



# Public Launch Event

Transcript | January 18, 2018

*This transcript was prepared by official military court reporters based on an audio recording of the event.*

## Speakers:

- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck, Chairman
- The Honorable Mark Gearan, Vice Chair for National and Public Service
- The Honorable Debra Wada, Vice Chair for Military Service
- U.S. Senator Jack Reed (RI), Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee
- U.S. Representative Mike Coffman (CO), Chairman of Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee

## Keynote:

- Mr. Earl Bowman Conservation Tech, Delaware State Parks Trail Team

## Panel:

- Mr. Eduardo Martinez, President of the UPS Foundation, UPS Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer
- Ms. Shirley Sagawa, CEO of Service Year Alliance
- Lieutenant General Laura Richardson, Deputy Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command
- Ambassador Francis X. Taylor, former senior official with the Departments of Homeland Security and State, and former executive with General Electric



## INTRODUCTION

### **Ms. Debra Wada**

Distinguished guests, members of Congress, and attendees, thank you for joining us today for the launch of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service. I am one of eleven commissioners and the Vice Chair for Military Service.

I and my fellow commissioners are very excited to welcome you here today, and we will begin with a press briefing followed by a panel discussion with a guest speaker and four very distinguished individuals who have dedicated their careers to public and national service.

Earlier today, we launched our website and social media accounts. I encourage you to check out our website, follow us on social media, and our hash-tag is "#inspire2serve," and "#jointheconversation." We are also Facebooking live, and I would like to welcome our Facebook viewers who have joined us live across the country.

I would like to introduce our Chairman, Dr. Joseph Heck. Dr. Heck served three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives from the 3rd District of Nevada. Prior to coming to Washington, he served in the Nevada State Senate. Dr. Heck is also an active member of the U.S. Army Reserve, holding the rank of brigadier general, and is currently serving as the Deputy Joint Staff Surgeon to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dr. Heck is also the President of RedRock Consulting.

## WELCOME

### **Dr. Joseph Heck**

I want to thank all of you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to be here today and help us kick off what is truly going to be a moving conversation with the national public about service in this country. We have a terrific audience, filled with service representatives from across the U.S. Government, the White House, Congress, the public and private sectors. This is an incredible group, and we appreciate you taking the time to be here.

I would like to specifically thank our members of Congress who you will hear from shortly; the former Secretary of the Army and Congressman, John McHugh; Sheila Crowley,



Acting Director of the Peace Corps; Kim Mansaray, Acting CEO of Corporation for National and Community Service; General (Ret) David Rodriguez, former Commander of AFRICOM; Lisa Monaco, former Homeland Security Advisor; and Alonzo Fulgham, USAID Administrator; and our distinguished panelists who you will hear from later in the program. Last, but not definitely not least, I would like to recognize all of my fellow commissioners.

I am honored to serve with such a distinguished collection of individuals. They have all dedicated their lives in service of this Nation and the American people. You have all been appointed by the President, the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House, and the Chairman and the Ranking Members of both the House and Senate Armed Services Committee. We have been meeting monthly since we organized on September 19th of last year, in preparation for this rollout and for us undertaking our official duties.

The Commission on Military, National, and Public Service was created by Congress to review the Selective Service System, to look at the potential need for a draft, and to consider methods to increase participation in military, national, and public service. Our mission is to listen to the American people from all walks of life. We want to learn from those who have served, who have yet to serve, and understand the barriers to that service, develop recommendations that will help increase a greater ethos for service to this Nation, and help those who actually want to reach out and start to serve attain their dreams.

Over the course of the next two years, we hope to ignite a national conversation around service, and we need the help of everyone in this room, your friends and families, to get engaged, to join this national conversation. Ultimately, our goal is to transform that national conversation into a series of recommendations for you, the American people, for the President and for Congress, that leads every American citizen to be eager and inspired to serve.

We will start that conversation by visiting all regions of the country over the next six months, and I am pleased to announce that our first visit will be to the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania area, February 22nd and 23rd. Please make sure you keep up with our website, which is [www.inspire2serve.gov](http://www.inspire2serve.gov), to check the calendar as we schedule more of these national meetings



and conversations. We ask that you put this information out throughout your networks, so that we have people from those areas come to participate so that we can listen to them.

I would like to thank Senator McCain and Congressmen Thornberry and Smith for their support. Due to scheduling conflicts, they were unable to join us today. The Commission has received unparalleled bipartisan support, and we look forward to working with members of both parties as we begin this journey. Before introducing the members of Congress in attendance and offering them the opportunity to make a few remarks, I would like to read a quote from Senator McCain, one of the primary sponsors of the Commission.

"When Jack Reed and I led the effort to establish this Commission, we hoped it would be a catalyst for an important national conversation on military and public service. Our nation is at a crossroads, and we must decide how we want to foster a culture of service among American men and women from all walks of life. I encourage everyone with an opinion to share their views with the Commission as it develops its recommendations."

With that, I introduce Senator Jack Reed, who is a true service champion, is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, and who served in both the active Army and the Reserves for over twenty years; a banker and a lawyer, who has represented the great State of Rhode Island, first in the House of Representatives and now in the U.S. Senate, where he is the ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

## REMARKS

### Senator Jack Reed

Thank you for the very kind introduction, and for your distinguished public service which continues. It is good that he read the comments of Senator John McCain, because there is no more example of lifelong public service than John McCain. So we are all lucky to have the pleasure to know him. I also want to thank all the members of the Commission and distinguished individuals who are helping out.



This Commission's importance cannot be overstated. The immediate legislative concern that prompted Senator McCain, and he was gracious enough to ask me to help, is the Selective Service System. As the Department of Defense moves to open up all military positions to service by women and the related issues requiring the registration of women for the draft, all of that raised significant issues, and we wanted the expertise of distinguished Americans to help us through those issues.

When we are considering the registration, for example, I think the growing perception is that women have to be a part of it because they are so much part of the service; General Richardson is an example of that, but that is something we have to do legislatively, and we look for your guidance as we go forward.

We are also in a situation where we hope we explore the accession standards to the military. Today, barely 25 percent of America's youth, aged 17 to 24, even qualify for military service, regardless of their propensity to serve. Some want to serve, and they cannot serve.

These standards have generally worked very well for the last fifty years, but I think we have to look again at these standards. I remain convinced that there are a large number of individuals in that unqualified group that could serve today because some of the demands, cyber-technology, sophisticated tactical aspects, might not require the same standards that in 1941 generated our Army and prompted similar enlistments in the Navy and the Air Corps. So that is one issue that I hope you can concentrate on.

We are also looking at the utility of the draft in general. We want to be able to access individuals, again in this new world, who might be linguists, cyber-specialists, mathematicians, etc. So, we might think about narrowing the draft to specific functions, not to broad-based national service. That is another area where we need your advice. We haven't reached a conclusion, we certainly need your advice.

We also want to look at where we can foster, as Chairman Heck said, not just military service, but national service, and that is why I am very pleased that President Mark Gearan is involved. He has a distinguished history with national service beyond just the military.



I think there is something that we have lost in the course of professionalizing our military forces. Growing up back in the 1960's, we all assumed, as men, that we were going to go in the Army or, at least, deal with that. And it developed a sort of national social fabric: your experience of the military, your appreciation for those who served, everyone seemed to serve.

I think that fabric has frayed and eroded and we have to rebuild it, not just by putting people in the military forces, but encourage them to go into national service: into Vista, into City Year, into a host of programs that can give them not only an opportunity to serve, but also give them the sense and satisfaction of serving. They have done something for the country. They are not just idle bystanders on what goes on. It's their country. They did it. They are going to make sure they continue to do that. Developing that active citizenship is a very important part of national service, and therefore something that we really look forward to you.

