

**HEARING TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE TESTI-
MONY ON ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE, AND
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROGRAMS IN RE-
VIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012 AND THE
FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2011

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:35 p.m. in room SR-232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Jim Webb (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Webb, Blumenthal, Graham, and Ayotte.

Majority staff members present: Jonathan D. Clark, counsel; Gabriella E. Fahrner, counsel; and Gerald J. Leeling, counsel.

Minority staff members present: Diana G. Tabler, professional staff member; and Richard F. Walsh, minority counsel.

Staff assistants present: Jennifer R. Knowles and Breon N. Wells.

Committee members' assistants present: Nick Ikeda, assistant to Senator Akaka; Juliet Beyler and Gordon Peterson, assistants to Senator Webb; Jeremy Bratt, assistant to Senator Blumenthal; Clyde Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Brad Bowman and Adam Hechavarria, assistants to Senator Ayotte; and Andrew King and Sergio Sarkany, assistants to Senator Graham.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JIM WEBB, CHAIRMAN

Senator WEBB. The subcommittee will come to order.

And I'd like to begin by apologizing to Senator Graham for knocking his water over when he was on his way. It had nothing to do with his—

Senator GRAHAM. I deserve it; I was late.

Senator WEBB.—the delay in his arrival. [Laughter.]

Senator GRAHAM. I deserve it; I was late.

Senator WEBB. We meet today to receive the testimony from military services on their Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs, in review of the National Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2012 and the Future Years Defense Program.

I welcome our witnesses to today's hearing. The Army witnesses, The Honorable Thomas Lamont, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Lieutenant General Thomas Bostick, the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, United States Army. The Navy and Marine Corps witnesses are The Honorable Juan Garcia III, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Vice Admiral Mark Ferguson III, Chief of Naval Personnel; and Lieutenant General Robert Milstead, Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, United States Marine Corps. The Air Force witnesses, The Honorable Daniel Ginsberg, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower Reserve Affairs; and Lieutenant General Daryl Jones, Deputy Chief of staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services, United States Air Force.

Your complete statements have all been received. And, without objection, all will be included in the record of this hearing, at the end of your oral statements.

This is the third in a series of hearings, as we prepare to mark up the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012. In our first hearing, we received testimony from the senior non-commissioned officer of each service regarding the state of enlisted personnel, force readiness, and family readiness. We also received testimony from representatives from military service organizations on their views of the needs of military personnel and their families.

In our second hearing, we received testimony from the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel Readiness, the Assistant Secretaries of Defense for Reserve Affairs and Health Affairs, and the Department of Defense comptroller. These officials testified about the personnel programs of the Department of Defense, and discussed efficiency initiatives included in the Department of Defense budget submission.

During this hearing, it became clear that the contracting workforce was not being evaluated as a part of the total force, even though contractors are performing many functions previously performed by military service personnel. The subcommittee has asked for more information about this component of the total force.

Today, we will focus on military personnel policy and issues of the military services, through the testimony of the Assistant Secretaries for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and the military personnel chiefs of each Service. I expect to discuss not only personnel policy programs and policies, but specific budget items, in furtherance of our subcommittee's oversight responsibilities.

As I've said in the other two hearings, I take this oversight very seriously. There's no greater responsibility for the Congress, and for our military leaders, than to care and provide for our servicemembers and their families. But, in doing so, we must ensure that we are effecting the relationship as stewards of the taxpayers' dollars, as well.

As I've said in earlier hearings, our military continues its engagement in the longest sustained period of major conflict in our Nation's history. Military personnel are challenged by high operational tempos, the stress of multiple deployments, inadequate dwell times, and an inefficient disability evaluation system. Our military families, by and large, are successfully dealing with the stress associated with frequent and lengthy deployments into dan-

gerous war zones, but many are experiencing serious challenges. Because of my own experience, and my family's tradition of military service, I'm well aware of these challenges. I do appreciate our obligations to see the needs of servicemembers and their families, and I take that responsibility very seriously.

The All-Volunteer Force has worked remarkably well over the past quarter century. And we must ensure that the All-Volunteer model continues to produce the world's best military. It's important to recognize that we have an All-Volunteer Force, not an all-career force. We need to ensure that programs and policies also support those who serve in the military for a period less than a career before returning to their civilian communities. The contributions of these individuals are just as important as the contributions of career servicemembers.

We also have entered a new era in the use of our Guard and Reserve Forces. They have played critical roles, during this period, in ways never envisioned at the inception of the All-Volunteer Force. This subcommittee will continue to explore changes needed to employ our Reserve component forces as an operational force.

I look forward to hearing your testimony about the personnel issues of your services. I'm aware that each of the services is facing challenges in managing its forces over the next few years. Current plans require the Army to reduce end strength by 22,000 in fiscal 2013, and an additional 27,000 by the end of fiscal 2016. The Marine Corps is planning to reduce end strength by 15,000, to 20,000, during the periods 2015 to 2017. Because of unusually high retention rates, the Navy and Air Force are implementing mandatory separation procedures in an effort to reduce end strength to authorized levels by the end of this fiscal year.

As always, I would request that each of you discuss your challenges and how you plan to address these challenges, with particular emphasis on any legislative authorities you believe would be needed to shape your forces. Reducing the size of the force is never easy. It's important that it's done in a manner that respects the service of everyone who has given so much during this period of continuing conflict. And also, I would encourage you to express your views candidly, tell us what's working well, and raise any concerns and issues you may want to bring to this subcommittee's attention.

Senator Graham, for any opening remarks you'd like to give.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As always, I enjoy conducting these hearings with you. I think our staffs work well together, and we have a lot of experience to offer the Senate about how to shape the force.

Last week was about healthcare. We're having, I think, an unsustainable increase in healthcare cost in the Department of Defense. We're going to have to make some hard choices, sooner or later, because it affects everything we'd like to do in every other area.

Disability evaluation systems, General Bostick, Secretary Lamont, if you would—I don't think you mention it in your written statement—talk to us about the 20,000 nondeployable folks that

are waiting some type of evaluation. What can we do to expedite their decision? How do we deal with the fact—not only are we going to reduce the Army, as Senator Webb indicated, but also, if you have 20,000 nondeployable, that goes into who can go to the fight. And to me, that is a personnel issue we need to come to grips with, in how we can better evaluate.

On the legal side—as many of you know, I'm a member of the Air Force JAG department. The recommendation to take three brigadier-general positions out of the command—key major commands—was opposed by General Schwartz and Secretary Donley. And, Secretary Ginsberg, just want you to know, from my point of view, that's a decision that I think I have to push back on, because I'm fairly familiar with how the Air Force legal community operates. And I think it would do more harm than good to reduce those brigadier general spots that serve the Air Force well.

On the Navy-Marine side, we've got a manning of 830 military attorneys. An independent review said we need 950. I'd like to know about how we solve that problem.

Basically, we're going to reduce the force, with the view that there must be some peace dividend that I don't see coming anytime soon. I do hope we can reduce our forces in Afghanistan, slowly but surely. We're going to withdraw most of our forces from Iraq. But, at the same time, just because of the operational tempo that we've experienced in the last decade, when you draw your forces down, that means those who are left are going to have to do more. And I just really question, Is that a wise decision? And I'd like to get comments from each of you about how you think that affects retention, recruiting. And how do we reduce this force? Do we—what kind of system do we come up with to reduce? Do we tell people they can't retire at 15 years? What do we do?

So, with that, I look forward to hearing your testimony.

And I really appreciate working with Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you very much, Senator Graham.

We will begin with Secretary Lamont and just move across the table, from my left to my right.

And, Secretary Lamont, welcome back. And we're very interested in hearing your testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS R. LAMONT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

Mr. LAMONT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad to be here—Senator Graham, other members of the Committee. Thank you for taking the time to explore these very important topics, so crucial to our Nation's defense today and in the future.

