



Military Service Hearing: Increasing Awareness among Young Americans and Lessening the Civil-Military Divide

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

Commission:

- The Honorable Debra Wada, Vice Chair for Military Service
- The Honorable Mark Gearan, Vice Chair for National and Public Service
- Mr. Edward Allard, Commissioner
- Mr. Steve Barney, Commissioner
- The Honorable Avril Haines, Commissioner
- Ms. Jeanette James, Commissioner
- Mr. Alan Khazei, Commissioner
- Mr. Tom Kilgannon, Commissioner
- Ms. Shawn Skelly, Commissioner

Panelists:

- Mr. C. J. Chivers, Author and Writer, The New York Times, former Marine
- Dr. Lindsay Cohn, Professor, U.S. Naval War College
- Mr. Ernie Gonzales, former Director Youth Outreach Programs and Senior Policy and Program Analyst for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Department of Defense
- Dr. Kathleen Hicks, Senior Vice President, Henry A. Kissinger Chair, and Director of the International Security Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies
- Mr. Anthony Kurta, Performing the Duties of The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness



OPENING STATEMENTS

The Honorable Debra Wada

Welcome to the 12th hearing of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service. Thank you for being here today and for tuning in online via Facebook.

Today, the commission meets to discuss military service in America. Our distinguished panel will explore how the nation can create more awareness of military service, particularly among young Americans, and how to lessen the divide between military community and society. This hearing is focused on increasing awareness of military service, and this morning's hearing explores how we can increase America's participation in military service. Military service is defined in the commission's mandate as active service or active status in one of the uniformed services: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, the Commission Corps of the National, Oceanic, and Atmospheric Administration, and the Public Health Service. These include active duty military service members and those serving in the reserve components.

These hearings are timely as May is military appreciate month, and this weekend, May 18th, is Armed Forces Day. This single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the Armed Forces under the Department of Defense in 1949, and on behalf of the commission, I want to thank our service members and their families for their service.

During our first year, we learned military responsibility is borne by few. The United States shifted to an all-volunteer force in 1973, producing a strong, capable, and effective fighting force, despite concerns over the end of conscription. Yet, an unfortunate outcome of this shift is the limited interaction many Americans now have with a much smaller, more professional military. Limited interaction also means that many are unaware of the myriad of opportunities service in the military provides. At the same time, policy decisions over the past 4 years have increasingly concentrated military bases in the south and west of the country, producing geographic disparities in the composition of the force. These trends have led to the



isolation of those serving in the military from others in the nation. Isolation has a demonstrable impact on recruiting. Today, about four in ten young Americans say they have never even considered military service. Increasing awareness of military service is a first step in both expanding the pool of those who consider military service and increasing young Americans' desire to serve.

We also learned that many Americans' knowledge of the military is informed by media, television, and movie portrayals of military life. These portrayals can, at times, be inaccurate, with depictions that tend to focus on the most thrilling and dangerous jobs. But military service is more than just infantry and Navy Seals. It has 50-plus healthcare specialties and careers in logistics, engineering, mechanics, aviation, information technology, law, human resources, and more. An increased interaction between the Armed Services and the public and the private sector is important to foster a greater understanding of military culture and opportunities. Without renewed efforts, such isolation insulates the American people from both the responsibilities of military service and engagement with military communities, as well as sacrifices made by those who fight our wars. And it may make voluntary recruitment unsustainable over time.

The goal of this hearing is to hear from experts on how to increase youth awareness of military service, lessen the military-civilian divide, and leverage recruiting practices to increase diversity and reach new areas of the country. And I hope our panelists will address the issues directly as possible in their oral statements and in their responses to the commission's questions.

Let me welcome our panelists here today. We have C. J. Chivers, author and writer of *The New York Times* and former Marine; Dr. Lindsay Cohn, Professor of the U.S. Naval War College; Mr. Ernie Gonzales, former Director of Youth Programs and senior policy and program analyst for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs at the Department of Defense; Dr. Kathleen Hicks, Senior Vice President, Henry A. Kissinger Chair, and director of the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International



Studies; and Mr. Anthony Kurta, performing the duties of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Thank you all for joining us today.

