bureau is a principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on matters involving non-federalized National Guard forces and on other matters as determined by the Secretary of Defense.

In your view, what functions are included in “matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces” about which you would be prepared to advise the Secretary of Defense?

Non-Federalized National Guard includes National Guard soldiers and airmen in State active-duty status to carry out State missions as well as service members serving in a Title 32 duty status to carry out the Department of Defense (DOD) missions. The

CNGB is responsible for addressing matters of non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense, civil support and Title 32 activities that build readiness for the Services and support the Combatant Commands. Non-Federalized National Guard forces serve under the command of their respective State or Territorial Governors and TAG. The CNGB coordinates with TAG to maintain real-time awareness and enable the capabilities and readiness of National Guard forces to support the complete spectrum of State and Federal responses. In a non-Federalized role, members of the National Guard are often the first military responders in a domestic emergency.

What is the nature of “matters involving non-federalized National Guard Forces” about which you would expect to be called upon to advise the Secretary of Defense?

The CNGB is uniquely situated to provide the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense with the viewpoints and insights of TAG commanding our non-Federalized National Guard forces including soldiers and airmen serving on State Active Duty. I would expect to advise on matters in which the National Guard will be called upon for homeland defense and civil support missions, as well as building readiness under Title 32 authorities to support other Federal missions, including Combatant Command missions upon mobilization. If confirmed, I will establish and maintain a close and professional relationship with the Chairman and Secretary, in order to provide informed and timely advice and communicate openly and directly on all matters impacting the National Guard and the Armed Forces as a whole.

On what other matters would you expect the Secretary of Defense to seek your advice?

With respect to Title 10 of the U.S. Code, I would advise the Secretary of Defense on the readiness of the National Guard for federal activation and mobilization in coordination with the Military Departments and supported commands receiving those forces. I also understand that, as a member of the JCS, the Secretary may seek my advice regarding issues and questions that impact Components other than the National Guard. In that respect, I believe it is my responsibility to understand issues involving other Components, consider the impacts to that particular Component, explain how the National Guard may be impacted by the issues, and offer military advice as to what I believe is best for the Department as a whole, as well as National Security.

What background, education, and experience do you possess that qualify you to perform these duties?

I believe that that I am qualified to serve as the CNGB based on my military commands, professional military education, and strategic leadership positions and

experience. I have held key command positions that have honed my expertise in domestic and civil defense operations. I currently serve as the Commander of the Continental U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command Region and 1st Air Force (U.S. Air Forces Northern and U.S. Air Forces Space) where I am directly responsible for safeguarding the airspace of the continental United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Additional leadership and command positions include Commander of the Air National Guard Readiness Center, Director of Operations and Logistics at the National Guard Bureau NORAD and USNORTHCOM as the NORAD Deputy Director of Operations and commands at the Wing and Squadron levels. My combat experience includes Southern Watch, Vigilant Warrior, Northern Watch, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom. From an education standpoint, I've completed Air War College, multiple advanced fellowships, and hold a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership.

Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, particularly in regard to serving as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

If confirmed, I will continue the work of my predecessor to establish structured and systematic processes within the National Guard Bureau that enhance my ability to provide sound and timely advice to the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force, and the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force. I will also work to ensure responsibilities assigned to the CNGB in law, Department of Defense policy, and Service policy are fully addressed through the National Guard Bureau's internal policies and procedures.

In light of the lines of effort set forth in the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS), what other duties do you anticipate the Secretary of Defense would assign to you, if confirmed?

In regard to the number one priority of the National Defense Strategy (NDS) of defending the homeland, I expect an increased role for the National Guard in planning and preparing for homeland defense. Internationally, there will likely be a continued emphasis on the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) to continue to build and develop relationships with allies and partners. I believe the National Guard will be asked to take on more partner nations as the strategic environment changes and the program evolves to align with NDS goals and activities. I anticipate a continued role for the National Guard in supporting civil authorities and interagency planning for and reacting to events that may require support to civil authorities.

If confirmed, what innovative ideas would you consider providing to the Secretary of Defense with regard to the mission, functions, and organization of the National Guard Bureau?

Adapting the organization of the National Guard Bureau to take advantage of evolving missions and functions is essential to supporting the needs of the Joint Force above and below the threshold of mobilization. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Services modernization initiatives as well as existing innovation programs geared toward DOD 's commitment to increasing efficiency of business practices. Furthermore, I will continue National Guard participation Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) prototyping and other innovation activities, the Defense Innovation Community of Entities (DICE), and joint experimentation with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for DOD Research & Engineering (OUSD (R&E))) linked to the delivery of new capabilities through the Rapid Defense Experimentation Reserve, Defense Innovation Acceleration, and Rapid Prototyping Programs to enable to the warfighter as part of the Joint Warfighting Concept. I will promote internal National Guard innovation efforts focused on addressing National Guard capability gaps tied to domestic civil support missions and overseas deployment operations. The National Guard must pursue and resource innovation initiatives to keep pace with new threats and the evolving character of war in order to be relevant as the primary combat reserve of the Army and Air Force.

If confirmed, what innovative ideas would you consider providing to the Secretaries and Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force with regard to enhancing the organization, training, and equipping of the Army and Air National Guards of the United States?

If confirmed, like my predecessors, I will recommend the Secretaries and Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force promote interoperability of the Army and Air National Guards through common organization, training, and equipping. An important consideration in Force Design is ensuring appropriate Component balance. I will further recommend increased involvement of the Air and Army National Guards in the Air Force and Army innovation communities' experimentation and the Defense Innovation Community of Entities (DICE) to advance joint warfighting concepts. Given the projected scope and duration of future conflicts, having a ready and effective operational reserve is imperative to overcoming adversaries. I will also encourage Air and Army National Guard collaboration with service data analytics communities to incentivize the development of the right skill sets in our people and provide them the computing power for leveraging data to better inform senior leader decision-making.

If confirmed, what duties and responsibilities would you assign to the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau?

The position performs the duties of the CNGB when there is a vacancy in the office of the CNGB or in the absence or disability of the Chief. If confirmed, I will assign the Vice with executing responsibilities to ready him or her to act as Chief in the event of my absence or disability. I would assign duties of significant importance to the Vice Chief, such as oversight of the United States Property and Fiscal Office. These duties

would be commensurate with the December 2023 amendment to section 10505 of Title 10, U.S. Code, in which Congress made the Vice Chief a statutory O-10 position and with CNGB Instruction 5101.01a (29 July 2024).

The Army National Guard of the United States is a component of the U.S. Army, and the Air National Guard of the United States is a component to the U.S. Air Force.

What is the role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau with respect to these command relationships?

The CNGB does not command federalized National Guard forces. Rather, the National Guard Bureau is the channel of communications between the federal and state authorities regarding issues impacting those federalized National Guard forces. Under the National Guard Bureau Charter, the Chief has a responsibility to communicate with the Combatant Commands regarding the mobilization, and the Chief also serves as the channel of communication between the federal military authorities and the State respecting its federalized National Guard forces.

What are the roles of the Director of the Army National Guard and the Director of the Air Guard with respect to these relationships?

The Directors of the Army and Air National Guard assist the CNGB in carrying out the functions of the National Guard Bureau as they relate to their respective Service. The Directors provide their leadership and expertise to further the mission of both the National Guard Bureau and the Services. Direct coordination between the Directors, the respective Service staffs is authorized.

What is your view of the current command and control relationship between units in the Air National Guard that perform core space functions and the Space Force?

The command and control relationship is the same as it is for any other Air National Guard unit that is non-federalized. While non-federalized, the unit is under state command and control. It may perform missions in support of the Air Force and Space Force in that status consistent with section 502 of Title 32, U.S. Code.

What is your opinion of the Administration's proposal to move these Air National Guard units that perform space functions into the Space Force?

Space superiority is critical to our Joint Force and our allies and partners. For the last 27 years, the National Guard has performed critical space missions including missile warning, space domain awareness, and surveillance and reconnaissance. Until a decision is made, and if confirmed, I will continue to support the mission to ensure our forces are ready and our people are taken of.

Relationships

If confirmed to be the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, what would be your relationship with, and on what issues would expect to engage and collaborate with each of the following officials or organizations?

The Secretary of Defense

I will advise the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, on National Guard matters, including homeland defense, civil support missions, and building readiness in National Guard formations. I will also advise the Secretary of Defense on all military matters as a member of the JCS. I will build professional relationships that enable the Secretary to provide timely and informed advice to the President.

The Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force

If confirmed, as the principal statutory advisor to the Secretaries, I will develop strong relationships and open lines of communication with the Services Secretaries to advise them on all National Guard, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard matters.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, particularly with regard to providing advice to the Secretary of Defense

I will establish and maintain a close and professional relationship with the Chairman to communicate directly and openly on any policy matters impacting the National Guard and the Armed Forces. I will assist the Chairman in providing military advice to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. I will provide informed and timely advice and opinions in the performance of his responsibilities in planning strategic direction and contingency operations; advising the Secretary of Defense on requirements, programs, and budgets identified by the Combatant Commands; developing joint doctrine; reporting on roles and missions; representation on the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations; and other duties as prescribed by law, the President, or the Secretary of Defense. I would also advise on matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, particularly with regard to improving the Joint Qualified Officer system to better meet the needs of National Guard officers.