For nearly 2 years, I've served as the Army Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. During that time, we have worked hard to meet the challenges facing the Army and to prepare our force for the future. Our Army is stretched and strained. However, the resilience, determination, and values displayed by our soldiers, Army civilians, and families is remarkable. I am honored to serve such a committed group of individuals.

To lessen the strain on our soldiers, we need to make the most of the force we have. Maintaining appropriate strength and devel-

oping the proper force mix in our Active and Reserve components will be critical to the future of our force. Our effort to create a more appropriate total-force policy continues. We want to partner with you and all the other stakeholders to codify the Reserve component as an operational force and to develop better career models for our soldiers and civilians.

We will make the changes necessary regarding the realities of our fiscal situation, as well. We are moving forward with personnel efficiencies and aggressively enacting cost-saving measures throughout our Army. We are committed to the work associated with managing our resources properly, even as we conduct the largest transformation since World War II, the 2005 base realignment and closure initiative, as well as fighting two major conflicts and completing our modular conversions. The Army personnel community is focused on maintaining the unprecedented quality of the All-Volunteer Force in order to accomplish the missions at hand and to prepare the Army for the challenges of tomorrow.

Please know that the Army is filled with devoted civilian and military leaders, committed soldiers, and dedicated families. We certainly have challenges, but we have significant opportunities, as well. And one of our most significant opportunities is to capitalize on lessons learned over the past 10 years to create a force that is the right size with the right capabilities with the best-developed military and civilian leadership.

In closing, our Army is a total force that has been tested. We've been successful, and now we are focused on planning for the future while maintaining our strength. We appreciate the committee's support in accomplishing all we've done, and we look forward to your support in the future.

Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lamont follows:]

Senator WEBB. Thank you very much, Secretary Lamont.

General, welcome. General Bostick?

STATEMENT OF LTG THOMAS P. BOSTICK, USA, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF G-1, U.S. ARMY

General BOSTICK. Chairman Webb, Senator Graham, members of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to represent the 1.1 million soldiers serving around the globe, as well as over 300,000 civilians and their families.

Our All-Volunteer Army is now in its 10th year of continuous combat operations. More than 1.1 million soldiers have deployed. And over 30,000 Army civilian have also deployed into combat. This impacts not only the soldiers and the civilians, but their families, as well.

Our soldiers and families are feeling the stress of repeated deployments, but they remain extraordinarily resilient. The programs, that you have supported, aimed at the health of the force and quality of life, are helping to preserve the All-Volunteer Force.

Despite this unprecedented operational tempo, the Army is on track to restore balance by 2012. Increasing dwell time is the most important thing we can do to improve the health of the force. Beginning with units that deploy this October and later, they can ex-

pect to return home for 2 years, for the Active component, and 4 years, for the Reserve component.

As the Army prepares for reducing its end strength, we must prevail in ongoing combat operations, prevent and deter conflict, prepare for future threats, and preserve and enhance the All-Volunteer Force. There is no doubt that the Army of the future will be, and should be, different than the Army of today. There are changes in the environment, different threats, and emerging technology that we need to take advantage of, and we must be adaptable enough to do so. We must continue to provide the quality of care and support that our Army requires. We will work with this Congress as we move forward on a broad front to address the challenges of 10 years of war.

With this committee's help, your Army was able to attract, recruit, and retain very talented and committed young men and women, and exceeded our recruiting and retention goals once again.

To conclude, I want to thank you for your continued support, which remains vital to sustain our All-Volunteer Force through unprecedented periods of continuous combat operations.

I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Bostick follows:]

Senator WEBB. Thanks very much, General Bostick.

I'm going to, in order of propriety, ask Secretary Garcia to give the first comments, with respect to the Department of the Navy, and then we'll go to Admiral Ferguson.

STATEMENT OF HON. JUAN M. GARCIA III, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Graham. Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the sailors, marines, and civilians who comprise the Department of the Navy.

At any given time, approximately 75,000 sailors and marines are underway aboard ships or forward-deployed. When counting those deployed, those actively training and preparing to deploy, and those supporting forward operations, 40 percent of the Navy and nearly a third of the marines are involved in maintaining our forward presence and supporting contingencies.

In developing our budget request, we added 6,800 billets to the operational forces of the Navy. To source these billets without increasing Navy's end strength, we reduced or consolidated 8,400 billets, streamlining many staffs and shore activities. The marines will face different challenges as they reduce end strength by more than 1,500 while ensuring that current missions, particularly in Afghanistan, continue to be fully supported.

Our fiscal year 2012 budget request for recruiting and retention represents a reduction from fiscal year 2011. Both services are performing well in officer and enlisted recruiting. However, accession bonuses remain critical to achieving Navy and Marine Corps goals for health professionals, nuclear operators, and Special Warfare/Special Operations personnel. Because we're experiencing historic retention rates, we've made selected reductions in retention bonuses, although retention behavior indicates we must apply bonus

programs to critical skill areas that remain relatively insulated from changes in the economic environment.

At a time when 1 percent of this Nation has served in uniform, we're expanding the number universities and campuses with ROTC presence, to ensure that the office ranks are open to young men and women from all segments and all regions of the country. Our fiscal year 2012 education and training budget represents an increase from fiscal year 2011. However, the majority of this increase represents investments in critical mission areas, such as missile defense, antisubmarine warfare, and the NASA and cyberwarfare—cyberforce.

Our fiscal year 2012 budget request for servicemember and family programs is an increase from fiscal year 2011 to support our continuum of care and address the physical, psychological, and family readiness of our sailors and marines. We continue to emphasize suicide and sexual assault prevention programs.

In the past 12 months, the Navy and Marine Corps have mobilized approximately 12,000 reservists in support of operational requirements. Recognizing the personnel costs are the largest part of the Department of the Navy's budget, we're collaborating with OSD and our sister services to review the future role of the Reserve component as part of our integrated total force.

The Department of the Navy is leading the way in both innovative therapeutic treatments and in civilian hiring of our wounded warriors. Naval Sea Systems Command has excelled in bringing disabled veterans on board, hired 282, in calendar year 2011 and, to date, are half way to their current goal of hiring a wounded warrior per day.

Despite the challenges, we can think of no more rewarding job than to represent and advocate for the nearly 630,000 sailors and marines and 190,000 civilian employees.

To that end, we wish to thank the committee members for their support of our great men and women in our Navy and Marine Corps, and look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Garcia follows:]

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Secretary Garcia.

Admiral Ferguson, welcome.

STATEMENT OF VADM MARK E. FERGUSON III, USN, CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL, UNITED STATES NAVY

Admiral FERGUSON. Thank you. Chairman Webb, Senator Graham, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to review our fiscal year 2012 budget request.

We believe our request appropriately balances risk in supporting the readiness requirements of the fleet, growth in new mission areas, and the essential programs that provide for the care of our sailors and their families. The extraordinary people of our Navy are serving around the globe, with nearly 50 percent of our ships underway or deployed.

Our forward-deployed naval forces give us the flexibility to respond rapidly around the globe. We have witnessed this unique capability over the past few months, where naval forces on scheduled deployments were quickly on hand in the waters off Japan, after

the devastating earthquake and tsunami, to deliver humanitarian assistance to the Japanese people. Simultaneously, halfway around the globe, our ships, submarines, and aircraft were on station in the Mediterranean to set the conditions for a multinational no-fly zone over Libya. And in the central command region, naval forces remained on call to support our ground troops and Special Operations forces.

To sustain this force, we continue to adapt our family support programs to meet the needs of our sailors and their families. We monitor the health of the force through surveys and retention data, which indicate sailors are satisfied with their leadership, benefits, and compensation.