Before we begin, we have some housekeeping to take care of. So please silence any electronic devices, and I will explain how we will conduct today's hearing. The commissioners have all received your written testimony, and we've read it. And it will be entered into the official record. We ask that you summarize the highlights of your testimony in the allotted 5 minutes. Before you, you will see our timing system. When the light turns yellow, you will have approximately one-minute remaining, and when it turns red, your time has expired. After all testimony is completed, we will move into questions from the commissioners. Each commissioner will be given 5 minutes to ask a question and receive a response. Depending on the time, we will proceed to one and possibly two rounds of questions and, maybe, even three. We'll see. Upon completion of commissioners' questions, we will provide an opportunity for members of the public who are in attendance to offer comments, either on the specific topics addressed today or more generally on the commission's overarching mandate. These comments will be limited to 2 minutes. The light will turn yellow when you have 30 seconds remaining and then red when the time has expired.

So, we are now ready to begin with our panelists' testimony. I'd like to begin with Mr. Chivers. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. C. J. Chivers

Thank you for the chance to share a few thoughts. My name's Chris Chivers. I'm a former Infantry Marine and current author. I was present at the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, and in the years since, the primary focus of my work has been to cover small unit warfare and the human experiences and consequences of the wars that have raged since immediately after that day. I've done this by professional immersion, by channeling knowledge and past experiences as a grunt to live and walk side by side with combatants, often American



combatants, of a younger generation, with hopes of understanding wars as they were actually lived and not as our culture's nostalgists and propagandists would have it. One part of my work has been presented in *THE FIGHTERS*, a recent book examining the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq through the lives, and in one case also the death, of intensely committed members of our country's current all-volunteer force.

I don't speak to you as a social scientist, and I don't pretend to speak for all veterans or combatants. I do offer that what I will say is representative of the feelings of no small number of them. And I also declare that what I came to say today surprises me, as a former member of the Marine Corps who served in the years not long after the end of the draft. It surprises me, because during those years I believed, as I thought pretty much everyone around me did that the all-volunteer force was some sort of grand step forward in social progress and military readiness alike.

After examining the wars since 2001 up close and observing our national discourse about these wars, I recognize that the switch to an all-volunteer force has come with profoundly negative effects. Whatever good has come from the end of conscription has also led to a period of popular disengagement from war.

I'll offer a few numbers to illustrate a point. Since 2001, according to data that the Pentagon shared last year, about 3 million Americans have served in uniform in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. That's less than one percent of our population, and a cohort, as you said that is geographically isolated in an archipelago of bases and forts.

In a democracy, of course, a scattered and isolated one percent means almost nothing. But what's more important than numbers or percentages is this cohort's origins, and the nature not just of volunteering, but of opting out. The people who serve in the military today self-select. They assume risks by choice. This on its face is admirable. I'll add one of my sons right now is in the process of trying to join the Marine Corps, so I know something about this as a parent. But there is a consequence. Because everyone else opts out, we have hardwired the vast



majority of our population not to worry, not even for a moment, about being called to participate in our wars.

I'll submit this: Anything you don't have to worry about stands to become, very quickly, something you don't think about. One result of the end of conscription is that almost all of the American population has no personal stake or even the worry of a personal stake in wars that continue with little public examination or comment. Via the end of conscription, without randomized risk or even randomized participation, our citizens have been invited to tune out our wars in real time and to regard any consequence as someone else's burden and problem. Put another way, the rise of the all-volunteer force has helped enable our political leadership -- I say this across parties. I add I'm not a member of a party; don't like either of them. It has enabled our political leadership and senior officer class to wage wars, failed wars, mind you, with minimal national participation and far less accountability than if Americans were being asked to turn up by lottery. The antiwar movement has shrunk, and we have issued a license to our leadership to wage wars unnecessarily and badly.

I'm not here to offer policy prescription. It's not my job. I'm not even arguing for a draft. I'm asking for a thought exercise. Imagine if we had a draft live on national television of even a few thousand Americans per year, do you think the people then, our people, our fellow citizens, might ask more questions about just what we have done and are doing in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Niger, Somalia, and elsewhere and whether the wars are effectively managed and clearly aligned with a national strategy that are political class and celebrated generals could even explain?