We have had a situation where national service has been very important to all of us and I think we have seen it and we want to see it, as I said, extended; not just to the traditional draft system and the military, but to all aspects of American life. For example, what about our State Department and Foreign Service? Are there mechanisms we can use to encourage and facilitate individuals to join the Foreign Service? We have the Peace Corps, as Mark is very familiar with, what about using that as a bridge to service overseas as a diplomat? There are so many different things that we can do.

I want to end with two quotes which I think capture this feeling. One is by Lee Hamilton, and many of us have the privilege of knowing Lee as a member of the House of Representatives and Chairman of the 9/11 Commission. And he said, "I can assure you public service is a stimulating, proud, and lively enterprise. It is not just a way of life, it is a way to live fully. Its greatest attraction is the sheer challenge of it, struggling to find solutions to the great issues of the day. It can fulfill your highest aspirations. The call to service is one of the highest callings you will hear, and your country can make."

Let me conclude with the words of another distinguished American, and I hope I don't slip into my Massachusetts accent. In 1961, John F. Kennedy said, "Let the public service be a



proud and lively career and let every man and woman who work in any area of our national government, in any branch, at any level, be able to say with pride and with honor in future years, 'I served the United States government in that hour of our nation's need.'"

We are in, as we always are, an hour of our nation's need. Let us, through your efforts, mobilize America to serve again, to serve well, and then take pride in that service and say again, "I served our government in its hour of need." Thank you very much.

## **Dr. Joseph Heck**

Thank you for your insightful comments and your life of service. Now I would like to take the opportunity to introduce a member of Congress from the great State of Colorado, my former colleague, Mike Coffman. Representative Coffman has served our country in many ways. He enlisted in the active Army at the age of 17, then he went into the Reserves after his initial enlistment. He went in the Marine Corps and, after serving in the Marine Corps, served in the Marine Corps Reserve. In Colorado, he served as a State Representative, followed by being the State Treasurer, then the Secretary of State, and he has represented Colorado's 6th District since 2009. He currently serves as the Chair of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

## **Representative Mike Coffman**

I thank you for your continued service to our country and sharing this very important task before us right now, before the country. I took General Heck's place as Subcommittee Chair for Military Personnel on the House Armed Services Committee and I see a lot of familiar faces here today. I think the timing of this is so important right now. You all will have to make a recommendation to the Congress of the United States as to what the future of Selective Service is.

The fact is we have constitutional case law dating back to, I think, 1981, concerning the requirement of women to register as well. And so, I think that the way the current policy stands is not constitutional because, if you look back at that case law, it challenged the registration





system because women were not required to register for the draft and it said at that time that is okay because they do not serve in combat roles. We know that is no longer the case, so that needs to certainly be looked at.

What I want to do is share with you a couple of things. First of all, we put the Selective Service registration requirement on the shelf before in, I think, 1975. We ended taking draftees in 1973, following the end of U.S. participation in the ground component of the Vietnam War. In 1975, they put the registration requirement on the shelf. It wasn't until 1980 that it was taken off the shelf and reactivated when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. President Carter reinstated the registration requirement as a show of force to the former Soviet Union.

One of the things that we will certainly be looking at in the Personnel Subcommittee and sharing with you is our mobilization capability with our active Reserve component for all of our services. If you look at the height of our participation in Iraq and Afghanistan, even though there were incredible stresses on our force, at no point did the Department of Defense consider activating Selective Service and going to conscription.

They recalled individuals. When I enlisted in the 1970s, it was a six-year aggregate requirement. Whatever active or active Reserve commitment that you had, the balance of that was on inactive status where you could be recalled. That has been extended since then to eight years where it is right now. I volunteered out of retirement, but there were many Marines who had been out for two years or less who were recalled to active duty and sent to Iraq and Afghanistan.

So, there is an incredible reserve of qualified individuals right now that we can call upon. I believe that the Army Recruiting Command has recently come up with a study and, in their analysis, it's somewhere around 75 percent of young people are ineligible to serve given Army standards today; either they are overweight, or they don't have high school. I couldn't have gotten in under the requirements of today. I finished high school under an Army program.

You not only have to have high school, but you have to have a high enough score on the ASVAB test. You obviously have to have emotional fitness. You can't be overweight. You





can't have altercations with the law, on-going drug and alcohol issues. We are talking about 75 percent minimum by their analysis, men and women of military age.

I think that is extraordinary when you think about that. I don't envy you in your task. It is not going to be an easy one, but I think that it is so critical to this country right now. And whatever direction you take, the Congress will certainly pay attention to the decision you make. I want to thank all of you who have served our country, are still serving our country, and all of you who are volunteering to be here today on this important task. Thank you.

General Heck, thank you so much.

## **Dr. Joseph Heck**

I want to thank you for taking the time to come over and for your long-term service to the nation and the people of Colorado. Before I invite Ms. Wada to come back up and transition to the panel, I want to take a point of personal privilege and recognize one other person in the room and thank them personally on behalf of the Commission, and that is Lieutenant Colonel Mark Austin. With most temporary startup federal agencies there is a lot of work to do, with no authorization and no money and a definitive timeline to get your work done.

We were trying to figure out how we were going to get started with no money, no employees, no place to meet, and fortunately Colonel Austin stepped up in his current position in the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and took the lead in procuring space, along with Ms. Barna who has helped us immensely. He is about to leave that position and go off and take battalion command at Fort Stewart, Georgia. So, we wish you well in your future endeavors and, on behalf of the Commission, thank you for all of your help and support.

## **Ms. Debra Wada**

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I hope you enjoyed our press conference. I think that this part of the event is going to be really exciting. We have four very exciting and



interesting individuals to begin our panel discussion, so I would like to introduce you to our moderator for today: The Vice Chair for National and Public Service, Mark Gearan.

Mark has served in multiple ways, as the President of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, the Director of the Peace Corps, the Director of Communications and Deputy Chief of Staff for the White House, and he has been appointed to numerous commissions, boards, and task forces of similar engagement on public service.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

Like my fellow commissioners, I am honored to be a part of this Commission. I'm grateful for the leadership of our Chair that you saw displayed so amply this morning, and in a great op-ed piece he had The Hill this week. We thank all of you for coming.

This is an important launch and important effort to place the marker of the conversation that we are very anxious and excited about engaging in over the next couple of years. We thank you for coming and we thank you for the ongoing engagement with this conversation. It comes at a very important time, as Senator Reed said, in our nation's history; and a moment where we can we hope, over the next couple of years, really contribute to the dialogue and the conversation.

As the former Director of the Peace Corps and having served the Corporation for National and Community Service on its board, and most recently as a college president for 18 years, I have seen like so many folks in this room, the transforming impact of service. I come to this podium and to this work on the Commission from those posts: from the Peace Corps to a college presidency, very excited, and very inspired, and exceedingly optimistic about our country based upon the commitment of service of the millennials and, recently, Generation Z.

Our work on this Martin Luther King celebration week and his inspiration for service, what so many of us see as I look around this room; this is the Mount Rushmore of service looking around this room here. It's kind of like a college reunion for service. But you know very well the millennial generation and those coming after them, their commitment to service. There



are so many exciting opportunities, and that is why I think, speaking for all of our commissioners, the opportunity we have to come forth with recommendations could not be more important.

This is again where we need your help; to listen when we go across the country, to engage with key stakeholders that you would commend to us, and to take advantage of the rich panoply of social media, our website that was launched today, [inspire2serve.gov](http://inspire2serve.gov), our Twitter accounts, and all of the various streams of communication. Particularly, for millennials and Generation Z, that we are going to be employing and really seeking the kind of ideas and recognizing the aspiration that we all have for our country.