It is imperative that the National Guard Bureau continue to prioritize Joint Qualification and I will work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and

Readiness to ensure that these opportunities are afforded to the officers of the Army and Air National Guards. Further, I will work with TAG to identify opportunities to identify and develop National Guard officers within the Joint environment.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

I will work closely with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force, to ensure the effective integration of National Guard capabilities into a cohesive Total Force. Furthermore, I will actively coordinate with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security in developing policies, and procedures affecting National Guard forces.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security

I will coordinate closely with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force, regarding the use of National Guard personnel and resources for federal missions assigned to the National Guard in accordance with section 502 of Title 32, U.S. Code, or in support of State missions. I will assist the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs in carrying out their responsibilities to incorporate in DoD policy the roles and responsibilities of the National Guard Bureau and the National Guard.

The combatant commanders, particularly the Commander of U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)

As established by the Unified Command Plan, and subject to the direction of the President, the Combatant Commanders perform their assigned duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, my relationships with the Combatant Commanders will focus on open communication. Specific focus will be given to USNORTHCOM and INDOPACOM to coordinate on matters involving Homeland Defense and non-Federalized National Guard domestic operations. I will advocate to conduct planning, wargames, and exercises with Combatant Commands to improve our relationships and build readiness of the joint force through integration of the National Guard.

The Military Department Assistant Secretaries responsible for Reserve Component Matters

If confirmed, I will build and maintain a partnership with the Assistant Secretaries. I will confer with the respective Service Secretaries on areas where it is appropriate and beneficial to collaborate to ensure Total Force integration.

The Directors of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard

The Directors of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard are senior officials of the National Guard Bureau and assist the CNGB in carrying out the functions of the National Guard Bureau as they relate to their respective Services.

The Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for Guard and Reserve Matters

These positions no longer exist. The provision in title 10, establishing these positions, 10 USC 155a, was repealed in 2016. [Reference: §155a. Repealed. Pub. L. 114–328, div. A, title V, §502(a)(1), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2102]

The Chiefs of the Reserve of each of the Services

If confirmed, I will work with the Reserve Chiefs on matters that have overlapping equities and implications between the National Guard and Reserve Components.

The Reserve Forces Policy Board

The Reserve Forces Policy Board, as codified in section 10301 of title 10, U.S. Code, serves as an independent adviser to the Secretary of Defense to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary on strategies, policies, and practices designed to improve and enhance the capabilities, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Reserve Components. If confirmed, upon request and through appropriate coordination, I will nominate officers or retired officers of the Army and Air National Guard for recommendation by the Service Secretaries to the Secretary of Defense for appointment to the Board and to serve as Board staff. I would make officers of the Army and Air National Guard available as witnesses or subject matter experts to assist the Board in performing its functions. Additionally, in coordination with the Board, I will advocate for matters important to the unique aspects of the Reserve Component on matters of parity that affect recruiting, retention, and quality of life for National Guard soldiers and airmen.

The Council of Governors and the National Governors Association

I would work with the Council of Governors on matters related to the National Guard, homeland defense, civil support, and other matters of mutual interest consistent with Executive Order 13528. As a Federal participant in the Council, I would be ideally situated to provide information to these organizations and listen to the governors' concerns to ensure the National Guard can be responsive to their needs. I believe that it is my responsibility to be a conduit of information between the Department of Defense, National Guard Bureau, and the governors. I would also work closely with the National Governors Association, a public policy organization which identifies

common priority issues and matters of public policy and governance at the state and national levels.

The State and Territorial Governors

The Governor, in general, and dependent on particular State or Territorial law, acts as Commander-in-Chief of the non-Federalized National Guards of their respective States and Territories. If confirmed, one of the most critical responsibilities I will have, is to act as the channel of communication between the State National Guards and the DOD on all National Guard related issues. I will work with Governors on concerns they have regarding their National Guards, at their request, and proactively engage as appropriate. Additionally, in accordance with Executive Order 13528, the CNGB participates as a federal official in the exchange of views, information, or advice between the DOD and the Council of Governors on matters related to the National Guard and civil support missions.

The Adjutants General of the States and Territories, including the Commanding General of the District of Columbia National Guard

TAG are foundational to the organization, administration, and operations of the National Guard. If confirmed, I will work directly with TAG, ensuring open and consistent communication to proactively seek their opinions, concerns, and advice on important National Guard matters.

The National Guard Association of the United States

The National Guard Association of the United States is a private non-federal entity that represents the interests of the National Guard. If confirmed, I will ensure the National Guard Bureau's compliance with all applicable laws and regulations related to interacting with private organizations.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

What is your assessment of the authorities of, and process by which members of the Joint Chiefs (other than the Chairman) provide military advice and opinions to the President, National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and civilian leadership of the Department of Defense?

Members of the Joint Chiefs provide individual military advice and collective advice to the President, National Security Council, Homeland Security Council, and Secretary of Defense pursuant to section 151 of Title 10, U.S. Code. If confirmed, I will use this authority to ensure my best military advice is conveyed to the President, National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and civilian leadership of the Department of Defense.

If confirmed, would you have any hesitancy in providing your best military advice to the President, National Security Council, Homeland Security Council, and civilian leadership of the Department of Defense, even when your advice and opinions might differ from those of the Chairman or the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

If confirmed, I will not hesitate to provide informed and timely advice to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense. I will work to resolve any differences of opinion, and when necessary, provide advice in addition to or in disagreement with the views to the Chairman or other members of the Joint Chief of Staff.

As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau has the specific responsibility of addressing matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions.

In your view, what functions are included in “matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions?”

Non-Federalized National Guard refers to the National Guard serving in a State active-duty status to carry out State missions and in a Title 32 duty status to carry out DOD missions. If confirmed, as a member of the JCS, I will have the specific responsibility of addressing matters involving National Guard in support of homeland defense and civil support missions. In a non-Federalized status, National Guard forces serve under the command of their respective State or Territorial Governors and TAG. Constant communication with TAG will be necessary to maintain real-time awareness on the capabilities and readiness to support these missions. Examples of National Guard support provided in a non-Federalized status include air defense, counterdrug, cyber defense, continuity of operations, critical infrastructure protection, National Guard Support of Civil Authorities, and natural disaster support.

If confirmed, what approach would you take to effectuating this specific responsibility?

Because non-Federalized National Guard forces serve under the command of their respective State or Territorial Governors and TAG, I will be in constant communication with TAG to provide the Chairman and Secretary of Defense with real-time awareness on the capabilities and readiness of the non-Federalized National Guard forces to support homeland defense and civil support missions.

In your view, should the Chief of the National Guard Bureau be consulted before the President invokes the Insurrection Act to federalize the National Guard?

Yes. As with the other members of the JCS, the CNGB has statutory responsibility to serve as a military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. CNGB must always provide best military advice to the President and is uniquely positioned to advise the President on best utilization, real-time capabilities, and availability of National Guard forces.

If confirmed, would you see it as your duty to represent and defend to the Joint Chiefs the National Guard position on matters coming before them, including matters pertaining to the National Guard in a Federal status? Please explain your answer.

Yes. If confirmed, I will have a duty to represent and defend National Guard equities, responsibilities, and capabilities to the Joint Chiefs, to include matters that pertain to the National Guard in a Federal status. To do so, I will continuously engage with TAG and our Federal and State partners on matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense, civil support, and Title 32 missions, and I will engage with the Directors of the Air and Army National Guard on matters involving Federalized National Guard forces in support of Service requirements.

Use of Military Force

In your view, what factors should be considered in making recommendations to the President on the use of military force?

For any use of military force, a primary concern would be to recommend careful consideration of and adherence to basic fundamental legal principles and requirements contained in the U.S. Constitution, federal statutes and Department policies governing how we employ DOD resources. For domestic operations, recommendations to the President concerning use of military force should consider a wide number of factors to include, but not limited to: unit and individual soldiers and airmen rights to self-defense; preference for de-escalation and confrontation avoidance with U.S. citizens and U.S. persons; coordination with civilian law enforcement agencies; exercise of restraint in using force to ensure any such use is reasonable in intensity, duration and magnitude, with due regard for the safety of innocent bystanders; a clear understanding of if and when non-deadly and deadly force may be used; the limitations in detaining individuals and carrying out other direct and indirect assistance to law enforcement; how the use of force will support or hinder the desired endstate; and the applicability of restrictions contained in the Posse Comitatus Act, Intelligence Oversight rules, and other law, policy and regulations. Ordinarily, federal military force should be a last resort after all non-military resources are exhausted.

For combatant activities OCONUS, recommendations to the President concerning the authorization for the use of military force should consider all factors necessary to determine compliance with U.S. law and the international laws of war. We need to ensure military employment is informed by developed military doctrine, clearly defined missions, Rules of Engagement and ensuring we are using and properly supporting our forces.