I hope you will consider this in your work. Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you, Mr. Chivers.

Dr. Cohn?



Dr. Lindsay Cohn

Thank you also for having us here for this very important work that you're doing. I'm very grateful to be a part of this. I do need to say that everything that I say here is my own opinion and does not represent the position of the U.S. Naval War College, the Department of Defense, or any other organ of the U.S. government. And I also want to say that what I'm going to talk about here is what the data tells us in the aggregate, none of which discounts the very real feelings and experiences that Chris just talked about. Those feelings and experiences are real. They happened. They are real people, and we need to care about those experiences. So, when I talk about the data, I'm talking about an aggregate, and I'm talking about the difference between what some people experience and what most people experience or what is happening in general. And I just want to make that clear; I'm not dismissing what many people experience.

I disagree, however, with a lot of what Chris said, and not all of it. And I do want to temper some of the premises that this commission is proceeding from. Primarily that I would talk about what our frame of reference is. I think most of us come to this conversation with the frame of reference of the way things were after World War II, when we had an enormous veteran population; when we had a war that had touched the lives of many; and when we had a strong feeling of the need and the appropriateness to do something for your country. I want to submit that that was one of the weirdest, most unique periods in American history, and that it's not likely we'll have one again, unless we have another gigantic war.

Historically speaking, the United States has relied on volunteers. We have even relied on volunteers for expeditionary missions. All of our stuff in the Philippines in the early 20th century; that was all volunteers. Although we now have a situation where a very small percentage of the population serves, it's actually larger than the percentage of the population that served for most of American history, up until the point of World War II. So again, I think if you look at the longer historical context, what we're looking at now is not terribly unusual and, in fact, better than what it was for most of the 19th century, when, of course, you had a small



volunteer force distributed in a small archipelago in very remote bases that nobody ever interacted with fighting a bunch of wars that nobody cared about.

If you think of other possible frames of reference, other civil-society institutions, other government institutions; the military enjoys significantly better salience with civilian society than many of these. If you look at other countries, the United States is actually very fortunate to have a situation where we have a fiscally, politically, and socially salient military that is also seen as not getting too involved in politics.

So, I am not dismissing the concerns of this commission. I think they are very real concerns, and I do think that the trends, especially demographic and cultural trends in this country, represent something that we need to engage with in order to continue; both the health of the force and the health of civil-military relations. But I would argue that what we are seeing right now is not a crisis, and that the concept of a civil-military gap causing the disengagement that Chris talked about; there is very little evidence that the disengagement comes from the, “gap.” Americans have always been disengaged from foreign policy. They do not pay attention to foreign policy. And in most of the polling that we have, having a friend or family member, direct family member in the military does not make a difference in the way people respond to questions about whether the wars affect their lives, whether it matters, et cetera.

So, I would argue that this is an intuitively appealing causal connection, but that there is very little evidence to show that the small size of the military, its geographic isolation, or anything else like that is a direct cause of the kind of disengagement that we see. Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you very much, Dr. Cohn.

Mr. Gonzales.



Mr. Ernie Gonzales

Thank you. Madam Vice Chair, Members of the Commission, I am honored to have been asked and appear before you today to provide some comments on the staff memorandum regarding military service, specifically on the increasing awareness among young Americans and lessening the civil-military divide. Having spent the last 25 years of my public service managing several youth outreach programs that connect and reconnect the Department of Defense with America's youth both in school and out of school, I believe those programs have made some difference in lessening the civil-military divide and increasing the awareness of military opportunities.

After reviewing the considerations in the staff memorandum, I believe those options would only continue small, incremental changes, because the recommendations lead to minor adjustments to existing policies, budgets, and initiatives. There's much more that can be done and accomplished if the commission considers youth outreach as a primary core mission, not a nontraditional, non-core mission of the Department of Defense. For the mission to become a reality and effective, the commission should consider some out of the box efforts that will require the support of Congress and the administration. Certain legislative and funding barriers, along with bureaucratic organizations, would need to be removed by congress, the DOD leadership, or both in order to enhance the outcomes of the two objectives being discussed today.