Fortunately, from my perspective, we begin this conversation today with a great foundation of service. Again, thanks to so many people in this room and our predecessors in respective positions, service is really part of the American DNA; from de Tocqueville's observation to General McChrystal's, and all in between; all of the icons of service that we have respected through the years. Now our task is how do we expand, create, and foster a greater sense and ethos of service in our country. It is the challenge that Congress laid before us, and why I am personally excited.

Already in this country, every year, 80,000 Americans raise their hands to be AmeriCorps members. 3500 Americans raise their hands to serve the most desperate places on the planet as Peace Corps volunteers. 300,000 Americans raise their hands to serve in active military service. Staggering numbers; really incredible service. And also those who commit their lives and their talents to state, and local, and federal government service. And then, of course, there are the 63 million other Americans beyond that who just volunteer in their respective communities. So, our country has such an appreciative dimension of service and commitment to making a real difference.

Americans who serve in the military, and AmeriCorps, and the Peace Corps, and the City Year, and all the different contemporary opportunities for service, go on to lead lives of consequence. We will hear from our panel in a minute representing important aspects of the service agenda and conversation.



We want to begin and center our conversation by bringing forth a young man who demonstrates the spirit of service and who has lived it. This has been part of the Commission's agenda. As Chairman Heck said, we have been meeting since September, and each month that we have met we have asked someone who is committed to service to speak to us. We have had an active military member come and impress us with her perspective, a returning Peace Corps volunteer, a City Year member, a teacher, all of the different streams.

And this cadence that we are hearing from will add to our listening, will inform our perspective and our recommendations. And so, today, we are fortunate to have Earl Bowman come down from Delaware. He touches every possible base that this Commission could imagine: military, national, and public service, based on what he is doing presently in Delaware for the state parks, and AmeriCorps service, to his work as a volunteer at a very, very young age.

So, we are grateful for him traveling down from Delaware. And so, with gratitude for that and respect for his commitment to service, I bring forth Earl Bowman to the podium.

## **GUEST SPEAKER**

### **Mr. Earl Bowman**

My name is Earl Bowman and standing before a group of people and speaking is really not my thing. I would rather plow on a trail with a shovel in hand, but I am honored to be here and to share my story.

My love for the outdoors stems from my childhood. As a family, we were always hiking, biking, camping, fishing, and even hunting. Life in school wasn't always easy for me; the harder I studied, the harder school was. I was diagnosed with a learning disability in the third grade. By middle school, I discovered the world of volunteering. I frequently went to a nursing home to play cards and dominoes with residents. At nursing homes, I learned that I enjoyed helping others. It was nice, along with being in the outdoors.



At 13, I joined the local fire department as a junior member. I am still a volunteer firefighter, serving my community as a Rescue Lieutenant. For many years, serving with the fire department, I have seen and experienced many things. Mostly I've learned that I truly love serving and protecting those in my community.

After high school, I had a difficult time finding a job. I turned my hand to a few different jobs. Retail really wasn't my thing; neither was working in a warehouse. So, I took some time and I thought about my next move. I realized that I've grown up with some pretty amazing role models. A lot of my family served in the military. My grandfather served in the Army in Vietnam. My great, great uncle was part of the 82nd Airborne Division in World War II, and my great grandfather served in the great Korean conflict. So, those role models were really nice to have in the family.

I enlisted in the 166th Airlift Wing as a Service Specialist with the Delaware National Guard. Being in the military, I learned the importance of a team and how every individual is an important link to our chain. We form an amazing bond and become a family. Everyone I served with came from different backgrounds and dealt with different life struggles, but that didn't matter because we were all one team with the same common goal.

Once my term was over, I was again at a crossroads: What to do with my life? My mom gave me some information about AmeriCorps and a position with Delaware State Parks Veteran Conservation Corps. She said that this would be a good fit, because it combined my love for service and my love for the outdoors. My response to her was, "Eh, maybe." This continued every day for about two weeks, until I finally told her that I would give it a try. What did I have to lose? As soon as I started, I knew this was right for me. As a suggestion that comes from moms, they generally know what is best. Just don't tell my mom I said that.

Having the opportunity to be part of the Veteran's Conservation Corps has grown me and was an amazing experience. You get so much from it. It has a lot of military structure, because you serve side-by-side with many fellow veterans and their family members. We bond as a team and we have a common goal to prepare and maintain our state parks. I learned so much to help my career. I have trained on environmental stewardship, trail maintenance, wildland firefighting,



certified interpretive guide, playground safety, and para-first aid. I learned how to properly use and maintain chainsaws, and how to build a trail from beginning to end.

Immediately out of my service, I was offered a job with Delaware State Parks, but first I had to finish my service commitment. So I am proud to be part of the Delaware State Parks Trail Team. I plan to use my AmeriCorps education award to finish training toward becoming an EMT and paramedic for the state of Delaware. I can say that I struggle with self-confidence. I also consider my service experience in the military and AmeriCorps has given me so much more confidence.

It gave me more skills, and more knowledge, and a sense of mission, a path for the future, a chance to be in the outdoors and, most of all, it gave me happiness to give back to the community and country. Service changed my life. Thank you.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

That was fantastic. I should tell you, your mother was listening during the Facebook live feed. Hash-Tag, "I told you so." We thank you for your service and for bringing forth all that you did. Your colleagues came down with you from Delaware. We thank you for your service to the state and AmeriCorps as well.

It is now my pleasure to bring forth our panel. Certainly, Earl's story is powerful. So many of us have seen other examples of young people, and people young at heart, who have committed themselves to service. So, over the next coming months, the Commission will be listening around the country to their stories and lifting up examples as we think through recommendations to inspire more Americans to serve.

So, with our successful set change, we have a real opportunity to engage in conversation with all of you. Our four distinct panelists are leaders in their fields, who have led lives of service. Their biographies are in your program before you, so I will not repeat that in detail. But



you will see, as we did, their extraordinary commitment to service and their excellence in their respective fields.

First, Eduardo Martinez is president of the UPS Foundation. He is also UPS's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

Shirley Sagawa, well known to so many of us, is President and CEO of Service Year Alliance. We especially thank Shirley, because she answered the call to service at 7:00 AM this morning, when one of our panelists' flight out of Atlanta was canceled and she filled in in short order. We thank you for that.

Lieutenant General Laura Richardson, the Deputy Commanding General for U.S. Army Forces Command; and

Ambassador Francis Taylor, who is President of FXTaylor Associates.

Welcome all, and thank you for being here today.

Perhaps we can start with a bit of self-introduction in terms of where service is centered in your life and some of the issues that you have gleaned from that and you would commend to us as a beginning frame.

## **PANELISTS**

### **Mr. Eduardo Martinez**

I want to say congratulations to the Commission for this launch day, for this very, very important mission, and also say that it is an honor for me to be here on behalf of UPS; and that is United Parcel Service, so a 110-year-old company with service in its name. I've got a lot to tell you about our community engagement. I think that we were asked to talk a little bit about our personal experience and our professional engagement in service, and there were two life events that really shaped my perspective.

First, I was born in Cuba, and had to flee Cuba with my family in 1960. I was an infant, and we went to New York City and then Miami. Really at an early age, I saw the importance of





community outreach. I saw the importance of family, and how communities come together in really probably the most humane act; extending a helping hand to someone in need. I think that that was a very important era of my life growing up as an immigrant, really as a refugee, and seeing how the community outreached to us and really helped my family, who left very well-established lives in Cuba, to reestablish themselves in this great country.

Not too long after that, I joined UPS. I was 16 years old, in Miami, and I was hired as a package un-loader. Throughout my 41-year career with UPS, service was required, is encouraged, of all of its people, from the frontline to the CEO. I look forward to talking more about that, to talking about how important it is for the private sector to be involved in service and how the private sector really wants to be involved.