In your view, what is the appropriate role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in establishing policies for the use of military force and rules of engagement?

As military advisors to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, the Secretary of Defense, and the JCS present their best military advice while performing a wide range of functions under the law including policy formulation, developing military strategy and contingency plans, assessing ongoing operations, and reviewing combatant command requirements. Ultimately, the members of the JCS are advisors though, and not commanders. It is commanders who are responsible for establishing Rules of Engagement and Rules for the Use of Force for mission accomplishment that comply with the Law of Armed Conflict, domestic law, and the Standing Rules of Engagement and Rules for the Use of Force. Because the Joint Chiefs provide advice on any and all matters falling within the broad range of military topics and functions as specified in 10 U.S. Code, Ch. 5, this would include use of military force and rules of engagement.

In your view, what factors should be considered in making recommendations to the President about the use of the National Guard to address state civil disturbances and disaster relief operations?

The primary utilization of the National Guard forces providing civil disturbances and disaster relief operations is under state command and funding. Any impacts to combat readiness caused by using military forces (and other resources) to fulfill civilian authorities support requests must be considered carefully. The National Guard is a first responder, but generally only after civil capabilities are determined to be insufficient or exhausted. The National Guard is the military force of choice for these missions through community-based, locally focused relationships with civilian partners and populations. In accordance with DOD policy, requests from civil authorities and qualifying entities for assistance are evaluated for legality (compliance with laws, state and federal); lethality (potential use of lethal force by or against National Guard forces); risk (safety of National Guard forces); cost (including the source of funding and the effect on the National Guard and DOD budget); appropriateness (whether providing the requested support is in the interest of the DOD, and National Guard); and readiness (impact on the National Guard and the Department of Defense's ability to perform other primary missions). Consideration for National Guard support to civil authorities should be based on the following: 1) determination of insufficient capabilities or capacity of the civil authorities to meet current requirements without general purpose, 2) specialized or unique National

Guard personnel or capabilities, 3) protecting the life, property and safety of U.S. persons, 4) protecting critical U.S. infrastructure, 5) providing humanitarian assistance during disaster response and domestic emergencies, 6) providing support to designated law enforcement activities and operations, and 7) providing support to designated events, programs, and other activities. Proper consideration of these factors ensures every circumstance is considered on its own merits in assessing if the National Guard is the right sourcing solution.

Major Challenges

What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you will face if confirmed as the Chief of the National Guard Bureau?

The three largest challenges I believe I will face are recruiting and retention, readiness, and modernizing the force.

What are the major barriers to professional military education in the officer corps in the National Guard?

In addition to ensuring National Guard units are manned, trained, and equipped, our National Guard soldiers and airmen must ensure they meet Professional Military Education (PME) requirements for career progression. The biggest barrier our service members face in fulfilling their PME requirements is the need to balance their civilian careers and family life with their military duties.

What plans do you have for addressing each of these challenges, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I will work with the Department, the Services and Congress to ensure we have the resources, authorities, and policies in place to meet the demands placed upon us. Each of these challenges will require a collaboration between stakeholders to ensure our forces are appropriately manned, trained and equipped. The National Guard must be deployable, interoperable, and sustainable with the Joint Force.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to focus National Guard Bureau efforts on addressing each of these challenges, and on what timeline?

If confirmed, I will direct an operational training team stand-up to review these challenges and provide recommendations within the first 90 days of being confirmed.

Southwest Border

The current Chief of the National Guard Bureau recently testified that the National Guard's ongoing security mission on the southern U.S. border provides no military value to the guardsmen and adds significant stress to their families.

Do you agree with his testimony?

Homeland Defense is the number one priority of the NDS. I am proud of the National Guard service members support of the Southwest Border mission. Generally, the border mission does not add readiness value. Like any mission or deployment, it does take our service members away from their families.

In your view, what is the impact of deployments to the border on National Guard readiness for other military missions?

The National Guard continues to meet every assigned mission. If confirmed, I will conduct a readiness assessment and share those findings to senior Department officials and Congress.

Are you aware of any member of the National Guard sent in a pure State status, Federally funded State status, or Federal status to the southwest border involuntarily?

Currently National Guard soldiers and airmen serving in support of the federal Southwest Border mission are mobilized under section 12302 of Title 10 U.S. Code, which is an involuntary activation authority. However, members may also volunteer for this mission. I am not aware of whether those sent to border areas by their Governors in a State Active-Duty status are in a volunteer status.

Approximately how many members of the National Guard are currently mobilized to support southwest border security?

Approximately 2,300 ARNGUS Soldiers are currently mobilized under Title 10 in support of the federal SWB mission. In addition, approximately 4,500 National Guardsmen (from TX, LA, IN, and IA) are supporting Texas' Operation Lonestar in a State Active-Duty status under State authorities.

In your view, how would a requirement that the Department of Homeland Security submit requests for assistance at the southwest border at least 180 days in advance affect the ability of the Secretary of Defense to provide National Guard support to this border mission?

The earlier the DOD receives requests for assistance, the better. This is true in all requests for assistance regardless of who requests the assistance. Early request for assistance gives the DOD a greater ability to evaluate, plan, and execute support requirements. Most importantly giving 180 days of advance notice to members provides full benefits allotted for service and their families. I fully support requests for assistance being submitted as early as possible.

National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account

In your view, to what extent has the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA) improved the overall readiness of the Army and Air National Guard?

The National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA) continues to have an exponential impact on the readiness of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard. Because the Reserve Components will operate hand-in-hand with the Active Component in Great Power Competition, it is imperative that the Reserve Components are concurrently modernized with the active Component and our equipment is deployable, interoperable, and sustainable. While the Services remain the primary funding source for our modernization programs, the NGREA funding remains the lifeblood of the both the Army and Air National Guard modernization programs as it provides a direct source of procurement funding to address critical validated capability shortfalls. As a result of Congressional support for NGREA, our soldiers and airmen can better integrate with our active-duty counterparts in training and on the battlefield.

Roles and Missions

What is your vision of the roles and missions of the Army and Air National Guards?

The National Guard provides both operational and strategic depth to the Joint Force. My vision for the Army and Air National Guard is an elite warfighting force as the primary combat reserve of the Army and Air Force. We must invest in our people and accelerate and integrate future capabilities in order to meet the objectives outlined in the NDS to include both Homeland Defense, Homeland Response and Great Power Competition. In addition, they provide dual-use capability and capacity for domestic requirements in support of the 54 States, Territories, and the District of Columbia.

Do you think the roles and missions of the National Guard should change in any way, particularly in light of the National Defense Strategy? Please explain your answer.

Currently the National Guard supports Combatant Command requirements, Homeland Defense, and Homeland Response in line with the NDS, that should remain the same.

What are your views as to the optimal role for National Guard forces in executing overseas combat and contingency missions?

As the primary combat-ready reserve, National Guard units provide rotational forces through the Services in support of Combatant Commanders. The optimal role for National Guard units is one that aligns to their federal requirements for current and

future combat and contingency missions. While National Guard forces can support multiple types of missions across the continuum of competition, the National Guard remains a federally resourced combat reserve of the Air Force and Army. Overseas tours and participation in overseas exercises provide National Guard leaders and units with opportunities to create generational readiness.

What are your views as to the optimal role of the National Guard in overseas humanitarian, and stability operations?

The National Guard is capable of responding to global emergencies to conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in the same manner the National Guard responds in support of defense support to civil authorities.

What do you perceive to be the domestic role of the National Guard in regard to state civil disturbance and disaster relief operations?

The National Guard supports local, state, and federal requests to provide ready units to protect life and property, and preserve peace, order, and public safety. The National Guard's dual state and federal roles provide flexible capabilities to support requests for assistance. Training in multiple areas of domestic response and presence across 2500 communities within the 54 States, Territories and District of Columbia enable rapid response. During disaster relief, the National Guard is postured to assist civil authorities in emergency response and mitigating the impacts of a disaster situation. Essential capabilities of the National Guard for these responses include aviation, transportation, logistics, public safety and security, engineering, medical, and communications, which are organized and located to integrate quickly with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). During civil disturbance operations, the National Guard operates under State command and funding to support local law enforcement agencies.

What are your views on the contributions the National Guard makes in supporting DOD cyber operations, especially in areas like defense support to civil authorities for critical infrastructure? Do you have recommendations for improving National Guard Bureau support for CYBERCOM?

The National Guard plays a crucial role in supporting DOD Cyber Operations by providing the capability to rapidly respond to and mobilize against cyber incidents. Our current authorities address mitigating threats which we enhance with our unique mixture of civilian and military acquired skillsets. Having our soldiers and airmen, when not mobilized, employed as civilians in various critical infrastructure sectors improves our preparedness to respond to both DOD requirements and requests to support civilian critical infrastructure. The National Guard conducts regular training and exercises to prepare for cyber incidents. These activities help identify vulnerabilities and improve response strategies.