Your support has made this possible.

In developing our fiscal year 2012 budget request, we review current operations, our procurement profile, and readiness requirements. This review indicated the need to add approximately 6,800 billets to the operating forces. And to source these billets without additions to our overall end strength, we reduced or consolidated approximately 8,400 billets in the fleet, squadron staffs, and shore activities.

Additionally, the Navy has placed end strength, previously funded by supplemental appropriation, into our baseline program for fiscal year 2012 and beyond. We assess that our Active and Reserve end-strength request will meet our 2012 projected requirements.

We continue to attract, recruit, and retain the Nation's best talent. Your Navy's received over 20 national awards, over the past year, recognizing accomplishments in workplace flexibility, management, training, recruiting, and workforce development.

On behalf of the men and women of the United States Navy and their families, I extend my sincere appreciation to the committee and the Congress for your support. And I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Ferguson follows:]

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Admiral Ferguson.

General Milstead, welcome.

**STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. ROBERT E. MILSTEAD, JR., USMC,
DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS,
U.S. MARINE CORPS**

General MILSTEAD. Chairman Webb and Ranking Member Graham, it's my privilege to appear before you today.

The Marine Corps is our Nation's expeditionary force in readiness, and we're ready to respond to today's crisis with today's force, today. The individual marine is our Corps' most sacred asset. And the quality of our force has never been better. Part of my job is to make sure it stays that way.

Regardless of any future force-structure changes, the challenge of shaping our force with the right grades, combat experience, and skills to fulfill operational requirements will remain. We appreciate your continued support for the tools and the funding to succeed.

A top priority of our Commandant is to keep faith with our marines, sailors, and their families; and, through program improve-

ments, and with your continued support, we are doing just that. Marines are proud of their eagle, globe, and anchor and what it represents to our country. And with your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our Nation's call.

I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Milstead follows:]

Senator WEBB. Thank you, General.

Secretary Ginsberg, welcome.

STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL B. GINSBERG, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

Mr. GINSBERG. Thank you, Chairman Webb and Ranking Member Graham. I appreciate the opportunity to come and testify before you today. Your committee plays a vital role in overseeing our Department of Defense, and we deeply appreciate your support, in the Air Force.

I begin with Secretary of the Air Force Donley's recent words that our most valuable asset are our people. I recently returned from a trip to Afghanistan with Secretary Lamont and can report that your airmen are making an incredible contribution to the joint and coalition warfight. Whether in the realm of air medical evacuation, forward airbase resupply, close air support, or intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, the Nation's airmen are applying every ounce of their skills, talents, and energy to support their partners.

We have a total force that is indeed fully engaged in today's fight. We have deployed more than 42,000 airmen, and engaged significant stateside forces in support of global operations. There are approximately 10,000 deployed Guard and Reserve airmen supporting every combatant commander.

Under Secretary Donley's leadership, we are building on our longstanding commitment to taking care of our airmen and their families by establishing the Air Force Sense of Community, which is an outgrowth of last year's highly successful Year of the Air Force Family Initiative. This plan will strengthen our ties to one another, increase our operational abilities, and ensure our Air Force community is best positioned to meet future commitments and requirements.

In the all-important realm of wounded warrior and survivor care, we have significantly improved the Air Force Survivor Assistance, Recovery Care, and Air Force Wounded Warrior Programs. Our family liaison officers, recovery care coordinators, medical caseworkers, Air Force wounded-warrior consultants, and community readiness consultants provide immediate and direct care for our airmen and their families through recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration to the Air Force or into the civilian community.

Also, at the direction of Secretary Donley, we developed a plan to integrate the three Air Force component personnel management systems into one system. The strategic intent of this effort, which we call "3-in-1 integration," is to establish a single, uniform system for Air Force personnel management, optimizing existing systems already in place. This effort will greatly improve efficiency, per-

sonnel management, and promote uniformity in policies and processes, to the extent practicable.

I look forward to answering your question, and thank you for your continued support of the Air Force.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ginsberg follows:]

Senator WEBB. Thank you very much, Secretary Ginsberg.
General Jones, welcome.

STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. DARRELL D. JONES, USAF, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR MANPOWER, PERSONNEL AND SERVICES, U.S. AIR FORCE

General JONES. Thank you, sir. Chairman Webb, Ranking Member Graham, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and represent the men and women of your United States Air Force.

These tremendously talented men and women—officers, enlisted, and Air Force civilians of the total force—are the backbone of our service in an era of revolving requirements, constrained budgets, and our Air Force faces increasing set of challenges. As the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services, I'll do everything I can to help deliver fully qualified and ready airmen to the joint warfighter, while meeting the essential needs of these airmen and their families.

We are dedicated to properly managing our end strength. Unfortunately, with retention at a 16-year high, we are compelled to use voluntary and involuntary programs. We expect to exceed our end strength in fiscal year 2011, and could experience additional growth in fiscal year 2012 if we do not actively manage our force levels.

Our force management strategy is not a quick fix, but a tailored, multiyear effort. Beyond existing force management legislative authorities, we are working with the Office of Secretary of Defense to seek additional legislative authorities to provide us the tools to better manage our end strength.

American deserves the very best Air Force in the world, and that is what you have. We must recruit, develop, and retain the highest quality airmen from the broadest landscape to maintain that status. Even though quality and retention are high, we are obligating a portion of our budget for bonuses to recruit the right skill sets and retain experienced airmen in our critical warfighting skills. Without these funds, we will handicap our commanders and their ability to carry out the full range of missions America demands of its Air Force.

We are committed to strengthening the resilience of our airmen and their families. Our goal is to build resilient airmen who have the ability to withstand, recover, and grow in the face of stressors and changing demands.

We remain fully committed to caring for our wounded airmen. We continue to provide support and assistance to the Air Force Survivor Assistance Program, the Recovery Care Program, and the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program, and will do so for as long as needed.

In closing, today's airmen have an unsurpassed dedication. They enable our competitive advantage against our adversaries and de-

liver dominance in air, space, and cyberspace. We will continue to recruit, train, and retain America's finest. And we will provide the care and service that they and their families need.

To that end, we would like to thank you for championing the post-9/11 GI Bill and the opportunities it has provided to many of our airmen and their families, including my youngest, who's in his first senior year at Texas A&M University in computer science.

On behalf of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, we appreciate your unfailing support of our airmen, and we look forward to answering your questions today.

[The prepared statement of General Jones follows:]

Senator WEBB. Thank you very much, General.

And as I mentioned at the beginning of the hearing, your full statements will be entered into the record after—immediately after your oral statements. They will be thoroughly—they have been, and they will be again, thoroughly examined by staff. And there may be a number of follow-on questions, staff to staff, after this hearing. It's—all of the information that you provided is valuable to us as we looking forward to marking up the Defense bill this year.

I have a number of questions. I think what I'm going to do, because of the nature of the subcommittee, is, I will ask one and then ask Senator Graham to go ahead and ask one. And welcome, Senator Blumenthal. And we can just rotate, rather than any one of us taking up—you know, the way that it's normally done on full committee.

I'd like to start with this. Last week, I raised the issue, with the Under Secretary, and also with the Defense comptroller, about the nature of the contracting force, the civilian contractors. Many years ago, as all of you know, I was Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, and at that time, we were flushing out the structure of what we then called the "total force," which was the active, the Guard and Reserve, and the—shall we say, the formal civilian component of the Department of Defense. And since the post-September 11 buildups, we have had an enormous growth in civilian contractors, many of whom perform what, in the past, were military functions. And we're having a hard time getting an actual number from the Department of Defense as to how many civilian contractors really are on board at any one given time. And so, I would like to ask each of you, however you want to do this, by service component, how you take into account civilian contractors when you build your manpower models.