As I mentioned, I am only able to inform this commission about some anecdotal belief that the Youth Outreach Program specifically authorized under either Title 10 or Title 32 made some difference in lessening the civil-military divide among our nation's community and youth. This is based on some individual, local studies conducted on some individual programs. However, a comprehensive study was recently initiated and currently being conducted by the Department to ascertain the effectiveness of these authorized youth outreach programs; the DOD STARBASE, the National Guard Youth Challenge, and the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps. The results of this study will help establish a baseline for a future long-term study



requiring additional data gathering to fully evaluate how these programs are meeting these objectives.

Under the subject to increase youth awareness, the staff memorandum identifies three options to consider. They are expanding the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery participation by leveraging the Career Exploration Program; expand youth-cadet programs; and increase base fieldtrips.

I would like to comment on two of these options; first, expand youth-cadet programs by introducing more young Americans to military service and culture through participation in cadet programs, including programs both affiliated and unaffiliated with the uniformed services. This memo specifically states expand JROTC to additional locations, specifically areas without military bases or historically undisturbed by recruiters to increase civic awareness of an exposure to military service while increasing civic engagement. It appears that the staff received the recent RAND study on JROTC, geographic and demographic representativeness of JROTC. However, the staff memo failed to include a recommendation in the study that would allow the Department to effectively implement this option. What the recommendation's commission should consider from the RAND study is dedicated funding for all JROTC programs. The commission should also consider the dedicated funding be in a centralized managed OSD account, similar to the accounts funded by the National Guard Youth Challenge and the STAR-based program. By combining policy and resources in a centralized location, the department would be able to develop a strategy that effectively places and sustains programs in both metropolitan and rural areas.

The RAND study also recommends the department consider flexibility and structure requirements for rural areas and small schools. However, the study did not correlate an important data point, which is the number of retirees residing in rural areas and qualified to be JROTC instructors. The more effective policy, placing JROTC units in these areas, the qualifications criteria should be considered by expanding the criteria to include Guard and Reserve personnel.



I see that my time's almost up, but the second increase is the base fieldtrips. Although expanding base fieldtrips to local schools, community groups, and key influence will help reconnect the military to the American public, it only expands what's currently being done. A more radical approach would be to support initiatives that have multiday contacts with the public, such as expanding the STAR-based program to more locations. This was initially considered by school districts as a fieldtrip. Now school districts and communities embrace the program, which has enhanced our relationship there. There are many studies that were conducted locally that shows the long-term effect of these programs, and, therefore, I believe that looking at that type of effort would help out.

Finally, these affiliated, non-affiliated youth programs can address issues, and I believe that expanding programs like the California Cadet Corps would help out with regards to that; similar in respect to the Junior ROTC Program, but funded by the state and placed in local school districts where the state believes that JROTC is a gift. You know, the DOD invests approximately 500 million dollars in these youth outreach programs, and I believe that if it was truly looked at as to how that department could effectively utilize these resources and implement a strategy that could truly have an impact of youth awareness that it would definitely have a very good outcome and that the studies would show that. Thank you for the time.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you, Mr. Gonzalez.

Dr. Hicks.

Dr. Kathleen Hicks

Thanks very much for the opportunity to testify today. Healthy civil-military relations is a bedrock for America's constitutional democracy, and I agree with Dr. Cohn; we are not in a crisis. But we do see some worrisome trends that merit address, and I think this commission is



well placed to address several of those issues. I'm going to address three areas in particular: the military and policy making, the military and society, and gaps on the military and politics.

So, in the first area of policy making, we're seeing a confluence of trends that look like symptoms or, at minimum, accelerance to distrust between policy makers and the military, which is in and of itself a longstanding trend. But what we see today that is particularly manifesting is the lack of shared experiences between senior military officers and senior civilians; several of the other panelists have commented on that; a lack of interactive education and training opportunities for senior civilians and rising military to develop relationships and norms together; a lack of training and employment opportunities specifically for civilians on Defense policy and Defense matters; a disproportionate reduction in civilian defense positions relative to military counterparts; and a relative imbalance between the public's strong trust for the military as an institution and its relative distrust of the presidency, the Supreme Court, or at its worst, the Congress at the bottom of the list as institutions. The commission should recommend stronger education, training, and employment opportunities for those interested in serving the nation's defense in a civilian capacity. For those with civilian control responsibilities below the elected level, I also recommend that the commission suggest a one-week training course as a mandatory requirement within the first year of service. So that might be applying to executive branch employees or rising senior career civilians.