USCYBERCOM, through the NGB, has forged close relationships with both the Army and Air National Guard, but long-range planning and incident response could be improved with more permanent presence at Fort Meade. Additionally, providing access to advanced and continuous training programs for the National Guard to ensure they are most up to date regarding the latest cyber threats and defense techniques. National Guard Bureau is working with USCYBERCOM to host a Critical Infrastructure Liaison Officer (LNO) at the National Guard Bureau. The LNO will serve as a primary point of contact for general operational coordination between National Guard Bureau and USCYBERCOM, with emphasis on facilitating enhanced coordination and integration between the agencies for the protection of critical infrastructure sectors. Additionally, National Guard Bureau and USCYBERCOM work together to utilize the SPP to effectively develop cyberspace security capabilities with Partner nations.

In your view, should DOD assign homeland defense or global or domestic civil support missions exclusively to the National Guard? Please explain your answer.

No. The National Guard is a key component but only one piece of a Total Force solution. Each service and Component have unique capabilities that can be applied to homeland defense or civil support missions.

What homeland defense and civil support capabilities, if any, should receive increased emphasis in the National Guard?

If confirmed, I will work with the NORAD and USNORTHCOM Commander to identify areas related to homeland defense and civil support capabilities that would benefit from an increased emphasis, such as fighter aircraft, defense of critical infrastructure, and force protection specifically in regard to Counter Small Unmanned Aerial Systems.

What capabilities currently resident in the National Guard could the Nation afford to trade for increased emphasis on higher priority missions?

The National Guard is a cost-effective reserve Component to the Army and the Air Force. If confirmed, I will continue our close partnership with the Air Force and Army in assessing needs of the Total Force to ensure the National Guard provides necessary capabilities commensurate with priorities established in the NDS and the annual Defense Planning Guidance.

If confirmed, how would you seek to enhance the relationship between the National Guard Bureau and NORTHCOM, particularly with regard to the planning, coordination, and collaboration among NORTHCOM, the National Guard Bureau and the state National Guard forces?

If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with USNORTHCOM to meet requirements for homeland defense and response. In addition to our many efforts at integrated planning, training, and exercising, the National Guard will continue to stay engaged with USNORTHCOM through National Guard service members assigned to USNORTHCOM (including the current Deputy USNORTHCOM Commander) to advise and assist them in their development of plans and requirements to protect the homeland.

If confirmed, what objectives would you seek to achieve with respect to the National Guard organization, end strength, and force structure?

If confirmed, I do not anticipate any major changes to the National Guard's organization, end strength, or force structure given the current environment. However, as the strategic and operational landscape evolves the National Guard requirements must align to meet the needs of our states and nation. As the primary combat reserve of the Army and Air Force, I would use the authorizes available to ensure the National Guard remains commensurate with its active Components.

In your view, do the Reserve Components serve as an operational reserve, a strategic reserve, or both? In light of your answer, should the National Guard be supported by improved equipment, increased training, and higher levels of overall resourcing for readiness going forward?

The National Guard provides both operational capability and strategic depth to the Joint Force. Balancing operational capability with strategic depth requires a coordinated effort across the DOD.

To maintain parity with active-duty counterparts, the National Guard must focus on training and equipping modern, lethal, and interoperable forces to support large scale combat operations overseas. Combatant Commanders expect the same level of capability regardless of which unit is deployed. The DOD cannot meet the National Defense Security objectives without the Reserve Forces, therefore, adequate resourcing and modernized equipment that is deployable, interoperable, and sustainable with the Joint Force.

What are your views on the relative balance required between the Army National Guard and active Army end strength levels?

An optimal force structure construct balances combat and enabling forces. This approach allows the National Guard to meet the requirements of the Department and Governors and provides a cost-effective solution in the fiscally constrained environment.

What are your views on the relative balance required between the Air National Guard and active Air Force end strength levels?

As an operational reserve that provides strategic depth, the Air National Guard participates in all Service missions. At approximately one-third the size of the Active Component, the overall balance is effective. If confirmed, I will continue this close partnership to ensure National Guard capabilities best reflect the needs of the Nation.

If confirmed, what level of input and influence would you seek to exercise with regard to Army and Air Force force structure and resource allocations? What would you perceive to be the most effective way to make recommendations to the Military Departments on these issues, particularly with regard to the Department's budget formation process for the National Guard?

In my role as the CNGB, and a member of the JCS, I will continue to work with the Secretaries of Defense, Army, and Air Force to remain fully integrated into their force structure allocation processes and the Program, Planning, Budgeting, and Execution systems, to allocate resources and ensure the National Guard is adequately manned, trained, and equipped. I will engage our military and civilian Service leaders to ensure the National Guard continues to provide elite, cost effective and ready forces.

The National Guard Bureau voice and recommendation is accomplished with full integration in the DOD planning, programming, budgeting, and execution (PPBE) process, which includes budget formulation. The National Guard Bureau effectiveness is driven by our continuous participation to request and justify our budget request through OSD, the Service secretaries (Army and Air), and the Joint Force. If confirmed, I will ensure through these types of engagements the National Guard receives adequate resources to support our roles, requirements, and priorities in support of the NDS.

What is the current role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau with respect to oversight of the Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Teams (WMD-CST)? If confirmed, would you seek to modify your role in any way? Please explain your answer.

The CNGB ensures WMD-CST mission readiness in coordination with Army and Air Force Secretaries responsible for the programming and budgeting for resourcing requirements. Additionally, the 57 WMD-CSTs are assigned to CDRUSNORTHCOM for Training and Readiness Oversight (TRO) in accordance with DOD Global Force Management directives. The CNGB supports USNORTHCOM WMD-CST External Evaluation (EXEVAL) program.

No, I would not seek to modify the CNGB's role. I believe the current roles and responsibilities are sufficient to meet CNGB's statutory and regulatory responsibilities.

Recruiting and Retention

Are you concerned that the Nation’s continued reliance on the National Guard—particularly over the past two decades—for operational missions is or will have an adverse effect on Guard recruiting and retention? On private sector employers’ willingness to hire National Guard members?

For both the Army and Air National Guard, current recruiting and retention data indicate that the current operational tempo is not having a significant impact. However, we remain cognizant of the stress that a high OPTEMPO has on National Guard service members seeking to balance military, civilian employment, and family roles.

The private sector continues to support and hire our National Guardsmen.

If confirmed, what will you do to ensure the National Guard meets its recruiting and retention goals?

Recruiting and retaining people will be one of my highest priorities. I will continue to advocate and leverage all available resources and programs to achieve Air and Army National Guard recruiting missions and the statutorily mandated end strength. Specifically, I will work with the Services as well as the Department's Chief Talent Management Officer to assist with enhancing and improving National Guard recruiting.

If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to enhance the recruiting and retention of experienced members of the National Guard?

I will continue incentive programs targeting the recruiting and retention of qualified, trained, and experienced soldiers and airmen. We will continue to reduce administrative burdens for Active Component soldiers and airmen in transitioning to the National Guard. I will also focus on retaining mid-career soldiers and airmen to help improve the force's overall skills and experience profile. In addition, I will review the recruiting forces of the National Guard to ensure they have the personnel and resources to effectively perform their mission.

Does the unwillingness of National Guard personnel to continue to serve in the National Guard indicate future concerns about citizens’ willingness to serve in the Army or Air National Guard?

We continue to see high retention in our ranks, which indicates a strong willingness for citizens of our nation to serve in the National Guard.

Is the OPTEMPO for members of the Army and Air National Guard sustainable in the long term?

Our OPTEMPO has not shown to have negative effects on retention. If confirmed, I will strive to provide predictability to our soldiers and airmen and as much prior notification as possible for mobilizations.

In your view, do the military services give enough respect or deference to the civilian careers of members of the National Guard, specifically with respect to training, mobilizations, education requirements, and other reserve component duties that may conflict with civilian career advancement for members of the Guard?

The National Guard must assist our soldiers and airmen with balancing their service commitments with civilian careers, education, and families. If confirmed, I will welcome the opportunity to partner with my Active Component counterparts to ensure that National Guard service members can obtain timely and flexible access to the training courses needed to ensure an elite and ready Total Force.

Do you believe service leaders place too much reliance on federal laws that protect Guard members against discrimination at the expense of coming up with flexible and workable solutions for Guard members to balance their careers and family?

Federal laws like USERRA are crucial in protecting National Guard soldiers and airmen from discrimination and ensuring their reemployment rights. However, relying solely on these laws may not address all the unique challenges National Guard soldiers and airmen face in balancing their military duties, civilian careers, and family life. While these laws provide a necessary safety net, if confirmed, I look forward to finding additional policy-based solutions to these challenges.

Lessons Learned

What do you perceive to be the most significant and important “lessons learned” from the National Guard’s participation in numerous post-9/11 contingency operations around the world?

Lessons learned concerning post-9/11 contingency operations around the world are captured by the parent services as National Guard units are mobilized under Title 10 and integrated into the force for Home Defense related missions. However, the National Guard Bureau has a significant repository of lessons learned relating to support to Civil Authorities. These contingencies include responses to events such as hurricanes, wildfires, and civil disturbance.

If confirmed, how would you apply these “lessons learned” going forward?