And, Secretary Lamont, maybe just start with you.

Mr. LAMONT. It's all part of our total-force mix. Each Army military organization is required to maintain an inventory of all their functions to assess whether those functions are inherently governmental, closely associated, or not at all. From that, we determine, then, which positions can be converted to internal full-time employees. As we look at our total-force policy, though, we look at all mix of the—and all components, be it the active Duty, be it the Guard and Reserve, be they civilians in our contractor mix—trying to create the most balanced and integrated total force that we have.

On the Army side, you will find in excess of 200,000 contractors at any given time. Like you, we have some issues determining pre-

cisely how many contractors we have at any given time. Given our drawdown that's looming—

Senator WEBB. Let me ask you one question—

Mr. LAMONT. Yes, sir.

Senator WEBB.—on that, because this is the issue—one of the issues that came up last week. When you say “200,000,” does that include contractors that are brought on board through block O&M funding that goes out to the various CINCs?

Mr. LAMONT. Yes, it does.

Senator WEBB. It does? Okay.

Secretary Garcia?

Mr. GARCIA. A year and a half into my tenure, I shared the frustration with the challenge of putting a number—a headcount on the contractor force. As we've wrestled with it, what we learn is that oftentimes a contract is let, and it's up to that contractor, as an entity, to determine how many folks they'll employ in that effort, ranging from folks operating in theater, obviously full-time, to part-time work, mowing the grass on bases.

It came to a head during the end game of this year's budget process, when the remaining variable, at the end of the process, was that contractor figure. What we found was that it was a less-than-strategic effort to meet our numbers; instead, was applied, salami-slice style, for lack of a better term, across the BSOs.

What we want to do—we started a 2-month initiative, a total-force effort to drill down to ensure that each of the BSOs has a strategic voice in ensuring what their contractor force should be, and that it does not become an afterthought. In the meantime, we continue to drill down and put a headcount on the number of contractors out there, acknowledging that it's a challenge, in that how a given entity deploys their personnel is up to them.

Senator WEBB. So, do you know how many contractors are in the Department of the Navy?

Mr. GARCIA. Candidly, we do not, Mr. Chairman.

Senator WEBB. It's kind of difficult to place—

Senator GRAHAM. Within 50,000, can you tell us?

Senator WEBB. It's kind of difficult to place cost-effectiveness on the use of a contractor if you don't know how many you're using.

Mr. GARCIA. Well, we concur. What we do know is what we're paying in—for contractors and for those services. What we're trying to do with this 2-month initiative is, across the BSOs, make an assessment of whether we're using them wisely across each one.

Senator WEBB. So, you're working toward finding a number.

Mr. GARCIA. That's right.

Senator WEBB. Okay.

Secretary Ginsberg?

Mr. GINSBERG. Well, Senator, we, of course, recognize that, in addition to all Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian manpower, we, of course, have a great amount of work that's being undertaken by contractors. And one of the major muscle movements that we've been engaged in over the past couple years is a great deal of insourcing, where we took a look at some of the work that was being done by our contractors, and we saw that it actually would save money and did get the work done as effectively by bringing it back in house. And we've been undertaking that process.

In terms of tracking the amounts, we have a general idea. It's around 215,000 over the next few years. But, in terms of the specific granularity, you know, that's a challenge that we're going to work on with our fellow services, as well as OSD, in trying to get that granularity that we need.

But, we definitely recognize, of course, that that is a—there's great deal of work that has contributed to the service, and that—fluctuations in that realm have an impact, and that we need to address.

Senator WEBB. Well, for the record, we'd like to see your best estimates on those numbers, as we move toward the Defense bill this year, which means fairly soon.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator WEBB. Senator Graham?

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was an excellent question.

I know it may be difficult to count, but as we try to figure out what force we can afford and pay for, and where's the best investment of taxpayer dollars, I think—very important that we understand, generally speaking, how many contractors we have.

And that gets us back to numbers of people available for the fight. Secretary Lamont and General Bostick, I understand there's 20,000 Army personnel awaiting disability evaluation boards, or in that system. And we're supposed to draw the Army down by 22,000 over the next couple of years. What are we doing to get the people through the system? And that's 42,000 people, over the next couple years, that will be lost to the fight. How does that impact the Army? Because nondeployable really means you can't go to the fight. Doesn't mean you can't contribute, but it does take away.

General BOSTICK. Yes, Senator. The nondeployable situation is just one factor in our overall challenges in manning the force. The Congress helped us with the 22,000 end strength—temporary end-strength increase, and that allowed us to account for not only the nondeployables, but the wounded warriors, and the fact that we had to stop using stop-loss. So, all of that 22,000 is being utilized today.

Additionally, we were supposed to stand up three additional brigade combat teams, and we did not do that. And we did not apply structure to it. So, that gave us another 10,000 or so to work with.

Having said that, it's bigger than the nondeployable issue, which we're working. It's also the fact that we're going to come down the 22,000, then come down 27,000. And we're going to do that in an environment where we're still fighting a war. But, the physical disability evaluation system, in the process, is—despite all of our efforts and despite all of the leadership that has gone into it—it is not functioning at a pace that is keeping up with the number of soldiers that go in there. So, it grows every month, as opposed to—the input is much higher than the output.

So, we are working very closely with OSD to figure out how we can streamline it. As you know, we've worked closely with the VA on the integrated disability evaluation system. So, instead of doing two physicals, we now do one physical. But, it takes more time, on the Army time.

But, the bottom line is, I think we've got an antiquated medical, physical disability evaluation system that is—that needs to be revamped for the war that we're in, and to really meet the needs of Active, Guard, and Reserve soldiers and other military.

Mr. LAMONT. If I might just add, the DES system, or disability evaluation system, is complex, disjointed, hard to understand, and takes way too long. And that's the good news.

On top of that, it is, as you say, highly inefficient and truly does impact our readiness. We have got to get a grip on this, and we are making every effort to do that, as we say—as we move to—hopefully, to get to a single—

Senator GRAHAM. What can we—I mean, you know,—I understand it's frustrating. And it's a balance, here. You just can't throw people out. Most people want to stay. And the termination—you're disabled, unable to serve—is a dramatic event. Some people obviously can't, and they need to be separated with dignity, quickly, and given the best treatment possible. You need a process that will convince people, who are challenging their decision, that they're not able to stay in—fair renderings of evaluations. Just let us know what we can do to help. This is a major problem for the country.

Mr. LAMONT. And it's not all medical-related. We will find legal, as you know, being a fellow JAG—our legal issues, particularly on the due-process side, have expanded over the past 10 years. And there are various other slices that contribute to the problem. But, medical is our largest.

Thank you.

Senator WEBB. Let me, if I may, add something on this—it's Senator Graham's time, but—

This process has—the disability evaluation process—is much more complex than any civilian model that people may try to use. I say this as someone who worked for 4 years as committee counsel on the House Veterans Committee, years ago, and represented many veterans—pro bono, by the way—on their disability claims. It's not simply people who are trying to stay in, and want to stay in; there are a lot of people who want to get on with their lives and, at the same time, have suffered some sort of, you know, permanent disability, with respect to having served their country.

And disability law evolved out of the old private bills in the Congress, where people who would have, in—you know, in other wars, would have had no recourse except for to get a Member of Congress to come in and say, "My constituent lost a leg and we'd like the government to sort of help him out." So, part of it is whether an individual is able to stay on Active Duty. Another part of it is simply compensating people who—citizen soldiers, who have served—for any injuries and disabilities that they incurred when they stepped forward to serve their country.