## **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

I wanted to serve because I wanted to help end poverty in America, and I decided that the best way to do that would be to go work for the Senate. I don't know if I would choose that today. I had the opportunity to work on national service legislation as a pretty junior person there, and drafted the first national service bill that created a demonstration program.

I got appointed to the commission that implemented that with my colleague, Alan Khazei, under President George H.W. Bush, and had a real opportunity at a pretty young age to try to figure out what the federal role should look like. I went on to serve with President Clinton in the White House, drafting AmeriCorps legislation and then setting up the Corporation for National Service and AmeriCorps. So I have a kind of policy work connection to this.

Currently, I am running the Service Year Alliance, which is chaired by General Stan McChrystal. General Rodriguez is on our leadership Council and we have many wonderful people who are stepping up because they believe that a year of service should be a common expectation and opportunity. So, that is what we work on and I am very honored to have a chance to pinch hit here.



## Lieutenant General Laura Richardson

I didn't know I wanted to serve before I started serving. I will start with that up front. How could that be as I'm sitting here today? Growing up, my parents always seemed to be a couple of steps ahead of me; making sure that I was always busy, I was never getting in trouble, and I always had too many things to do. They got me involved in sports when I was very young. I am the oldest of four kids, and all the kids were in sports. That took a lot of our time.

I went on to be a Colorado State champion in swimming. I started at eight years old, and went through college. And I think that built in the discipline and work ethic that is important for military service. While in high school, my parents got me started taking flying lessons. That was even more study, because you had to study to learn all of the things in order to get your rating. And, I think they had this plan mapped out for me before I even knew it.

Then, as soon as I started college, my dad said "Hey, you need to go to this class this coming Thursday." It was actually at a different school. It was Air Force ROTC. I went up there and I didn't know quite what to think. I wore a uniform. I had a funny looking gray hat that I wore around campus. I didn't look like many of the other people that were on campus, and I wasn't sure if I liked it or not. Plus, I was commuting to another school.

That year, I think, was a pretty telling year; freshman year in college. I thought that maybe it might be for me, but maybe this wasn't the right service. And, I think the commuting thing had a lot to do with it too. I looked around at the other services. I went to talk to the Navy; the Marine Corps. The Army seemed to be the best fit. They had helicopters. I thought, "Okay, I can take my flying lessons." My dad wanted the service to pay for my flying lessons. They never did until I started flying helicopters, and then they did.

It was a door that opened in terms of ROTC that made me start thinking, as somebody who didn't grow up near a military installation. Fort Carson was a couple hours away. You sometimes heard about Fort Carson, but not a lot. They did not have JROTC at my high school, so I did not grow up around the military at all.



My dad was very patriotic. He was in ROTC, but had a medical disqualification so he couldn't commission. He was drafted twice in 1956 and 1965. Again, he couldn't go into the service. Interestingly enough, 20 years later, he was able to go into the Reserves and served for 18 years as a medical doctor in the Reserves and the Individual Ready Reserves. And I had a grandfather who served in World War I and World War II.

The ROTC opened up a lot of doors and got me thinking. I was taking pre-med in college, possibly to follow in my father's footsteps, and I was taking flying lessons. The college I transferred into to take Army ROTC offered a professional pilot program, so that was my minor degree that I was working on.

When I graduated, I got accepted to medical school and flight school for the Army. So I decided to go to flight school, because my eyesight might not last long enough, but I could always go to medical school. I had a good number of friends that had gone to the School of Mines; it was a pretty good engineering school. They graduated, and most of them did not have jobs and they had student loans to pay. Within a month of my graduation, I was at Fort Rucker, Alabama. I was going through my leadership training. I was wearing the uniform every day, I was getting paid, and that was pretty exciting. Shortly thereafter, I started my helicopter training.

I am also married to another service member, Major General Jim Richardson. We have been married for 30 years. We got married very early in our career, so we have served together and we have made a life in the Army. We have one daughter; she is 29. She has her own family now. She is not in the military, but she looks really fondly on her time growing up as a military brat and, I think, would not trade it for the world.

As we talk about a life of service and opportunities, I think that education is really important for what our services offer, and I think that the word doesn't get out enough. Had my parents not said go to this class or go check this out then, like our previous speaker said, mom was getting after him for a couple of weeks. You really have to get the word out, and I think when folks realize how many opportunities are out there, it really makes the difference.



## Ambassador Francis Taylor

My story is pretty simple. I grew up here in Capitol Hill in the 1950s. I had a single mother. Most of you weren't born and weren't living in the 1950s but, in the 1950s, after the Korean War, there was a show called Combat. Vic Morrow was the lead actor, and it was about leadership in combat during the Korean War. I became mesmerized by that show. I watched it every week and followed Vic Morrow and what he was doing. I decided that I wanted to be a Soldier.

Also, In the 1950s, Jet magazine used to do a summary of African-Americans in the Armed Forces. Every week, I read Jet and followed General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. And, because Jet covered him as he walked through the ranks in the military following his father, I said that I wanted to be like General Davis. This was at eight years old. I told my mother that I am going to go to West Point and I'm going to be an Army officer. Well, it did not quite work that way. The idea of joining the military stayed. I was appointed to the US Naval Academy. I did not pass the physical. I applied to several universities and only one accepted me; the University of Notre Dame. Not too shabby.

I was in high school ROTC here in DC. Every public high school in Washington in the 1960s had a high school ROTC program that was mandatory for all males. It was a great start. I was corps commander for all of the high schools here in Washington when I graduated as a senior. I went to Notre Dame. I had the decision, like General Richardson; I went blue as opposed to green. I joined the Air Force ROTC at Notre Dame. It turned out to be a wonderful experience for me, being one of 26 African-Americans on a campus of 7000 in South Bend in 1966. I found a home in ROTC. Col. Vic Ferrari, who I will remember for the rest of my life as our PAS, was like a father figure to me and the rest is history.

I've always wanted to be in the military since I was eight years old. I realized the dream in graduating from Notre Dame as a second lieutenant, and I never looked back during the course of my career. And somehow, during the course of that career, other opportunities to serve just kept coming, even when my wife said no. And somehow, I just kept saying yes. I have had the opportunity to serve in many different capacities, not only in the military, but in the State



Department and the Department of Homeland Security, most recently; and at the General Electric Corporation, where I was a vice president and head of the Veterans Network.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

Ambassador, let us stay with you for some questions. You are in a perfect position to reflect from your experience in the military, state, Homeland Security, and the private sector. With Father Hesburgh as the President of Notre Dame when you were there, you were imbued with a sense of service, I suspect, as an undergraduate. What are some of the elements of service that you would commend to us to think about as the Commission? Have you seen the propensity for service change or evolve over the course of time in the various sectors that you have seen; yourself, the military, the state, and others that you've seen in other streams of service?

## **Ambassador Francis Taylor**

My own experience is that service is very personal. Everyone is not going to join the military. Everyone is not going to join government service. But there is an opportunity, as you live, to give back to your community, to give back to your family, to give back to those that are less fortunate. All of these are opportunities to serve. Looking at his leadership at Notre Dame, I have an autographed picture of Father Hesburgh with Dr. King, which was not very popular at the time, in terms of the broader community and his relationship with Dr. King and the civil rights movement. But he said that this is the right thing for America.

So, my sense of service is doing what is right for America, looking for opportunities. I am passionate about education. All of my charitable donations go back into education, either my high school or Notre Dame, because I think that is how you continue to pay forward the opportunity to serve both in the military and government service. I think that there are many opportunities. I think they are all personal as far as how you look at service, and I don't think that there is a one size fits all approach.