I will leverage the lessons learned from our parent Services to develop innovative ways to seamlessly integrate and mobilize National Guard units and personnel in support of contingency operations. I will also work with TAG to ensure they are aware of these challenges and potential solutions so we can work to support our Combatant Commands and parent Services when called upon.

Coordination with State Adjutants General

What is your view of the role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau in establishing defense policy and in, Army, and Air Force resource allocation and funding decisions?

As a principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and a member of the JCS, the CNGB is responsible for ensuring that the National Guard actively participates in the development of defense policy on all matters. If confirmed, I will focus on ensuring matters that involve the non-federalized National Guard are appropriately addressed. I will advocate for National Guard requirements and resourcing during the DOD PPBE process. I will also ensure the National Guard Bureau executes its role as the channel of communications on all matters pertaining to the National Guard, the Army National Guard of the United States, and the Air National Guard of the United States during the development of defense policy throughout the Department. I would further ensure that the National Guard Bureau allocates the unit structure, strength authorizations, and other resources to the Army National Guard of the United States and the Air National Guard of the United States.

If confirmed, specifically what would you do to engage the State Adjutants General on defense policy and resource allocation issues—with a view to ensuring that State voices are heard in defense policymaking and budgeting processes?

Section 10503 of Title 10, U.S. Code, requires the Secretary of Defense prescribe the National Guard Bureau charter with requirements for the National Guard Bureau to participate in the DOD PPBE process and budget execution. National Guard Bureau staff regularly communicates with their state counterparts to capture their inputs. The Council of Governors and various Adjutants General Advisory Councils represent State equities and provide input to policy making and resource allocation matters. In accordance with Executive Order 13528, the CNGB participates as a federal official in the exchange of views, information, or advice between the DOD and the Council of Governors on matters related to the National Guard and civil support missions. If confirmed, I will continue coordinating with these stakeholders to facilitate their input to DOD senior leaders. I will communicate directly with TAG and solicit their input through forums such as TAG surveys, advisory panels, and recurring All-TAG calls to relay information and capture State concerns, particularly when considering major

changes to policy or force structure. I will also ensure the National Guard Bureau coordinates and communicate laterally across the 54 National Guards to coordinate input and requirements and keep them informed on all significant National Guard matters.

Do you believe there is value in establishing one overarching National Guard position on matters important to national defense? If so, how would you go about achieving this, if confirmed?

Yes. As a member of the JCS, this position ensures synergy across the 54 and provides the Department with a singular touchpoint to coordinate on National Guard matters related to policy issues and promote a single National Guard position. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with TAG to ensure I provide timely and appropriate perspective and military advice to DOD senior leadership.

Continual dialogue and transparency are critical to this effort. I also acknowledge there are circumstances where perspectives may differ between elements of the National Guard enterprise given the NG's unique structure and statutory roles. The process for development of the National Security Strategy, the NDS, and the National Military Strategy already include iterative inputs from the National Guard Bureau. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing that process and working closely with the JCS in developing a strong and effective strategy to meet the requirements of our national defense.

What is your understanding of the resources and personnel over which the Chief of the National Guard Bureau exercises authority, direction, and control?

The CNGB is responsible for the organization and operations of the National Guard Bureau under section 10502 of Title 10, U.S. Code, as implemented in the National Guard Bureau Charter prescribed by DOD pursuant to section 10503, U.S. Code. This includes responsibility for all resourcing decisions, as well as management and direction of all assigned National Guard Bureau personnel. Pursuant to section 10508 of Title 10, U.S. Code, the CNGB may also program for, appoint, employ, administer, detail, and assign persons to the National Guard Bureau and the state National Guards for the purpose of executing the functions of the National Guard Bureau, the missions of the National Guard, and other missions as assigned by the Chief.

In your view, should the Chief of the National Guard Bureau have directive authority with regard to the Adjutants General of the states and territories? Please explain your answer.

TAG are commanded by their governors while subject to federal regulation and oversight. This Constitutional construct strikes the right balance to provide an effective partnership between Federal military authorities and State authorities. As provided in the National Guard Bureau Charter that DOD prescribes under section

10503 of Title 10, U.S. Code, the National Guard Bureau has the necessary authorities to ensure the proper balance of coordination and oversight of TAG and their National Guards. These authorities further enable the National Guard Bureau to monitor and assist the States in the organization, maintenance, and operation of National Guard units so they are prepared to augment the active forces when needed. If confirmed, I will work closely with TAG and their governors to ensure compliance with Federal law and policy applicable to the National Guard. In extremely rare cases where noncompliance is identified it is my experience that most issues can be resolved through effective communication with a states' senior leaders and an explanation of the Federal standards.

Do you believe the National Guard Bureau has adequate authority to conduct oversight of Federal resources and equipment provided to the 54 states and territories? Please explain your answer.

Yes, the CNGB supervises the U.S. Property and Fiscal Officers (USPFO) who are required for each state and territory by section 708 of Title 32, U.S. Code. The USPFOs maintain appropriate supervision over each state's National Guard's expenditure of federal funds, as well as the acquisition, supply, and accountability of federal property issued to the National Guard. If confirmed, I would have adequate authority, personnel, and organizational ability to exercise effective oversight of Federal resources and equipment provided to the National Guard. This includes the National Guard Bureau's management of the budgets of the Army National Guard of the United States and the Air National Guard of the United States.

What is your understanding and assessment of adequacy of oversight of National Guard budget execution by the National Guard Bureau, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, and the Department of the Air Force, particularly with respect to appropriations for personnel, operations, and procurement? If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you take to improve this oversight?

The CNGB is statutorily and regulatorily responsible for the organization and operations of the National Guard Bureau to include the oversight of the National Guard budget execution.

The National Guard Bureau's Comptroller Office, in general, is responsible to carry out these responsibilities and is led by an experienced Senior Executive Service civilian and a staff that works collaboratively with the OSD Comptroller as well as the Army and Air Force Comptrollers to enforce the Financial Management Regulation (FMR).

The National Guard Bureau continues to support Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness by continually assessing the fiscal state of the National Guard and

correcting deficiencies. If confirmed, I will continue to make this a priority by partnering with the DOD to correct any deficiencies.

If confirmed, I will place a high priority on fiscal stewardship and auditability of National Guard. With the National Guard Bureau Comptroller as the lead, through coordination with ARNG and ANG, I will support the SECDEF's audit priorities and place emphasis on the actions necessary to achieve and endure an unmodified audit opinion.

The “Dual-Status” Commander

The appointment of a “dual-status” commander has become the customary command and control arrangement when active duty and National Guard forces are employed simultaneously in support of civil authorities.

What is your view of the effectiveness of recent uses of “dual-status command” authority? If confirmed, would you recommend expansion of the frequency with which this authority is invoked and utilized? In what other situations would the assignment of a “dual-status” commander be most beneficial, in your view?

The uses of "dual-status command" authority have been effective in enhancing coordination and response during emergencies. This authority allows a single military commander to oversee both federal and state military forces, ensuring unity of effort and streamlined decision-making.

It has been particularly beneficial during large-scale events where rapid and coordinated responses are crucial. It provides improved communication between federal and state entities and has helped optimize resource allocation and operational efficiency. Overall, it has proven to be a valuable tool in managing complex, multi-jurisdictional incidents.

A dual-status commander (DSC) is used in situations where both federal and state military forces need to be coordinated under a single command structure. This typically occurs during large-scale emergencies. The decision to establish a DSC is left to the discretion of the President through the Secretary of Defense and the Governor concerned (32 USC 325). I anticipate continued use of the Dual Status Command in instances where the Armed Forces and the National Guard are employed simultaneously in support of civil authorities in the United States. This approach helps to optimize the response efforts and enhance overall operational efficiency.

As previously described, a DSC is established when the Armed Forces and the National Guard are employed simultaneously in support of civil authorities in the United States. Additional use rests with the President through the Secretary of Defense and the Governor concerned but is fitting during natural disasters, National

Special Security Events, pandemic response, and complex training exercises. In accordance with military doctrine, the entity with both the preponderance of assets and the ability to command and control those assets should be responsible for leading the effort -- the DSC really exemplifies that crucial piece of our military doctrine.

In your view, can a single officer serve in both a State and Federal capacity and effectively exercise both State and Federal authorities and responsibilities? Please explain your answer.

Yes. Although used sparingly, the “dual status” command authority provided in sections 315 and 325 of Title 32, United States Code has provided operational flexibility to coordinate Federal military forces and non-Federalized National Guard forces under a single officer, thereby maintaining unity of effort through the officer’s ability to simultaneously exercise both State and Federal responsibilities.

In your view, what are the risks of such “dual-status” command arrangements and, if confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure these risks are mitigated?

There are several areas where there is room for improvement regarding risks associated with “dual-status” commander arrangements. Current military doctrine does not fully contemplate the appointment of a DSC in, homeland defense operations, mutual or automatic aid agreements between communities and military installations, federal military commanders supporting the Department of Justice in emergency situations involving weapons of mass destruction or civil disturbance operations.