And I'm a little worried, here. This is the reason that I'm raising this. I'm a little worried with this joint single-disability evaluation, because, in history, there are always two separate evaluations. There was the evaluation as to whether or not someone was fit to remain on Active Duty, and then, the second one, with the VA, was a lifetime evaluation. If you could—you could leave the military with a 10-percent incurred disability during your military service, but that disability could get worse as you get older; and when

you're 55, 60, 65 years old, the VA, appropriately, could rate you as, say, 60-percent disabled.

And what we're seeing, right now, first of all, is a logjam, which what—is what Senator Graham is talking about. A lot people who want to get out, who are ready to move on, who've done their time, can't get out. They're stuck on Active Duty until this process unwinds. And then, the second one is, there are people who are going to leave the military with a fairly small incurred disability that, over their lifetime, is going to grow. And it's appropriate for us to take that into account, as well.

Just—want to add anything, Senator?

Senator GRAHAM. I agree.

Senator WEBB. Yes. All right.

Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Senator Webb.

And thank every one of you, for your service to the Nation, and to the people who serve with you, and particularly your work on recruiting and training the best-qualified people who are entering the military, and people given such talent and skills, as we've just seen over the last couple of weeks. And the briefings that we've received have emphasized that the triumph was an all-service triumph, truly. Although the Navy Seals are the ones in the spotlight, the training and the qualifications that you are instilling, I think, are seen not only at the tip of the spear, but throughout the armed services, which kind of leads me to the question, focusing on the end, when these folks leave the military; among them, the most talented and dedicated in their age group, receiving tremendous training, and those skills may not be directly applicable to civilian needs, but they then become among the highest unemployed in the whole country. And depending on which numbers you pick, or which ages and so forth, their rates are multiples of the civilian populace, which seems to me not only unjust and unfair, but unproductive.

So, I have a general question, which I'd like to pose to you. And I know time may not permit, and you may not have been fully prepared for this question. So, I would welcome anything you have, to follow in writing later. But, I think this is a very, very—profoundly important for the whole Nation.

Why is it that the unemployment rates are so high among that 20-to-30 age group? And what can we do about it? And I've looked at the testimony, and there's not a lot in here, but I would welcome any comments that you have.

Secretary Garcia?

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Senator. And thanks for raising the issue. And I speak for the Navy and the Marine Corps when I say that, candidly, our Transition Assistance Program has not been sufficient. A 3- to 4-day evolution, required on the Marine side; but, the reality is, it is not—it's not been sophisticated enough, it's not been tailored for the individual. At a time when your Marine Corps is 60 percent under 25 years old, 40 percent lance corporal or junior, when that junior marine gets out—it's highly likely that he or she enlisted right out of high school, has never put a resume together, and he's in the same room, going through the same seminar

as O-5, O-6, who has a different set of needs as he or she makes their transition.

What we're in the process of rolling out, very—my colleagues—a focused effort, a joint effort with the VA, with the Department of Labor. It's a TAP 2.0, if you will, a new Transition Assistance Program that'll roll out, Veterans Day, this November—that instead of being a 3- to 4-day generic slice of what one could expect, it'll be focused and tailored for the individual, not just a 1-week evolution, but one that a member can reach back to in the weeks and months to come, that will address what we know to be a major chokepoint in hiring, that is, translating the skills that a member learned in the Navy or the Marine Corps into terms that are applicable for industry, that will have avenues for spouse engagement, as well. In many cases, we know that they are—these days, they're the principal breadwinner. And it will be an ongoing engagement. It'll also, at the same time, address veterans' benefits, access to the Reserves, and be an all-around, 360 revisitiation or reformation of the TAP experience.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I was actually going to ask whether a sort of re-TAP, or second-round TAP, once somebody gets home, or where that person is going to call home, might make some sense. But, it sounds like you're pursuing that approach.

Mr. GARCIA. I think it's going to be productive, Senator.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you very much.

Senator WEBB. Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank—I want to thank all the witnesses that—who are here, for your testimony and for your leadership, for your service to our country, and to all of those that serve underneath you.

I wanted to—Lieutenant General Bostick and the other panel members, I'm pleased to see, in your written statements, the—your repeated recognition of the critical contributions that our guardsmen and -women have been playing, in terms of our National security. As we all know now, they are an operational force. And we've needed their assistance to conduct the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. And it's been critical.

So, I want to follow up to what—actually, a question that Senator Blumenthal asked you about. And in the Guard and Reserve, the issue of unemployment—when you get back from a deployment, go back into your community, you're in a setting where you are not necessarily on a base, where you might get put right back in a civilian setting, where others might not understand or appreciate the experience you've gone through, and then also with the unique challenges of dealing with employment in a context where you're a civilian worker, and then you're called away and come back.

And I—in New Hampshire, we have a program, called the Deployment Cycle Support Program, that's been a great public-private partnership that I've talked to many of your colleagues before our Armed Services Committee about. And in the fiscal year 2011 Defense appropriation, there was allotted \$16 million for outreach and reintegration services, under the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. And I spoke with Secretary McCarthy last week about this program.

And what I would like to know is—last week, Secretary McCarthy assured me that critical funds to continue, in our State, this Deployment Cycle Support Program, which has been very successful, in terms of measurable metrics, on reducing unemployment, on making sure that our guardsmen and -women get the appropriate support on the mental health end and other services they need when they return, to cover the whole deployment cycle, are there. And there were many of us that joined on a letter. There were eight States that have these types of programs. And Secretary McCarthy assured me that these funds that were allocated in fiscal year 2011 were making their way through the system to the National Guard Bureau and then to the eight States, including New Hampshire.

A week has passed, and many of the States—I can speak for my own, New Hampshire—are approaching the deadlines for putting this funding in place. If we delay any longer, we're going to risk a gap in service that will directly hurt our troops and our families.

So, I would like to ask either Assistant Secretary Lamont or Lieutenant General Bostick, or whoever is the most appropriate individual to answer this question, Can you tell me the status of where these funds are and when these funds will be provided to the National Guard Bureau and distributed to the eight States who have these model programs?

And I would urge all of you—we need a national way to address this. I'm proud that my State has a model that I think is a good one for everyone to examine, to really—it's an efficient use of funds. It also brings the private sector in, which I think is very important. And so, I would urge you all to look at that on a national basis.

But, right now, I'm concerned about New Hampshire, and wondered where we were at in getting those funds to continue that program.

Mr. LAMONT. I'll take the first stab at it.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you.

Mr. LAMONT. Which—it's a very serious question, and we appreciate the question. But, quite candidly, I cannot tell you the status of those funds right now. We will try to get you an appropriate answer as soon as we can.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Mr. LAMONT. As a 26-year guardsman, I can tell you I share your concern, here. As we do any kind of transition with Reserve-component forces, it's always considerably different, since the—because of their location, the geographic differences from a—an installation which has quite a bit more service and support available to the returning veterans on the active side—we're very concerned about our transition efforts for our Reserve component.

As you know, we have a Yellow Ribbon Integrated Program. We do try very hard to have employer-support relationships. We do have a regional service, medical centers.

The employment situation really has a great concern. And this goes, also, to Senator Blumenthal's question. That cohort is not an easy one to help right now. And we're making every effort, as we—as I say, to bring in these employer relationships, set them up into

our Yellow Ribbon Programs, to have them on the ground, there, to meet with them.

Also, I think the Reserves has a new program—it's called a "Helmets to Hardhats Program"—in which we have any number of skills—for instance, if you're an MP, do you need to go back and requalify in your State to be a law enforcement officer? Do you need to take that over-the-road test for a commercial driver's license if you are fully qualified in the transportation end? We are trying to find any number of those linkages of—partnership linkages where it will assist them in going forward, back in their home States.