I also think that in order for people to understand the opportunities to serve, there needs to be more advertisement and discussion around what those opportunities are. They are not so



narrowly defined to the military, but AmericaCorps, Teach for America, and all of the other opportunities to give back to this great nation is what drives my thinking about service.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

Shirley, you were literally there at the beginning of this Commission, and with AmeriCorps, and you have written and talked a lot about the importance of service, broadly defined, and how with scale it can go at some of the nation's most vexing problems. You went into this to eradicate poverty as a young Senate staffer. How do you reflect, listening to the Ambassador's comments here in terms of service, and what do you see in the field in your work with General McChrystal?

## **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

I did want to reflect on what I've heard from both of you and Earl Bowman; that you serve, and then you serve, and then you serve some more; and that is very common. There are a lot of people who come out of the military and they do AmeriCorps, or vice versa. And there is lots of evidence that people who do AmeriCorps continue to serve throughout their lives. They are civically active. They vote. They solve community problems, and their lives are better. Instead of thinking about this as something we sort of impose on people, I'm thinking it is very common for military families to continue the path of younger people serving. You have heard about it. So many people are not asked.

When I was growing up, I didn't know anybody in the military. I didn't know that women wanted to be in the military. It didn't occur to me to think about serving until I was actually in law school, and I remember getting something in the mail about the JAG Corps. That was the first time that anybody had ever asked me to join the military. I actually thought really hard about doing it, but I had already carved out a different path.

I think that there is very much a need to ask, and people will step up. We have right now about 66,000 people doing a year of civilian service in the Service Year National Service program, like AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, or something privately funded. That's not very many.





We have done polling and research. With no arm-twisting at all, when people hear about the chance, you easily get one out of every four or five people. And that is without creating the larger expectation in society. So, we are leaving so many people without the opportunity to serve because they do not know. They may be turned away from a military recruiter. They may not ever be asked. They may never have heard of AmeriCorps. We know from polling that most people haven't. So, that to me is the question, more than do we need to force people. People want to do this, they do just don't know about it.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

General Richardson, can you reflect on that in terms of the propensity to serve in the military? Similar to the Ambassador's question, have you seen, over the course of your 30 years of service, that the propensity to serve has evolved when you look at those coming into the military now, and what should we be thinking about to get the word out?

## **Lieutenant General Laura Richardson**

I think the propensity to serve is declining with our veterans from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, as they fade away. As I read in Ms. Wada's article, you can't use yesterday's recruiting tools to recruit Generation Z. You have to tap into how do you reach out to those people and make them aware. I think it's a matter of not knowing and just not being around it. A pretty high percentage of the people that do join the military have a relative in the military, and so it's because they knew someone, they were educated about it, and a lot of our serving folks in the military today have children serving in the military. A lot of them. As our veterans are declining, I think our propensity to serve is declining, unless you have something like 9/11 that happens and spurs on that desire to serve the country.

We are an all voluntary force in the military and it's very important to protect that. We went to that in 1973. Since then, our military force has been made up of all volunteers. That is the difference between the Selective Service and the all-volunteer military. A good point that Senator Reed brought up is the folks that are not eligible to serve. We are all competing: the military, the private sector; there are a lot of people competing for the same people. We have a





pilot shortage going on not just in our services, but in our airline pilots. The military is competing for the pilots to serve and sometimes the military can't pay the bonuses that the airlines can.

We are all recruiting for that same sliver, and so we do need to have a conversation about standards. We do not want to lower standards. When we were talking about standards before, we have some pretty tough standards, as Representative Coffman was saying, and you don't want to lower standards. But then, when you only have 29 percent or 31 percent who are eligible to serve, what do we do about that?

## **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

It is not just the military that is struggling to get people who are qualified to do specific jobs. We hear that in industry as well. I think that part of that is that we as a society haven't figured out a way to help make people healthier and stay out of trouble; so they end up with criminal records, and we need to figure out how to make sure they graduate from high school. And that is part of the problem. We have made the pipeline so small. One thing that national service can do is address all of those things. There are evidence-based programs that work in all of those areas.

If we had even 1 million people serving, we could solve these problems at scale. If we could have 150,000 people working in early literacy, which we all know pays dividends on the other end, it saves money because people will end up in specialized or remedial programs. If we could have 100,000 people filling the capacity and building the capacity of substance abuse treatment centers, then we can make a huge dent, if not eliminate, the problem that we are having now with opioid addiction and many other substance abuse problems.

So, we have really neglected that side and we are leaving an amazing tool on the table of near-peer community, full-time people who will do that service, and make a difference in the areas that demand human capital. I made a huge list. I am not going to read it to you, but we could do this, and that would actually help solve that problem.



## **Mr. Eduardo Martinez**

If I could just jump in on the scarcity of employees. We see that people really want to work for a purpose-driven company. Our inclination to serve and to help communities, we think, is a huge attractor for our employee workforce; to demonstrate that we are purpose-driven company.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

When I was Director of the Peace Corps, we had about 10,000 applications for 3,500 positions. I don't know that all 6,500, at the time, were fit and ready to be a Peace Corps volunteer, but it always struck me that we were saying no to 6,500 Americans who were raising their hands to go to some very needy places across the planet to serve.

If you talk to undergraduates who want to come into the federal government or to different streams of service, they will say that it is so competitive to get into Teach for America; it is so competitive to get into the Peace Corps. That is what you hear back. My question is, is this a communications problem? That we don't have adequate information about all of the various ways to serve? Are there barriers to service that you would commend to us to be thinking about? How do we think about unpacking some of this challenge?

## **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

We think about this all the time. This is what we do. We have built a one-stop shop for the civilian service programs, for the full-time, full-year programs. We can now run campaigns. We do a lot of visual advertising. We don't have enough money to do the advertising needs that are out there.

The other thing is, and I hope that this Commission will think about this, is how do you create the expectation from an early age that you will choose some kind of service? If people were learning in middle school and high school about the variety of options, communicated by their parents and teachers, so that there is an expectation that you are going to pick one; either go into a public service job: a firefighter, police officer, or teacher, or go into the military and do a term of service there. Or if you have a different path you want, there should be a lot more full-



time, full-year service options that are what we call "service year" national service. If you had that expectation from when you were young, you would be looking for those opportunities. And having the matching system that we have could be broader; it could include connections with military or public service. We are not doing that now.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

Ambassador, you were eight when you said you wanted to be a Soldier. How do you think you got to that point at the age of eight?

## **Ambassador Francis Taylor**

It was cool stuff. Vic Morrow was my hero. He was serving America and doing things that I thought I would be able to do. The 1950's were a difficult time in our country, even with the draft. But I can't tell you how many people I met on active duty who said, "I wouldn't be here, if the judge hadn't sent me here and gave me an alternative." I think part of the challenge of creating a pool of eligible people to serve is are there alternatives to a guy with a nickel bag of marijuana getting a criminal record or going into the military, which was offered in the 1950s and 1960s for juvenile delinquents who just weren't getting it.

The Congressman mentioned that he got his GED coming into the military. Is that something we should be considering as well, because people haven't decided at age 16 or 17 that they really understand how important high school education is. I think we need to be broadening the base of opportunities for service. Not necessarily in AmeriCorps, but in other sorts of institutions to give kids alternatives. An institution makes a decision that you are a good kid, you did something bad, but if we put you into an institution where we think you can grow, you can grow from that.

As we were looking at veterans in the General Electric Company, the statistic I recall is there are 600,000 advanced manufacturing jobs in this country today that cannot be filled, because of the education level of the folks coming out of high school and, in certain cases, college. So, I think you get back to the quality of education, and whether the education system is



producing the kind of graduates that are going to be needed to both serve and to also fill those advanced manufacturing jobs that are out there. We are at 4.1 percent unemployment, which is almost full employment, yet there are still 600,000 jobs that can't be filled by people who are qualified technically to fill those jobs. So, broadening that base, I think, is very important.