Another risk, or a limitation, entails the lack of unity of command in multi-state areas of operations. DSCs cannot legally be members of multiple state National Guards, so they cannot serve as DSCs for multiple states at once. Therefore, we need to ensure careful coordination among multiple DSCs in neighboring states during multi-state operations to mitigate those risks.

There is additional risk of confusion between state and federal roles and missions. This relationship requires missions ordered by a DSC are given to the correct subordinate chain of command -- federal or state. Some missions must be performed federally, and some must be performed by the state. Although this is addressed in DSC memoranda of agreement, it is important for DSCs and their respective federal and state staffs to understand and apply these rules correctly. Education and training, as well as the involvement of the DSC's legal advisors (Judge Advocates) on both their federal and state staffs, mitigates these risks.

Finally, there is some risk that a DSC could receive orders from one chain of command that might conflict with state or federal law. To mitigate this, DSC's should consult with their legal advisors (Judge Advocates) from both their federal and state

chains of command, and if such consultation remains unresolved, they notify both chains of command and request appropriate guidance.

If confirmed, I will work with the Department to mitigate risk factors associated with DSC.

Mobilization and Demobilization of National Guard

What is your assessment of improvements made over the past several decades in National Guard mobilization and demobilization policies and procedures? Where do problems still exist in your view, and if confirmed, what would you do to address those problems?

There continues to be marked improvement in how the National Guard activates and mobilizes soldiers and airmen. Activations, mobilization, deactivation and demobilization policies and procedures have significantly improved, enabling both the Army and Air Force to better adapt to the evolving needs and requirements of the Combatant Commanders.

The National Guard will continue to work with DOD to improve upon activation and mobilization policies and implementation. Timely issuance and receipt of orders is an area that needs improvement, to include the ability to use a single activation order that encompasses pre-mobilization training, certification events, and mobilization. If confirmed, I will work with DOD to continually improve and streamline the policies, procedures, and automation of the activation and mobilization process.

What do you consider to be the most significant current need of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard with regard to ensuring their readiness for future mobilization requirements?

For both the Army and Air National Guard, the most significant current need is adequate resourcing. Whether it is individual and collective training, military construction, full-time manning, or modernization of equipment, adequate resourcing is key to ensuring readiness for future mobilization requirements. Additionally, the National Guard needs to continue to work with DOD to improve the mobilization and demobilization policies and implementation. Timely issuance and receipt of orders is an area that needs improvement, to include the ability to use a single activation order that encompasses pre-mobilization training, certification events, and mobilization.

What is your assessment of the Department's use to date and planned future uses of the mobilization authority provided under section 12304b of title 10, U.S. Code?

Section 12304b of Title 10, U.S. Code, has provided significant operational flexibility allowing the activation of reserve Component forces for pre-budgeted, preplanned

missions supporting the Combatant Commands and broadening credible response options. This authority has been instrumental in supporting various overseas operations, including training exercises, humanitarian missions, and security cooperation activities. By enabling the activation of reserve forces under the authority of the Service Secretary, the DOD can meet mission requirements in a cost-effective manner, leveraging the unique capabilities of reserve units.

Are National Guard aviation units successfully executing their flight hour programs to maintain adequate skill proficiencies for air crews and maintainers? If not, how would you improve and provide better oversight of these programs?

The National Guard has met or exceeded the flying hour program in the past three years and is maintaining adequate skill proficiencies.

The Air National Guard has a robust and deliberate plan of oversight and execution on our flying hour program and does not see the need for any changes to our processes and leadership focus. However, in the Army National Guard, changes in modernization strategy have delayed critical updates to its fleet. These modernization delays are increasing the age of the ARNG fleet and therefore, increasing the need for greater investment in ARNG aviation sustainment maintenance.

Duty Status Reform

In 2019, DOD submitted an extensive legislative proposal to “implement alternative approaches to reducing the number of statutory authorities by which members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces may be ordered to perform duty.” This proposal, while seemingly sufficient on the substance, contained numerous technical and conforming inconsistencies that require further refinement before it can be enacted into law.

Is “duty status reform” still an important goal, in your view? Why or why not?

Currently, duty status complexities and compensation disparities between Reserve Components impede the use of reserve forces and jeopardize retention. Duty Status Reform would streamline access to the RC to improve the ability of the Total Force to rapidly respond to contingencies; provide compensation parity within the Reserve Components; support retention efforts; simplify benefits statuses to improve service members' understanding of and access to benefits; and send a powerful message to National Guard soldiers, airmen, and families that their service is valued.

Do you believe the 2019 DOD duty status proposal satisfies the needs of the National Guard?

For Duty Status Reform to satisfy the needs of the National Guard it would need to incorporate streamlined access to the Reserve Component, which would improve the ability of the Total Force to rapidly respond to contingencies; provide compensation parity within the Reserve Components; support retention efforts; simplify benefits statuses to improve members' understanding of and access to benefits; and send a powerful message to National Guard soldiers, airmen and their families that their service is valued.

If confirmed, what would you do to modify or refine the legislative proposal submitted by DOD?

I would continue to coordinate closely with the Services, Department stakeholders, the States, and the Office of Management and Budget regarding any legislative proposal.

Dwell Time

Section 991 of title 10, U.S. Code requires the Secretary of Defense to manage the deployment of members of the Armed Forces to ensure that deployments do not exceed specified high deployment thresholds.

What is your understanding of the current Department of Defense policy for Reserve Component dwell time?

For the reserve Component, the Secretary of Defense's goal is a 1:5 mobilization-to-dwell with a threshold of 1:4. Secretary of Defense approval is required for activations less than 1:4.

What is your understanding and assessment of the current dwell time status of National Guard personnel as compared to the policy in effect?

The average dwell time for individual Guardsmen varies across capabilities and units. In some cases, the dwell time status of personnel exceeds the 1:4 threshold. There are high-demand, low-density Air and Army National Guard units that deploy more frequently. A sustainable 1:5 mobilization-to-dwell cycle is critical to our part-time business model, providing predictability to our soldiers, airmen, families, and employers.

What is your understanding and assessment of the adequacy of measures taken to respond to operational requirements for low-density, high-demand units and personnel whose skills are found in the Army and Air National Guard?

We continue to actively manage our low-density, high-demand units and personnel to better provide predictability and minimize stress on those critical assets. The National

Guard engages the Services and Joint Staff to determine the best and most equitable way to these forces.

In your view, should National Guard dwell time be changed so as to ensure that National Guard personnel can sustain favorable relationships with and support from their civilian employers?

No, predictability for to our soldiers, airmen, families, and employers is essential.

Stress on the Force and Family

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues in the National Guard?

I consider the most important family readiness issues to be predictability of mobilizations and deployments, employment security, competitive pay and benefits to support and strengthen financial stability, and continuity of care. I will focus on addressing support programs to support soldiers, airmen, and families.

In your view, what are the key indicators of stress on National Guard families at this time?

Financial readiness, interpersonal relationships, and behavioral health remain the top indicator areas for stress among National Guard soldiers, airmen, and their families. Personal finance education, communication skills training, and relational assistance have been highlighted as key areas for continued action by our Military and Family Readiness Specialists through their National Guard-wide annual needs assessment.

If confirmed, what would you do to address these stressors?

Taking care of National Guard soldiers, airmen, and their families will continue to be a top priority. I will work with the DOD and the Services to improve mobilization and deployment predictability and to ensure that adequate resources are available to address the stressors affecting soldiers, airmen, families, and community partners across the 54 States, Territories, and the District of Columbia.

If confirmed, specifically what would you do to enhance military family readiness support to National Guard families, particularly those who do not reside near an active duty military installation?

The geographic dispersion of National Guard soldiers and airmen is a key distinguishing characteristic of our operating environment. I will work to ensure that our soldiers, airmen, and their families have effective knowledge of and access to supportive programs. I will ensure that National Guard Military Family Readiness teams continue to identify community partners to join us in assisting soldiers, airmen

and families as well as connect our service members to these resources within their local communities.

The National Guard and the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

What is your assessment of the efficacy of TAP services and support to members of the National Guard as they transition from federalized/mobilized status back to civilian life and participation in their assigned National Guard units or positions?

The TAP has experienced major changes in recent years. National Guard soldiers and airmen are unique in that the number of transitions they experience drives a difference in needs. I look forward to working closely with the Army, Air Force, and DOD to improve TAP for National Guard soldiers and airmen by streamlining their experience and minimizing redundancy.

What are your ideas for improving transition and reemployment services for members of the National Guard?

I will work to extend optional TAP participation to National Guard soldiers and airmen transitioning out of a Title 32 status into civilian life. Additionally, I will work with stakeholders to encourage employer support to Guardsmen returning from deployment.

Medical and Dental Readiness of National Guard Personnel

Medical and dental readiness of Reserve Component personnel remain issue areas for the Committee.

What is your view of the current medical and dental readiness of National Guard personnel?

The National Guard continues to meet all mobilization requirements and assigned missions. Medical and dental readiness are essential to the National Guard's ability to take care of our people and be ready to meet mobilization requirements. If confirmed, I will work on ways to improve the readiness of our force and increase access to medical, dental, and mental health services.