Senator AYOTTE. I very much appreciate what you're saying. And I would actually urge you to—if you—we'd love to have you up to our State to take a look at it and—because we've bridged those partnerships, and we're keeping metrics on issues like deployment retention, homelessness, unemployment, mental health. We've had instances where we've actually saved someone from committing suicide. So, I think that, you know, things always start, hopefully, as a pilot. You get measurable metrics and go forward. So, please come to visit New Hampshire.

I would also say, I'm hoping, in the short term—I would very much like an answer on where we are on the status of the funds. And so, if you could follow up, or if—unless someone else on the panel has the answer—with the status of that, it's something that's an immediate need. And we know it's there, and Secretary McCarthy is committed to getting that—those funds where they're needed. So, I would appreciate that.

Mr. LAMONT. Thank you.

General BOSTICK. Senator, we'll follow up. We don't have the answer to that today.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

General BOSTICK. But, I did want to say that, in our own Army Career and Alumni Program, our Vice Chief, General Chiarelli, asked us to relook that program. And that report's coming in, this May. So, we've worked that with West Point and with the Guard and Reserve, the VA, with Ray Jefferson, Secretary Ray Jefferson, over at Labor. And that's going to be helpful to us.

But, what I would also say is that the 20- to 30-year-old age group is that same group that is having tough time with unemployment across the country. And our military reflects society. And where we differ is, they're part of the 1 percent that have worn the uniform. And while the government and the military can help work a lot of these issues, after 4 years in recruiting, what I learned is that a lot of America wants to help, but they don't know how. And part of what I would offer is that—you know, our soldiers coming out may not be certified in the areas that they need. A truckdriver may not have the certifications, but can drive a truck anywhere. A medic may not have the exact certifications that they need, but can work anywhere.

An educator off—on our platforms, or an instructor at West Point, coming out, may not have the certifications to go into an elementary school or high school. But, what can the country do to ac-

cept those military without those certifications, get them into jobs, and then allow them to work on the certifications as they go along?

We're doing the same in reverse, because we are desperately short of alcohol and substance abuse counselors. And the one thing that those counselors really need, to be independent counselors, is, they need 2 years of study and tutelage under a supervisor. And no one on the outside really has the time to deal with folks that need 2 years of study. So, we are bringing them on. We're making them commit to moving with us when we tell them that they have to move to a part of the country that is not a big city, and that they have to stay with us for a certain amount of time. But, we'd ask the country, What can you do to take our soldiers on?

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, if I could just add a quick footnote to that excellent—

Senator WEBB. Sure.

Senator BLUMENTHAL.—really excellent question. When you compile those numbers for New Hampshire, could you please get them for the other States, as well? And I recommend visiting New Hampshire or New England, including Connecticut. This time of year, it's a beautiful time to be there. So.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

I don't think there's many issues, in the military personnel, that are more emotional or controversial than the issue of diversity.

Secretary Garcia, during your confirmation hearing, 2 years ago, there was a debate going on, at the Naval Academy, about standards. I asked you about it during the confirmation hearing. There were allegations that there was a—basically, a two-track admissions system, one for athletes and minorities, and the other for other folks. And you indicated you were going to get your arms around that.

And let me just say, I am aware, at least from the 1970s, that there have been DOD policies with respect to diversity. When I was Secretary of the Navy—every promotion board, there was a precept that went into the promotion board, saying, "You will examine issues relating to diversity." And at the same time, we just had a diversity commission come out recommending, you know, more—you know, different kinds of policies. And I know, in the Air Force statement, there was some observation in there that there's actually an officer in charge of diversity at the Air Force Academy, or something to that effect.

I'm just kind of wondering what's going on. And, Secretary Garcia, why don't you start with the question that we had during your confirmation hearing?

Mr. GARCIA. Sure. Thanks for the opportunity, Mr. Chairman.

There's been a lot of coverage, a lot of ink spilled, on what's been depicted as a most diverse Academy class in its history, and the most diverse ROTC class in its history. I think the real significance is that, what is the largest is the most number of applications from minority Americans across the country, in Academy history, over the last 4 to 5 years. The same with ROTC. If the argument goes that if you cast a wider net, you'll get a better candidate, that, in the mission that the Nation now requires of our Navy and Marine Corps, that we can't afford to look—overlook talent anywhere, I think it follows that recruiting and looking for candidates in re-

gions where we haven't had applicants before, drawing from congressional districts where we haven't had applicants before—the number of congressional districts who send less than three qualified applicants, within the recruiting year, has been cut in half over the last 4 years. We've gone to places we just haven't gone before. If that's the premise, I think you can draw a linkage between casting that wider net and the superior candidate we're getting now.

Tightly correlated with an increase—a spike in minority applications is a greater presence of minority midshipmen on the meritorious academic honor roles and a disconnection, a—less of an appearance on attrition roles—greater graduation among Hispanic midshipmen. In less than a decade, it's gone from 68 to 81 percent.

I continue to wrestle with this, specifically in the NAPS application. But, my guiding light, my northern star, remains in—I guess the academy position is that if we continue to recruit in places we haven't been before, cast a wider net, we'll continue to get the best of the best.

Senator WEBB. What are your findings with respect to the allegations about different standards?

Mr. GARCIA. The Academy employs a whole-person structure. And there are—it is documented—there are midshipmen who do not have—who are accepted, who do not have traditionally as high a board scores, SAT scores, as others. But, because of the whole-person structure, that takes into account other things—less quantifiable, perhaps; life experiences—they are admitted. I continue to wrestle with that and the results at the other end; that is, the graduation end, performance end, retention end, performance in the fleet—to ensure that we're getting the best we can get.

Senator WEBB. Let me make one other suggestion. If you're following that formula, there are a lot of differences among white cultures in this country. That's something that's not frequently talked about. I wrote a piece in the Wall Street Journal about this, last July. When I was in law school, the University of Chicago did a study of white ethnic groups, and they broke them down into 17 different ethnic strata, and the difference between the top and the bottom, in white America, was greater than the difference between white America and black America at that time, in the 1970s.

So, if you're looking for places where people perhaps haven't been applying, you may want to examine areas like the Appalachian Mountains and areas like that.

Mr. GARCIA. Point taken, Mr. Chairman. And know that—when I alluded to “regions” we disproportionately haven't heard from, that also includes Montana, the upper Midwest. I saw your piece, your Journal piece, and I take your point.

Senator WEBB. All right. Anybody else like to—Secretary Ginsberg?

Mr. GINSBERG. Well, Senator, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about our diversity initiative in the Air Force. And, for us, diversity is—we consider it a military necessity. And it's not diversity in the way that you would think about in, sort of, legally-defined equal opportunity programs—race, ethnicity, gender. It's part of that. It's really, like you were talking about, really reaching out to—and as Secretary Garcia was mentioning—reaching out to—making sure

we're not cutting ourselves off from any person who is capable of contributing to the Air Force, whether it could be, you know, somebody from inner-city or somebody from a region where we don't have as many recruits coming in as the past.

So, we see this as sort of a broad-reaching initiative to make sure we get the very best people, especially in a time when so many young people are not eligible to join the military. So, when we've looked at this, and when you—you know, you can almost mathematically show this, that when you get people with different perspectives coming together and they look at a problem, and they look at it, time and time and time again, from those different angles, you get better outcomes.

Also, you know, there are certain career areas where we just are—we have to fill, we have to retain people. And if somebody who can contribute looks in and doesn't see somebody like them, in whatever way, then they're not going to want to join the Air Force.

And then, you know—and this is something that the Chairman, Admiral Mullen, has talked about, that there are some—as well as Secretary of Defense—there are some dangers when the—you know, the country starts looking significantly different—and again, not just in race, ethnicity, gender, but a whole broad set of characteristics.

So, that's really what—when we have a diversity—we have a diversity policy directive, and the Academy has gone out and engaged a really super diversity officer. That's really what we're driving for. It's something distinct from equal opportunity. And it's certainly something distinct from affirmative action, if you will.