## **Mr. Eduardo Martinez**

It also takes leadership, as well. You are seeing more and more CEOs today become more active around issues of diversity. It always helps when the leader of the company, when the leader of an institution, rallies the troops. A case for UPS is our CEO, David Abney. The first public announcement he made, as CEO-elect in 2014, was to declare this decade the decade of service for UPS. He did so at the Points of Light annual conference, and he urged the company that, by 2020, we will have 20 million hours of service by UPS employees. Just last year, our people contributed almost 3 million hours of service in their communities, and we are over three quarters of the way there.

I think people are predisposed to serve. I think they have to have an opportunity. I think once they serve, they will go back and serve again. But I think it also takes leadership and I think I see a trend of CEOs becoming more active in trying to fill gaps that they see among leadership.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

Did you see that piece yesterday that the CEO of BlackRock, Lawrence Fink, wrote to 1,000 global CEOs, saying that it is not enough to come in with a good financial bottom line, but you have to do good for society? It was pretty direct language. Speaking for corporate America here, are we at an inflection point? Is he reflecting what you are seeing, and many of us have seen, as an evolving private sector commitment in impressive ways?



## **Mr. Eduardo Martinez**

Yes, that is a perfect example of CEOs stepping in when they see gaps. CEOs are aware that those gaps are going to come inside the four walls of the company. So, they need to step up, and they need to demonstrate to their workforce where the company stands on certain issues. With respect to the key position of community for a company, I harken back to our founder, Jim Casey. He founded the company as a 19-year-old with a bicycle. He felt that in order to have a prosperous and inspired workforce, you needed to have a healthy, safe, and prosperous community. So, there is that shared value. We look at it as a development opportunity for our people and our leaders to be out in the community, to understand the challenges of the community, and to try to make the difference.

## **General Laura Richardson**

I think a way to reach out is our Junior ROTC programs in high school, they can be a really powerful program. It's not a recruiting program, by the way, that is a citizenship program, but it teaches a lot of the service values. Quite honestly, the ones that I've seen flourish greatly are the ones that are close to military posts, so we want to spread that.

I think we have about 1,700 JROTC programs in the United States. I think it's important to empower those programs to do the best that they can do. You have to reach young people in high school; that is when they've got to be reached. Earlier would be better, because the opportunities quickly go by once you get out of high school and start working. The opportunities go away.

You get into college and, if you don't take opportunities while you are in college, or think about what's next, you just keep going down the road of "I know I'm not going to have a job when I get out and I'm going to have these loans." I think all of the services just offer some really tremendous programs right now for education. We just had the blended retirement system, which that started up on the 1st of January. We have a matching Thrift Savings Plan, it is the equivalent of a 401(k), they match now. This is the first year that they match. So, if you serve for two years, you are going to get out of the service with some money in your pocket.



We have tuition assistance. We have 199 career fields, just in the Army alone; 99 percent of those you can get credentials, civilian credentials, when you get out of the Army to go into the civilian sector. So, there are a lot of things that are out there that we just need to educate on and the opportunities. All of the things that I have been able to do, quite honestly, I could never have done. If I had a wish list, I could not have picked some of the things that I've had the opportunity to do as a result of being in the military.

### **Mr. Mark Gearan**

You are now second in command of 750,000 folks, in a 30-year, distinguished career. And you just said, you never would have imagined. One of our charges here and questions, as the Senator said, on the military side, is the Selective Service System. Over the next couple of years, we are going to be talking and listening, and we are eager to get all points of view on this, but I would be curious as to your view in terms of the requirement for women in the Selective Service. Should that be something we should be thinking about and listening to? Your reflections on that, I think, would be helpful, General.

### **Lieutenant General Laura Richardson**

My personal opinion is absolutely; absolutely, yes. We have opened up all of the combat positions. By the way, we have been deploying women with our brigade combat teams for the last decade, so it is not new. We opened up the last couple of positions in infantry and armor at the company level for women to integrate into, but I deployed in 2003 and there were women. I was a battalion commander flying in the 101st Airborne Division. I flew a brigade combat team around; my 30 helicopters, and all my folks. So, it is nothing that is new.

One thing I did learn that I did not know, was that President Carter, in his proposal to reinstate the draft, and for the Selective Service registration, put forward that women should also register for the draft. Congress denied that because they said that the starting point for the discussion is that combat roles are not open to women. That is what Congress viewed as the starting point for that discussion back in 1980, and now they are open.



I just think that you want the best talent pool. When you have an all-volunteer force in the military, you want the best and the brightest that you can have in your military and provide the opportunities and the education. Whether they are going to stay, most of the folks that come into the military don't stay the entire career. I am, kind of, an anomaly to stay as long as I have, but as you get higher rank the less positions there are. I think that we have to educate on the opportunities that are available.

### **Mr. Mark Gearan**

As we look to travel to different regions and listening over the course of the next couple of years, are there specific areas of the country, specific pockets, specific demographics, that we really should be hearing from and you would commend us to be especially attentive to as we think about how do we create and enhance a greater ethos of service in our country? What affirmative duty would you commend to us to be listening for?

### **Lieutenant General Laura Richardson**

One statistic that I was surprised about, is that you have 11 states that the majority of the military comes from. That included California, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, Illinois. All of the other states, what do they think, when we are getting over 50 percent from very few.

### **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

I assume you will really make an effort to get out into the rural areas and hear from different economic groups as well. I think one of the strengths of national service is that people serve from all backgrounds. Some people have the notion that it is only for privileged people to serve poor people, or this is something you do when you can't do something else.

### **Mr. Eduardo Martinez**

I think you should continue to talk to business leaders in every community, and I think that what you'll find is an eagerness to engage and really talk from the same voice about service. It's a great opportunity. It is a serendipitous that I'm here. I'm sure most of you are familiar with





the Points of Light. They have a Corporate Service Council, and I am incoming Chair of the Corporate Service Council. This week we had our launch event for the Service Council, and there are 90 Fortune 500 companies that are part of that Council. These are all high-level executives who speak on behalf of their companies about how much they want to make a difference in their communities all over the world.

## **Ambassador Francis Taylor**

As I think about what I want to be listening for, people have a certain view of what Selective Service means. Is there a sentiment across the country not so much about Selective Service for the military, but national service, and turning the Selective Service System into a registration for national service? Making it not just for military, but to the broader service needs of the country. I think there is sentiment for that. It would take some adjustment to the law.

It would go beyond military service. As an 18-year-old, you would register, go into Job Corps, go into AmeriCorps, you take the two-year mission to go somewhere where there is need. You go serve in the fire jumpers out in California, if that is what you're interested in, to broaden the idea of service within Selective Service to more than just military service.

I think you will find in corporate America there is a very strong view toward community service and giving back to the community. I would be listening for how they see themselves doing that. We had a 24,000-person veteran's network within GE, and that was a tremendous organization for outreach to veterans in terms of opportunities for service. How can corporations help those who do serve continue to serve in the private sector and in transition? I would be listening for that as well.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

As a final thing, we want to kick it out to our audience. Let me open up the audience for folks to raise their hand and go to our panel or fellow commissioners with some of these questions.



## OPEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

### Mr. Eduardo Martinez

In order for UPS to encourage and or incentivize its employees to participate and provide this service, we allow our employees to follow their passion, and most of them do. But we also work with organizations like Points of Light to provide opportunities for them to volunteer. We connect our philanthropy to volunteerism. We have a local branch system all over the world. The UPS foundation supports over 4,500 organizations in 107 countries. In order for UPS to make a grant to an organization, that person has to put in 50 hours of community service with that organization.

We also play to our strengths. We do a lot of disaster relief, humanitarian relief, and we basically ask our people, logisticians, to volunteer; to do what they do for a living, but to help our communities, and they love it. Another key area for us is road safety. We have been driving vehicles since they were invented. So, we have drivers that teach young drivers their safety techniques, so that encourages volunteerism. From that point forward, we work with the United Way and the Peace Corps, and we work with a number of organizations around the world, because we also see the importance of volunteers in general to civil society.