If confirmed, what improvements to reporting on the medical and dental readiness of the National Guard would you make?

I will work with the National Guard medical leaders to ensure the National Guard has access to Military Health System information technology for the review of medical

records. I will strive to improve systems for duty documentation and tracking medical related requirements.

If confirmed, specifically what would you do to improve on the ability to produce a healthy and fit National Guard?

I will work with National Guard senior leaders to emphasize and educate our soldiers and airmen on ways to improve and support a healthy lifestyle. Prevention will be emphasized; this will include encouraging and supporting soldiers and airmen to be pro-active before physical, mental, and dental health issues arise.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Invisible wounds, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), may not be manifest until months after demobilization.

If confirmed, what steps if any would you take to improve consistency of identification and referral for care for PTSD and TBI for members of the Army and Air National Guard?

I would continue to emphasize to National Guard senior leaders the importance of taking care of our people to include completion and assessment of all post-deployment health assessments and reassessments. I will also ensure inclusion of data in The Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER). Lastly, in coordination with our Directors of Psychological Health, medical leaders, and leadership, I will ensure our soldiers and airmen are connected to necessary resources and all available benefits.

Health Care for National Guard Personnel

Members of the National Guard who are ordered to active duty for more than 30 days are eligible for the same health care and dental benefits under TRICARE as other active duty service members.

What is your view of the adequacy of health care for National Guard personnel?

TRICARE and TRICARE Reserve Select are vital to the health and well-being of the soldiers, airmen, and their families. However, health care for our National Guard service members can be challenging. Due to geographic dispersion, many of our soldiers and airmen serve in medically-underserved locations with minimal primary and specialty care access. My predecessor, GEN Hokanson, has also stated up to 60,000 of our soldiers and airmen do not have insurance. If confirmed, I will work with the Department, the interagency, and this committee to find creative solutions to these challenges.

What are your suggestions for improving continuity of care for members of the National Guard and their families?

Improvements in IT medical data systems will help medical teams better track readiness, as well as any medical issues, particularly when soldiers and airmen come off active duty. I will work with the Defense Health Agency (DHA) on feasible options to ensure continuity of care.

TRICARE Reserve Select authorizes members of the Selected Reserve and their families to use TRICARE at a subsidized rate when they are not on active duty.

What is your assessment of TRICARE Reserve Select program and its level of utilization in the National Guard?

The TRICARE Reserve Select program is an excellent benefit offered to our soldiers and airmen. However, access to participating providers is limited for many of our soldiers and airmen. We need to improve the number of credentialed providers participating within the entire TRICARE Network. Additionally, TRS patients are not limited to seeing TRICARE network providers - they may also see participating and non-participating providers.

What impact has TRICARE Reserve Select had on recruiting for the National Guard?

The TRICARE Reserve Select benefit is a useful tool for recruiting due to the low cost of the benefit for the service member and their family. However, there is work to be done to improve the access to care for our soldiers and airmen across the enterprise.

If confirmed, what specifically would you do to ensure that sufficient mental and behavioral health resources are available to National Guard soldiers, airmen, and their families who do not reside near a military base?

There are many areas of the country with low access to mental health services. I would support initiatives for tele-behavioral health benefits to allow licensed providers to support National Guard soldiers, airmen, and their families nationwide versus only in their licensing state. I also support appropriate allocation of Directors of Psychological Health resources within our organizations. In addition, I would also support increased participation in the STAR Behavioral Health Program where civilian mental health providers can receive training to better understand service-related challenges.

If confirmed, specifically what would you recommend to improve processing timelines for National Guard service members referred into the Disability Evaluation System?

The Disability Evaluation System is a complex process involving medical and personnel experts from the National Guard Bureau and the Services. I will increase senior leader emphasis on timely submissions and resolution of line of duty determinations. I would also place additional focus on standardizing internal processes, access to military health records, and staff training to support Service members meeting Disability Evaluation System requirements. If confirmed, I will encourage further coordination between all parties and investigate process improvement opportunities.

Additional National Guard Programs

The National Guard participates in programs such as the Youth Challenge Program, STARBASE, and the State Partnership Program. The State Partnership Program continues to prove a valuable foundation on which to build both improved capabilities in partner nations and critical military-to-military relationships for U.S. forces.

In your view, what is the value of these programs?

All three of these programs provided value in different ways. The SPP develops enduring relationships with partner countries, to improve capacity and interoperability, provides valuable lessons learned, countering malign influence, and secure and enhance U.S. access and influence. The program directly supports the NDS's focus on allies and partners and is a priority competition tool for OSD. SPP currently has 96 partnerships involving 106 countries in all six Geographic Combatant Commands.

The value of the National Guard Youth Challenge Program (NGYCP), the related Job Challenge phase of the Youth Challenge Program, and the DOD STARBASE program is the development of workforce talent and the strengthening and growth of community partners at the state and local levels. These programs demonstrate the Department's focus on and care for our communities, reinforce healthy trajectories for young lives, help to connect the Department to the fabric of America, and expose our youth to the concept of service during their formative years.

What is your understanding of and experience with the State Partnership Program?

SPP supports the security cooperation objectives of the United States and Combatant Commands by developing and maintaining enduring relationships with over 100 partner nations and carrying out activities to build partner capacity, improve

interoperability, and enhance U.S. relations. This increases the readiness of U.S. and partner forces to meet emerging challenges. SPP is a cost-effective program, administered by the National Guard Bureau, guided by State Department foreign policy goals, and executed by the TAG in support of Combatant Commander and U.S. Chief of Mission security cooperation objectives and DOD policy goals.

If confirmed, what recommendations would you consider to expand or improve this program?

The National Guard Bureau enjoys a great relationship with the Office of Secretary of Defense with how the SPP is integrated and used by OSD. We continue to work with our great partner Defense Security Cooperation Agency in improving and codifying the education and professional certification of our security cooperation practitioners working the SPP. Finally, we have a long lasting and meaningful relationship with the Geographic Combatant Commands that informs and deepens the utilization of the SPP in their areas of responsibility year after year.

Has STARBASE been successful, in your view, in improving propensity among youth to serve in the military? Has it improved the willingness of influencers to recommend military service? Please explain your answer.

While not a recruiting program, DOD STARBASE is an excellent Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEAM)STEM and military awareness program. The DOD STARBASE program adds value and strengthens the relationships between the military, the community, and their surrounding school districts. The National Guard hosts approximately two-thirds of DOD 's the Department's 90 STARBASE locations with over 1,800,000 students participating since inception in 1993.

STARBASE has improved the willingness of influencers to recommend military service. In a recent report to Congress, the number of teachers who were "Very Likely" or "Extremely Likely" to recommend the DOD or the military as a career option to students jumped by approximately 30 percentage points (a 75 percent increase) after participating in the DOD STARBASE program.

What are the most recent statistics on Youth Challenge participants joining the military following program completion? What is your view of Youth Challenge graduates' propensity to serve?

While not a recruiting program, historically between 5 and 11 percent of NGYCP graduates join the military in some capacity during the 12 months they are tracked after graduation. It is important to note that at graduation, 70 percent of cadets remain too young for military service (aged 16 to 17 years).

Reserve Forces Policy Board

What is your understanding and assessment of the appropriate role and function, of the Reserve Forces Policy Board?

By statute, the Reserve Forces Policy Board (RFPB) is composed of members with significant experience in national security and Reserve Component matters. The collective voice of the Board provides the President and Congress, through the Secretary of Defense, an independent view of strategies, policies, and practices to improve and enhance the capabilities, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Reserve Components. The Board provides thoughtful, balanced analysis and policy recommendations that support the role of the National Guard and the National Guard Bureau in meeting the mission requirements of the DOD. While the National Guard Bureau remains the channel of communications between the National Guard and the States to senior DOD leadership, I applaud the role of the RFPB in giving voice to policy recommendations which are nuanced with an understanding of the challenges and capacities of the National Guard within the context of the Total Force.

What is your assessment of the utility of the Reserve Forces Policy Board with respect to addressing the issues facing members of the National Guard and their families?

Since 2017, the RFPB has provided the Secretary of Defense with a series of reports addressing issues facing the National Guard and their families. I am pleased that the RFPB has taken a strong role in supporting the Total Force, to include issues that go beyond immediate readiness to consider the strategic dimensions of how-to best account for, support, and sustain the service and sacrifice of those soldiers and airmen who constitute the NG, their families, and even their roles in their communities and civilian workplaces.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend concerning the Reserve Forces Policy Board?

Currently, I do not have any recommend changes for the RFPB. If confirmed, I will work most closely and effectively with the RFPB through continued attention and inputs to RFPB deliberations, studies, and draft policy recommendations. In so doing, I believe the National Guard Bureau and the RFPB can provide the Secretary of Defense and the Nation with increasingly effective policy options.

Employment of Full-Time Support Personnel

Over the last several years, the military technician workforce has been subject to several major transformation and realignment initiatives. For example, the committee is monitoring current efforts in the Air National Guard to convert large numbers of dual status military technicians into Active Guard Reserve positions, and to affect large

scale re-leveling of the full-time support force across all 54 states and territories generally.