Senator WEBB. General Lamont?

General BOSTICK. Chairman, I'd say—

Senator WEBB. General Bostick?

General BOSTICK.—diversity is extremely important in the United States Army, as it is with the other services. And we compete for the talent that is out there. It's a broader definition, I would agree with the Air Force, of diversity.

We're—in the Army, we are experiencing some challenges as—minorities in our combat arms, if you're just looking at the minority part of it.

But, we did meet with General Lyle, Air Force (Retired), and General Becton, from the Army, after they did the MLDC, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission. And we understand we've got work to do. And we're looking at that commission's report. We also published our own diversity roadmap that the Secretary and the chief signed on, and it's guiding the way ahead for Army.

And what we have also found, in our enlisted force, that is now helping in our officer force—and it just gets back to what Secretary Garcia said, that it's really a whole-person concept. This notion of quality being a test score or some other metric has not proven successful in many universities across the country and, in some cases, at our Academy. So, we—and in our enlisted force. Our Army Research Institute has developed a number of unique tools for us to look at our enlisted soldiers, and now our officers, to try to predict their behavior and whether they will stay with the Army for the long haul, and whether they'll get promoted and serve as a leader. It's a personality assessment, an adaptive personality assessment

tool that we have started; I think the Navy and the other services are now using. And what it—we've found out is that there are some that don't test as high as those on the top rung, but perform extraordinarily well, even better, whether it's PT leadership—and then they stay with the military. That's important for ROTC. It's important for the academies. And we're looking at that, as well.

Senator WEBB. Well, thank you. This is a—not a question that is openly discussed often enough, in my view, you know. And I want to be really clear here. I grew up in the United States military, the first institution in this country to be racially integrated, in 1948. And I believe very strongly that there is strength in different cultures working together.

At the same time, the warning that I would have is, please be very careful when you lump so-called white America into one monolith in order to create your statistics. There are so many different cultures in white America that, you know, you run the risk of undoing the very thing you want to construct, if you're not careful.

Senator Blumenthal?

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Webb.

I want to go a little further in the line of questioning I was pursuing regarding the Transition Assistance Program, and focus on another area which may not directly link to unemployment. But, I've asked a number of panels about traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress, which obviously is tied to unemployment, and wondered if any of you would share your thoughts or observation about how the outreach to young men and women, who may not even recognize that they should be seeking some kind of treatment, can be done, either through the TAP program or through something like it.

Mr. GARCIA. Let me start out with that, if I could, Senator.

Senator Ayotte referred to the use of the Guard and Reserves. And while we don't have a Guard or Reserves that played heavily in the—a decade's worth of combat, on the Navy side, alone, we've deployed some 60,000 IAs for year-long deployments. What we found, early on in the war, was that the reluctance—a fear of a stigma to identify—for an individual to stand up and to recognize—verbalize that they were wrestling with demons and may need some help.

What we've done since is initiate a—what we call a PDHA, a Post Deployment Health Assessment, that no longer requires raising a hand. Everyone gets it, removing that stigma.

An IA, coming back, takes a PDHA within 30 days, and then takes another one within 90 days, a followup. We think, in that sense, we've removed the challenge of raising your hand in a group of your buddies, taking the stigma out. And we think it's reaped a benefit.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. And—I thank you for that answer—and the Commandant—Commandant Amos and Sergeant Major Kent have spoken very persuasively and eloquently on this issue. And I'm thinking not only of Active Duty members, but—and not only those as they transition out, but a year or so later.

I spoke, just coincidentally, this morning, to a young marine who has been out for probably more than a year and called me because he'd had an unfortunate brush with the law; nothing serious, but

just, you know, sort of explosive behavior, when stopped for speeding, and got himself into more difficulty and—you know, as he related it to me. And then, some of his service experience in Iraq—you know, things clicked in my mind—this young man really should be seeing someone before he gets himself deeper into trouble.

And, you know, if there were some way to outreach to people who have been through these experiences and may not have been diagnosed, because so many of the cases are undiagnosed—just a suggestion or an observation.

General MILSTEAD. Since—Senator, let me jump in here, since you're using a marine as an example. We're very much involved in the PDHA, and—but, your point is a good one. And, for those marines that have already separated from the service and have gone on—and we've spoken about this—we've put our behavioral health—under the behavioral health umbrella, we put our combat operational stress, our family advocacy, our suicide prevention, our sexual assault prevention, substance abuse. They're all connected in many, many ways. But, for a young marine—and this kind of goes back to the TAP, and I won't spend a great deal of time on what we're trying to do with the TAP—but, we have a de-stress line, we have the means that a young marine can call someone, we have our Marine for Life Program, that are distributed in the towns across America. That's one of the things in our transition assistance, is making sure that we turn this transition assistance from an event—from a 3- or 4-day event—into, as we've discussed, a process, something that will take care of a marine. We like to say, "You're a marine for life," and to take care of marines for life, so that they can come back to us and they can reach back, if they begin to dance with the demons, something that they didn't have, that it's—it has been postponed, and that they can come back and we can take care of them. I think that's important. And we need to do a better job—and we're working at that—of making sure that those marines, before they go ashore and before they depart the service, understand all those sorts of ways that they can come back. Because, there's thousands of people out there, thousands of organizations that want to help, and we've just got to connect them. They're all points of light. And we're working very hard on that.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I think that's an excellent answer. And I thank you, General Milstead. And I didn't mean to single out the marine. It just happened to be the one who called me this morning, and so, it occurred to me. But, I thank you for that answer.

General JONES. Senator, I think, from the Air Force perspective, identification, obviously, of post-traumatic stress syndrome and TBI are very important. And as we start bringing our airmen back from the fight, especially those outside the wire, we've started utilizing the Deployment Transition Center, USAFE, where it allows our airmen to decompress, to talk about their experiences, with professionals, of what they saw, what they experienced, and start identifying some of those traumatic events early on.

And then, a recent change we've also done, that I'm sure many of the services also utilize, is, anyone being discharged, who has deployed within the last 2 years, who had any incident of post-trau-

matic stress disorder or TBI, who is being discharged for anything less than an honorable discharge, are required to be evaluated by not—by highly, highly skilled mental health professionals and psychiatrists. And by doing that, we've realized that a lot of the misconduct that was—maybe in the past, have gotten someone discharged for personality disorder or adjustment disorder, is really related back to the TBI. And 61 percent of all of our airmen, who we follow in the Wounded Warrior Program, experience some portion, or some manifestation, of traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress syndrome. Some, that's all that they experience, and that's why they're in the Wounded Warrior Program, others, obviously, have other issues, along with that.

So, I think the identification, through the Deployment Transition Center, as they roll back. I know, the marines recently evaluated our program at Ramstein, and wanted to use that for a lot of their marines that were outside the wire, dealing with conflict every day. And it's great program. I'd encourage you to come over and see that, if you ever have an opportunity to pass through Ramstein.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. I hope to do that. Thank you.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Senator.

What percentages of your discharges are honorable, these days, as opposed to general or other than honorable?

General JONES. Senator, I'd have to get the for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

General JONES. It's obviously the great, overwhelming majority of them. But, I—

Senator WEBB. You don't have any idea?

General JONES.—I can get that for you.

General MILSTEAD. I did—I mean, for the Marine Corps, sir, we'd like to take that, because—for the record—and come back to you so that you get a precise answer on it.

[The information referred to follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

General MILSTEAD. Of course, the vast majority—

Senator WEBB. I'd be curious to see it.

General MILSTEAD. Yes sir. We'll come back to you with it.

Senator WEBB. I can tell you, it was 97 percent, during the Vietnam era. That's a readily available piece of information I'd like to look at, honorable versus general versus unsuitable versus, you know, court-martial—bad conduct or deed—just for the record.