Civil society depends for 30 percent of the workforce on volunteers. So, the foundation makes investments, and one of our four focus areas is service or volunteerism. We invest in Points of Light, we invest in the Peace Corps, because we know the value and importance of volunteering in our world.

### Ms. Shirley Sagawa

With regard to the definition of service, I don't think we have a definition for all service. It is a complicated word. When we were doing our branding, we tried to find a different word. Because service is also people who bring you your dishes in a restaurant, and there are lots of ways that that word is used. For us, we decided to build some boundaries around what we would count as a "service year." So, it has to be paid. You can waive your right to pay if you can afford to, but most people need money to be able to do full time for a year on anything. It has to be



making a difference. So, the positions have to be aimed at solving a problem that the community, or country, or nation has. We actually certify positions. We can look and see if this is actually fitting the definition.

The programs that we put on our website, [www.serviceyear.org](http://www.serviceyear.org), also have to help build the skills and work experience of the people who are serving, so they do get something from that experience. We have our criteria on our website and we are always looking to add new positions.

In order to define service we put some boundaries around it: The length of time, the amount of hours, that sort of thing. If you can articulate what is going to get done as a result of this person doing this year of service, that is probably good enough. Now, to get money from AmeriCorps, you have to have measurable outcomes. There are a lot of things you have to do to get federal money but, where it is privately funded, we are really looking to make sure that it is not just a bad job packaged up as a service position. We really want to make sure that it isn't. In much the way that higher education institutions have to be accredited, we are trying to play that role for the fields of service year programs.

## **Ambassador Francis Taylor**

Service is intensely personal. Why you serve, where you serve, the opportunities to serve range from soup kitchens across this country that are serving the homeless, and people feel really passionately about helping those who are going through tough times, up to and including military service, and all in the middle. I would strongly be in favor of a broader interpretation of service, rather than a narrow one. The question is how is what you are doing making the community better, the nation better, the world better. I think those are happening. How you define them more broadly and bring them into the circle of what service means in this country, is something I definitely recommend you look at.

With regard to recommendations on a key issue our Commission should look at, the first for me would be opportunities to serve. Are our standards and rules so strict that people who could be serving don't get the opportunity? Are there opportunities to broaden that group? Not lowering standards, but understanding whether those standards are realistic in light of today's



population. Those standards may look a little bit more like the 1950s and 1970s, in terms of inclusiveness.

## **Lieutenant General Laura Richardson**

I would say a key issue needs to be how to connect with society and the opportunities like AmeriCorps, and the Peace Corps, and the military. Considering that over 50 percent come from a very small percentage of the states for the military, through our communities, and our teachers, how do we best get the word out to our young people about the opportunities that are out there for service? Are they hearing, are they seeing, are they getting any information?

I was talking to our folks in Manpower and Reserve Affairs yesterday for the Army, and I said all the commercials I see are for the Wounded Warrior program. I am not seeing any of our Army commercials. I am not seeing any more Marine Corps commercials; there are no Air Force commercials. Where and when are these commercials coming on? They say we are doing these items, but I do not see them. I think all of those are very much needed. It also sends the message too, I think, that if you join the military, you will get hurt. With those programs, we don't want to send that message either. There is a place for both of them.

## **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

Not surprisingly, I think there needs to be more government investment in civilian service programs. You can't have a call for large-scale service unless you dramatically ramp up the positions that aren't in the military, and that needs government money. That can lift private money. Very few positions in AmeriCorps are 100 percent federally funded. Most of them are leveraging an equal amount of other sources. If we did it in a smart way, we could solve some of these problems that are actually leading to a smaller pool of people who are eligible to serve in the military.

I also would urge you to think about how do you give some measure of local control to creating these positions and managing them, even thinking about scaling this up in a local pilot system to see what would happen in Memphis, Tennessee, or Louisiana, or if the Empire State had a chance to do service at scale. What difference would that make?



## **Mr. Eduardo Martinez**

I think that elevating the importance of service would really energize the sector. We have talked about all of the virtues and benefits that inure to the people who serve, to the communities that receive that service. I do believe, and this is a Points of Light slogan, that service unites. In a world now that seems to be more fractured than ever, service is an area that is great for team building. It's great to get out into the community. It is great to get out into the inner cities. It is great to have multistate engagement. That is the way we look at it in our company. It would bring more harmony to those communities.

## **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

With regard to a question of whether respondents who said they wanted to serve were responding to service opportunities that were specifically incentivized, as with an education award, we described a program in which you would spend a year serving full-time in exchange for money for college. So, it was very much dependent upon having a structure that was focused that way.

We have had over 70,000 profiles created and about 20,000 people have answered a question on our platform that asks, "Why do you want to serve?" The number one answer, at 64 percent, is making a difference. By far, that is the main thing. Second, at 32 percent, is career advancement. 22 percent, giving back. 9 percent, finding purpose in their lives, and 6 percent travel and exploration. It is an interesting spectrum. People are very altruistically motivated, but making it not a bad detour in your life is important too, so that is where the education award is important.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

With regard to a question about whether the Commission will be engaging faith-based organizations for insight and ideas about service, there is no question. Every commissioner has a personal appreciation for what the faith community has done in terms of service, whether that is a great university, in the case of Notre Dame, to individual experience. Faith traditions factor very significantly into it and there is no question. While this narrow conversation may not fully



elucidate that, don't be under any misconception in terms of the importance in which we place it, and the energy we bring to engaging faith leaders because of their engagement in the service sector and our key interests.

In response to a question regarding how the public will be made aware of the Commission traveling throughout the nation in order to participate in the conversation about service, we need to appreciate that this is a start-up operation. The small, but extraordinary, staff we have has been promoting the Commission's activities in interesting and important ways. The website is one of those, inviting public comment. Social media will be added. Certainly, the website in terms of federal notice, all of the federal requirements from registration for convocations, as the Chair announced in Harrisburg.

The website will be the key opportunity both for the public facing announcement piece of this, like the first convocation that we will have in Harrisburg, but also importantly the listening, the input; both individually in cases like this, and through social media and the website. We are engaging every tool that is before us, and you will see it ramped up. We have launched this well since September 19th, but it will be even better in the months ahead in terms of seeing the elements of that.

## **Ambassador Francis Taylor**

In response to a question of whether there would be a review of a compulsory non-military service requirement, I think there is always a place for compulsory service in society. The question is, how broadly do you want to define where people can go to serve. Not everyone is going to join the military. Not everyone is going to join AmeriCorps. But I think this notion that a member of society has a compulsory obligation to give back your time to society is a very strong principle and one that I think, in certain ways, our nation has lost.

## **Lieutenant General Laura Richardson**

I think some examples showing what possibilities and opportunities for service are important. I think it is important that parents, teachers, and everyone in the community that



work with youth are educated about what is out there in terms of all of the different type of service.

## **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

I'm not sure you would get a good outcome if it is compulsory, in the sense that you would go to jail if you don't serve. The way we thought about it is, how can we make it such an inevitability that you are going to do it or you're not looked well upon. We have 500 employers in national service who are saying that they are going to give a leg up to those who serve. What if that became a much bigger thing? What if higher education made a much bigger deal out of the connection to service? What if we recognized a broader kind of service in a bigger way? I think you would get more people wanting to serve. This is a country that values freedom, and so that kind of tension is going to make it really hard to get there. I think you will get more cooperation and people will come to their service with the right spirit, if you think about it in a universal sense rather than a mandatory sense.

## **Mr. Eduardo Martinez**

I would agree. I don't think that it would be beneficial to force community service on our people. I think it is almost self-evident that you would garner more participation, more impact, just by making it what it is, voluntary.