If confirmed, what recommendations would you make with regard to reform of the National Guard full-time support workforce?

The Technician Act of 1968 and subsequent legislation has created a patchwork of authorities governing the National Guard military technician program. If confirmed, I would work with all stakeholders, especially our union representatives, to ensure the program is brought into the 21st Century. National Guard Dual Status Military Technicians are a vital part of our National Guard.

In your view, what is the proper balance in the Army and Air National Guards between military technicians, the Active Guard and Reserve, and title 5 civilian employees?

The balance between National Guard Dual Status Military Technicians, Active Guard and Reserve, and Title 5 civilians should be reviewed and modified based on the operational demands placed upon the National Guard in support of our federal wartime mission.

What statutory changes do you believe are warranted to ensure the continued viability of the military technical (dual status) program?

Action in these areas will support the continued viability of the National Guard Dual Status Military Technician program: Improve benefits, reduce administrative complexities, and reinforce National Guard Dual Status Military Technicians' critical military readiness function through passage of the Military Technician Modernization Act; and simplify duty statuses and provide compensation equity through passage of comprehensive Duty Status Reform

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

The Department has developed comprehensive policies and procedures to improve the prevention of and response to incidents of sexual assault, including providing appropriate resources and care for victims of sexual assault. However, numerous incidents of sexual misconduct involving National Guard personnel continue to occur.

If confirmed, what specific role and tasks would you establish for yourself in the National Guard's program of preventing and responding to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

I will explicitly communicate my policy of zero tolerance to TAG of every State, Territory, and the District of Columbia. By conveying the imperative of eradicating

sexual harassment and assault within our organization, we demonstrate our commitment to support and assist victims of these abhorrent offenses. I will maintain awareness of all program updates and ensure any concerns are addressed as soon as possible.

I will also support and prioritize the hiring of the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce. This full-time credentialed workforce takes a holistic approach to reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors to prevent harmful behaviors, such as sexual assault and sexual harassment. They work directly with leaders to change policies, implement prevention activities, and promote the health of the military community.

In your view, are the policies, programs, and training that the National Guard Bureau and the National Guards of the states and territories have put in place to prevent and respond to sexual assault adequate and effective?

Sexual assault in our ranks will never be tolerated, I have zero tolerance. Over the last years, additional resources, policies, programs, and training have been focused on countering sexual assault in the Department. The National Guard Bureau--as part of the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response team--continues to focus on developing and implementing data-informed, comprehensive prevention programs to support the National Guard community. Foundational to our efforts is the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW), which seeks to reduce the incidence of harmful behaviors, such as sexual assault, domestic abuse, child abuse, harassment, retaliation, and suicide

What is your assessment of the adequacy of National Guard resources and programs to provide victims of sexual assault the medical, psychological, and legal help they need?

The National Guard is dedicated to supporting victims of sexual assault and ensuring that they have resources available to assist them. All victims of sexual assault are entitled to counseling services through each state's Director of Psychological Health, and to legal aid from a Special Victims' Counsel. Each victim is also assigned a Victim Advocate who offers additional community-based resources. I will ensure that victims of sexual assault receive the support needed and that resources are allocated to identifying better ways to aid victims. These resources and programs have significantly assisted the National Guard in addressing the issue of sexual assault.

What is your assessment of the authorities available to National Guard commanders to hold assailants accountable for sexual assault?

In my assessment, National Guard commanders have a multitude of options available to hold an offender appropriately accountable for substantiated allegations of sexual assault. These authorities include investigations and criminal prosecution under the

Uniformed Code of Military Justice for members in a Title 10 status at the time of the offense. In addition, the Office of Special Trial Counsel shifts prosecutorial decisions for covered offenses outside the uniformed chain of command and to offices led by general/flag officers with significant military justice experience who oversee other highly skilled, experienced, and well-trained counsel. When members were not in a Title 10 status, several options may be available such as utilization of State military codes of justice, referral to civilian law enforcement authorities for criminal prosecution under State or local laws, or referral to the National Guard Bureau Office of Complex Investigations. Additionally, commanders may pursue appropriate administrative actions to include formal reprimands, bars to reenlistment, or separations from military service under less than honorable conditions.

What is your assessment of the adequacy with which states investigate and prosecute sexual misconduct involving members of the National Guard?

Reported perpetrators in a Title 10 status are investigated by Military Criminal Investigative Organizations and those who were not in a Title 10 status at the time of the alleged sexual assault are referred by the states to local law enforcement for criminal investigation. When local law enforcement does not investigate, fails to adequately investigate, or when a victim declines local law enforcement investigation, the National Guard Bureau-Office of Complex Investigations (NGB-CI) offers highly trained and skilled investigators to provide independent investigations of sexual assault and harassment investigations, on behalf of CNGB, for TAG. Upon completion of an investigation, NGB-CI provides TAG a comprehensive Report of Investigation that command can utilize in substantiated cases to assess appropriate administrative or criminal military justice action, consistent with law and regulation.

The National Guard response provides dedicated resources to promote a safe environment and foster a culture that encourages victims to come forward, knowing they will be treated in a sensitive manner throughout an investigation and any subsequent administrative or military justice proceeding. Since inception, NGB-CI has continued to investigate claims where law enforcement does not investigate and established itself as a trusted independent investigative agency that has encouraged victims to participate given the familiarity and manner in which investigations are conducted compared to local law enforcement.

In your view, what is the value of the National Guard Bureau's Office of Complex Investigations?

The National Guard Bureau- Office of Complex Investigations (NGB-CI) is essential to the multi-faceted approach the National Guard has implemented in response to sexual assault within the ranks. Supporting victims of sexual assault and ensuring a command culture built on dignity and respect is essential. To that end, NGB-CI continues to serve the CNGB and TAG to investigate sexual assault and formal sexual harassment claims.

NGB-CI provides TAG the mechanism for conducting well organized and executed administrative investigations into allegations of sexual assault that may otherwise go unaddressed because of the complex jurisdictional issues relating to the status of soldiers and airmen and the location in which the event was alleged to have taken place. NGB-CI has expanded its portfolio under the 2022 NDAA to provide independent investigations of formal allegations of sexual harassment.

Suicide Prevention

The number of suicides in the military, including in the National Guard, continues to be of concern to the Committee.

If confirmed, specifically what role would you establish for yourself in shaping suicide prevention policies and programs for the National Guard?

Suicide prevention involves more than senior leaders. It is a job for every soldier and airman of the Guard. The lowest echelon today are the future leaders of tomorrow. They will be empowered to proactively identify the risk factors of soldiers and airmen, while having the knowledge and ability to develop and foster protective behaviors. Moreover, we must ensure that assistance and support is available to all soldiers and airmen throughout every phase of their career. Suicide prevention will always be a National Guard priority.

If confirmed, what specifically would you do to maintain a strong focus on preventing suicides in the National Guard and among the family members of National Guard?

Suicide prevention starts with identifying the risk factors that contribute to suicide and supporting our soldiers and airmen and their families throughout the country before they are in distress. If confirmed, I will work to keep our service members and families connected to a robust network of local support resources including but not limited to legal, financial, behavioral health, and children's resources. I will also ensure that the National Guard continues to build strong partnerships at the Federal, State, and local level, with organizations committed to supporting and expanding family members' access to care. I will continue to implement the Independent Review Committee recommendations on Suicide Prevention and Response to enhance the Guard's support of its service members and families.

I will also support and prioritize the hiring of the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce. This full-time credentialed workforce takes a holistic approach to reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors to prevent harmful behaviors, such as suicide. They work directly with leaders to change policies, implement prevention activities, and promote the health of the military community.

Based on your experience, what resources should be dedicated to suicide prevention and response in the Guard component that are not currently available?

The National Guard is continually reviewing and revising current suicide prevention training, developing total force leadership training as well as establishing an enterprise-wide suicide response team. I will dedicate resources to implement the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee recommendations.

If confirmed, what specifically would you do to enhance the reporting and tracking of suicide among family members and dependents of National Guard service members?

If confirmed, I would work to enhance the reporting and tracking of suicides among our National Guard families by developing policy, guidance, and processes that assist National Guard leaders and the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce in identifying and validating the associated contextual risk factors. The analysis of these factors can help the organization target and mitigate risks and support our soldiers and airmen and their families.

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

What is your understanding and assessment of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and its effect on members of the National Guard upon return from deployment and the families of those members?

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) mission is to promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, their families, and their communities by connecting members and families with resources throughout the deployment cycle. This program provides vital support to National Guard members and their families.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose in the distribution of resources so as better to provide the full range of services contemplated by the Yellow Ribbon Program?

It is important that we continue to support the well-being of our National Guard and Reserve members and their families during transitions throughout the deployment cycle. I will assess the distribution of Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program resources and its efficacy to ensure the program is optimized and strategically positioned to provide the range of services intended and best support our service members and their families.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and when asked before this committee, its subcommittees, or other appropriate committees of Congress to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the position of the Administration? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

78.3 Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to provide this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this committee? Please answer yes or no.

Yes

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer yes or no.

Yes