I'd like to throw a question out, here. I mentioned it last week. We've had testimony estimating that around 25 percent of the 17-to-24-year-olds in this country are eligible for enlistment, the disqualifying reasons being, generally, educational/physical requirements. I just find that mind-boggling. And I know this is an enlistment-rich environment, for many reasons, right now. But, it's an issue that I think may come up, depending on circumstances in the future, and certainly for the health of the country, if we're talking about cross-sections of people coming in. I know that—again, I go back to the Vietnam era, because it was an era where there was conscription and there were a lot of people who didn't want to go in. But, still, one-third of the draft-eligible males in—during the Vietnam era, actually served, either on Active Duty or in the

Guard and Reserve. And now we're saying 75 percent, in this pool, wouldn't even be able to, if these numbers are correct.

And so, I'm wondering, first of all, if this really is an accurate figure. And second, if there's some sort of evaluation of the disqualifying features that could be undertaken, or should be undertaken.

General Bostick?

General BOSTICK. Chairman, I'd be happy to start off there.

The figure that I often use is, less than 3 out of 10 are fully qualified to serve in the military. And they're "not qualified," for several reasons. But, it's education and aptitude. They don't have a high school diploma or they don't score high enough on the ASFAB; medical reasons, which include all sorts of things, from asthma, eyesight, hearing, bad knees; and lately, some of types of psychological drugs that they may have had to take for ADD and that sort of thing; and then, finally, conduct, or misconduct—misdemeanors and felonies of that sort.

So, what can we do? In the area of weight, for example—I think weight and education are two areas that the country needs to go after. And I think we—all the educators—and my wife is a principal at an elementary school here in Arlington—but, education is something the country needs to help us with. And we're doing our part, in the military. Education is very important if you're going to come into the military service. I think the GI Bill, tuition assistance, the emphasis of the military to say, "We don't just want you in uniform. We don't want you to just deploy. We want you to earn your education, from high school all the way up to the Ph.D., if it works for you."

The other area is medical. And over the years, we've just gotten more and more overweight. And one of the things that we have tried to do in the Army—again, working with our Army Research Institute—is to find those young men and women who have grown up eating hamburgers and other things all their life, and not doing the fitness kind of things that they need to do, but they have the motivation and strength to come in the Army. So, we've created the ARMS program, the Assessment of [Recruit] Motivation and Strength. And that would take a youngster who might be a little bit overweight—body mass index—but, we are assured, based on this test that we give, that they can get through basic training. And it has been a wonderful success. They come in. They graduate at the same levels as others that don't have a weight issue. And then they lose the weight while they're in the Army. But, I think the country's got to take that on. And we're trying to do our best in the military.

Senator WEBB. Thank you. Anybody else have a thought on that?

Admiral FERGUSON. Senator, I would just offer, there was a DOD study on this issue, several years ago, that we can provide the committee, that breaks down the various factors and reasons. But, I echo General Bostick's comments that what we're seeing is increased disqualification due to—health and education seem to be the primary factors.

General MILSTEAD. I'll just jump in here, Senator. After commanding the Marine Corps recruiting command for about 2 and a half years, the quality of young men and women that are coming

in to the military today, it's the finest that I've seen in my 35 years of service. I mean, I'll just use the Marine Corps' figures from last year. We had—99.7 percent of the young men and women that joined were at tier I; 73 percent, mental category three-alpha [3A]. You kind of hit it on the head. Right now, it's a buyer's market.

But, it is a—to echo what was said, it is a national issue. It's a national problem. It's not a military problem, per se, but it's a national problem. It's something that we—like education, like suicides, it's something that we need to take on, on a national level. I'll just offer that.

Mr. GARCIA. If I could just put a punctuation point on that, on General Milstead's point. We have the same—we're seeing the same data that you are, Senator, in terms of one in four of the 17- to 24-year-old traditional recruiting demographic is either morally, medically, or legally ineligible for service. But, as the General said, by any objective metric, AFQT, ASFAB, technical background, traditional academic diploma holders, we're off the charts; we haven't been here before. And the same goes in the officer ranks. It's never been more competitive, at least academically, for ROTC scholarships, academy admission. We hear so much about a—

Well, I would just leave with this point, that every one of those kids who goes and stands on the yellow footprints or goes to Great Lakes does so knowing nothing but combat for their entire adult lives. So, out of that 25 percent that's left, we're getting an incredible cadre to raise their right hand.

General JONES. Senator, our quality in the Air Force is extremely high. But, I echo what my colleagues say; it is a national issue with having our people and our—having all Americans fit for military service. And the biggest thing, I think, is the physical attributes that we have, not because we've gotten tougher, but because the country's gotten softer. And we need to make sure, in the Air Force, 90 percent of all of our recruits are in the top three mental categories. We have 60 percent as the goal for DOD. So, we're all experiencing, really, a high-quality standard. But, what that allows us to do is reduce our training costs. We used to program 10.5 percent attrition for basic military training. We're now down to 5 percent, because our recruits that come in are such high quality.

But, the number of recruits, as you pointed out, that are—or, the number of people eligible to be recruited in the military is a significant concern for the future.

Senator WEBB. Certainly not a—as I said when I started this question, not a question of the quality of the military today. That is something that could well come up in the future. I'm not thinking that it will, with the—in the way we are sizing our military and the way that we have been taking care of, in an appropriate way, the—our military members and their families, including post-military assistance, such as the GI Bill. But, it certainly is a stunning statistic, when you look out at the rest of the country. And perhaps, going to what, Secretary Garcia, you were saying, being more “embracive” in society.

I remember, years ago, they—in the Marine Corps, they used to have a platoon, down in Parris Island, for the overweights. And they'd just work them to death until they hit the weight marks, and then they would go on and begin their regular basic training.

And they were—as far as I could tell, they weren't any different than any other marine, when they came out of all that. Right now, I guess you don't have the need to be doing those things, in terms of the quality of the force. But, it's certainly—it's just a stunning statistic.

When, in your testimony, you talked about reduction—many of you did; I don't have all your testimony in front of me—but, the reduction in enlistment and reenlistment bonuses that are now being paid, what happens to that money when it's not paid? Is it reprogrammed into other personnel accounts?

Secretary Lamont?

Mr. LAMONT. We look at—as an ability to reshape the force in other ways. What we don't need in our incentive for recruiting, for instance, we will look for the critical skill needs—so that we can add to our bonus situation there, for instance—as well as in our retention area, where we want to maintain those high-quality new captains coming out of there. So, we will provide any number of incentives, be it in terms of graduate school, be it in terms of bonus, be it in terms of assignment.

But, yes, we reallocate those funds primarily, as I say, to shape the force for our critical skill needs.

Mr. GINSBERG. And, Mr. Chairman, of course, in the Air Force, you know, we want to make sure the budget requests that come up here are as accurate as possible, and that we project, in the future, how much we are going to need in recruiting and retention bonuses. So, you know, we, of course—as the year—once the money's been appropriated, as the year goes on, we monitor it closely.

You know, I would say that recruiting and retention bonuses are absolutely vital right now, especially for filling some of our stressed career areas that we are having—particularly in the realm of retention—having some challenges. So—

But, we, of course, monitor it closely. And we tailor it, because, given, obviously, how scarce resources are right now, and that we do need to be good stewards of taxpayers' dollars, we want to target those as much as possible.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, again, for being here today, all of you, and for your continued dedication to the well-being of the people of the United States military and the others who are making our military posture successful in the total force. And I appreciate the candor in which we've been able to conduct our discussions today. And we will have, potentially, follow-on questions, staff to staff, on some of these other areas.

And this hearing is now closed. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 2:59 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]