## **Lieutenant General Laura Richardson**

In the military, I think we have moved beyond that with the standards now. I would say that we would need to look at that, if it were going to lower our standards. We have had this standards discussion before. Most of the disqualifications, as Representative Coffman was saying, with 75 percent ineligible to serve, a lot of that, I think, is just from obesity. And so, what is the national movement? Do we put health classes back into the high schools and that sort of thing, in terms of going back to the eligible population or pool. It also goes to medical care too, a healthy lifestyle. So, how do you put that back in? But I like what Shirley said about positive things to look at and have positive reinforcement versus the negative.





## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

In response to a question concerning how to raise civil service in public esteem and maintain the highest quality civil service sector in the 21st century, the Commission was fortunate to hear from Max Stier, who is the President of the Partnership for Public Service, where we placed some of these very important issues about the federal workforce, the looming demographics that exist, and the barriers to better federal service. Informally, as a Commission, we have talked about that.

While this panel may not have the capacity to reflect every aspect of our definition, as in the terms of the faith-based element, it is certainly an intended part of our work plan. And we would invite your perspective on that, because the barriers to service, I think, are a thread we have heard here from the military, to public service, to national service. And those are some of the issues the Commission is very much looking to unpack. While we may not be able to solve each and every one of them, we very much want to put it front and center before the Congress and the President with our recommendations.

## **Dr. Joseph Heck**

The enabling statute defines military, national, and public service for the purposes of the Commission. The military is self-explanatory. The national service piece includes elected office and governmental service, at both the federal, and state, and local level. So, it is part of our mandate and we will be pursuing it.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

As an obvious footnote, we attached it in an important way because our first speaker, Earl Bowman, is a state colleague and employee, and so his evidence of that part of it supports my saying that he is the perfect poster boy here for us in all sorts of ways, that does include important public service that he renders to the State of Delaware.

In response to a question about mid-career service opportunities, when I was at the Peace Corps, 8 or 9 percent of Peace Corps volunteers were over 50. So, there are opportunities for service.



## **Lieutenant General Laura Richardson**

I don't know where we are on that or if we are looking at mid-career service opportunities in the military for older Americans. I would say that the bulk of our population in the military is the 17 to 24-year-olds, as we know. As I talked about earlier, the higher you go the less positions there are. There are opportunities. I think the age limit for entry in the military is around 28; maybe that is something that we do look at. The Reserves and the National Guard tend to have an older population in some cases, and so that is another part of service outside of the active component that can be considered as well.

## **Mr. Eduardo Martinez**

Absolutely, the private sector is looking at mid-career service opportunities. I think over the years we have not done as good a job as we could in reaching out for our retirees, but certainly in the last five to ten years, particularly around volunteerism, we bring them back. They want to teach young drivers their techniques, and they want to mentor, and they want to do the things that they did when they were our employees. I think our retiree community is strong and very, very inclined to help.

## **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

This speaks to the transition point, a lot of people do AmeriCorps as a transition year. A study showed that for people who are unemployed, if you volunteer, your odds of finding a job are much higher than people who don't volunteer. So there is really something in that to speak to that transition experience.

## **Lieutenant General Laura Richardson**

As a result of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, since 2009, 340,000 veterans have gotten a degree or secondary degree as a result of the G.I. Bill. And so, speaking to the older demographic, those who have come in and served, and gotten out and gotten their education, what we have found is that veterans are more likely to volunteer; they are more likely to vote; they are more likely to be involved in the community; they generally have a higher GPA. In terms of the other population,



being a little bit older, they have done their military service, they have gone out and gotten a degree, and now they are ready for the next step.

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

The question about a declining propensity to serve and obstacles to service is a question that is very central to our work.

## **Lieutenant General Laura Richardson**

Those who serve in the military generally have a relative who has served. That connection is dwindling down, I think, as our older veterans are retiring and fewer have relatives that have served. We have fewer members of Congress that have military service as compared to the past, and so you have less of a connection for folks that are out there to serve. So, how do you increase that propensity? I think that getting after how you go about recruiting is key. Just a little while ago I said, I don't see any commercials on TV. Well, most of our young people don't watch TV. So recruiting efforts have to be geared towards what they are watching and what they are looking at in terms of the education piece.

## **Ms. Shirley Sagawa**

In civilian service, there are barriers. There are a lot of people who want to serve, but there are a couple things that can get in the way. First, awareness is a huge barrier. If you don't know to look, then you don't find it. Second, it is expensive. You don't get paid very much doing a year of service. The AmeriCorps living allowance is around \$12,500. If you don't have any resources to fall back on, that is kind of a hard package. So there is that barrier. We hear a lot of cries for differential living allowances and things, and that costs more money.

And we hear a lot about the problem that there are so many young people who have massive student loans. So even though they get an award and they can defer payments, they still feel the need to take a more lucrative job because they need to get going on their life, and these loans will get in the way of their being able to buy a house and support children, etc. Those are some of the barriers we hear a lot.



## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

In response to a question about the participation of millennials in the Commission's inquiry on service, I would say that it was quite intentional to start with Earl Bowman as our speaker today. It has been quite intentional every month, since we've been meeting in September, to begin with some reflections by a returned Peace Corps volunteer, a young man who is here in Washington teaching, and by others in the active-duty military, to make sure that we are listening. That thread will very much be consistent throughout the hearing process that we will have all around the country, trying to employ the kinds of social media and communication streams that resonate with millennials and, recently, Gen Z, so that we are certainly taking stock of these.

We are very much anxious to employ any suggestions as to reaching a wider and younger demographic with our efforts. We know well the importance of that because, in many ways, our charge is beyond millennials; it is increasingly Generation Z, and that is very different. Every demographer looking at this cohort indicates it is very different. It is well acknowledged that we need to be very much in that space to ensure that our recommendations to the Congress and the President are appropriate, apt, and resonant with the generation and fulfilling the mission that the Congress has given to us. That was a great question and a perfect place for us to wrap up here.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

## **Mr. Mark Gearan**

On behalf of our fellow commissioners, we extend our thanks first to our panel. They have given us so much to think about in terms of spanning opportunities to serve; some of the barriers that exist; the role of the private sector; the opportunities going to scale; and how that could confront some of the nation's most vexing problems and challenges. We thank, especially, Earl Bowman, for leading us off. We thank you for your service.

I said, at the outset, that this is a startup, and our Chair made that point at the very beginning; startups have challenges and complexities. So, to the staff that are here, they have



done an extraordinary job in a very, very limited time. Those of you who put together events can fully appreciate that, and so we thank our staff.

We were assisted by the fellowship of the service organizations, from the Pentagon to CNCS, and Sandy Scott's expertise, to the Peace Corps, and all of our partners in the government that certainly added to this.

Last, and significantly, I thank the Commission. I am grateful to Senator Reed for this important appointment. I would tell our audience colleagues that you have, in the 11 folks here, an extraordinary group of Americans who are really taking this assignment very, very seriously, coming to Washington every month, and thinking through these issues. Yet it will not be successful, and robust, and fully complete without the input of so many organizations and groups. So, while this is our launch, this is a beginning; your networks, your outreach, your counsel to us, could not be more important.

We have, we believe, a unique charge. Never before has this shared mission been united for the government; military, national, and public service. Never before, seemingly, has this inflection point been apparent from the government to the private sector. As we conclude here on a day perhaps, of a government shutdown, and the challenges of contemporary federal government life here, service may be very much an opportunity of uniting. This very Commission is a testament to bipartisan cooperation. Senator McCain's moving words, and Senator Reed teaming up to do this, the nature of our appointments, reflects the bipartisan spirit of the service ethic in our country. We will affirm to that and hopefully, with your support, we will be successful. Thank you all for joining us today.

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