A second worrisome trend line relates to the connection between the military members, their families and communities in broader American society. That's been well touched on already, and, of course, your interim report in January did a very nice job of summarizing many of those trends. I think it's fair to say that there's strong agreement that having a defacto warrior class is inherently destabilizing to a constitutional democracy, and it's certainly at odds with the stated intent of America's founders.

I touched in my written statement on a variety of trends, generational shifts, really, that I think will worsen this trend. And they're focused in my short commentary on disconnects



between many in the Generation Z and their perception of the military institution and the military workplace relative to their interests in equity and diversity. That is not meant to be an exclusive list. It was only to build upon the good work that you all have already done. I think the commission should build on its interim report and to reinforce to Congress the profound, strategic consequences that a growing disconnect could have in undermining the role and quality of the military. I think the commission should emphasize that while tailored incentive structures can help recruitment and retention, the success of a professional military within a democratic society fundamentally depends on its ability to reflect the attributes and principles its recruitment pool values.

Lastly, I want to touch on the role of the military in politics. A politically dispassionate military is foundational to effective operations and healthy democratic practices. A first-order problem that we have today is a perception supported by some polling data that the military is, itself, partisan in nature. This perception is problematic when held by society at large, but it's actively destructive for strategic planning and operations if civilians in government have concerns, rightly or wrongly, about partisan motivations within the force. Moreover, our civic education does not sufficiently support the maintenance of an apolitical and civilian subordinated military. It doesn't focus on the health of that important principle for American democracy, and it most certainly doesn't stress civilians' responsibility for reinforcing these norms. The military is generally better educated on these matters, but in the current era of American politics and the rise of social media, it is very challenging to that training.

America's civic education deficit can contribute to heightened risks for military politicization. Greater diversity in the pool of those drawn to military service, better training and education, and enforcement of apolitical norms are all important improvements the nation can make on the military side. But civilians bear ultimate responsibility for upholding the apolitical nature of our military, and we should better equip our civilians to do so. The commission should draw a direct link between civics and norms of healthy civil-military relations, including apolitical role of the military and civilians' responsibility to support it.



Let me conclude on this point about the all-volunteer force that's already risen. The trends I have mentioned are certainly byproducts, at least in part, of maintaining the AVF. I do believe the AVF remains the best model for the U.S. military. It delivers the strongest operational outcomes and it reinforces American ideals of personal liberty. But it does create these unique challenges, and we are responsible as a society for addressing those if we want to maintain a professional military. Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you, Dr. Hicks.

Mr. Kurta.

Mr. Anthony Kurta

Thank you. In the office of the Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness, we are charged with preserving the all-volunteer force. I would postulate that preserving that force in the long run requires that the military be respected by our society. It must generally represent the racial, ethnic, and social-economic makeup of our society. It must represent the values of our society, and our military must be connected to the society that we serve. In war and peace and through economic highs and lows, we must consistently achieve our recruiting goals. The good news, of course, is that in our 18th year of continuing war, our all-volunteer force is in pretty good shape. Retention is at an all-time high. Quality remains as good as ever, and we are mostly meeting all of the recruiting goals across the force.

There are some storm clouds on the horizon however, and the future is not necessarily assured. More like this national commission are essential in my view to the continuing conversation America must have with itself, and the specific question we discuss today, the military-civilian divide, is foundational to the future of the all-volunteer force. So, let me state up front my gratitude to each of you for engaging in this debate. It is not hyperbole to state that the future of our nation may depend on this issue.



There are signs that our society and our military are increasingly disconnected. Despite needing over 250 thousand new recruits every year to sustain the force at its current size, only 1 in 4 young adults can name all 5 of the active duty services. Half of them rate themselves as having little or no knowledge about active duty service. Even if every young adult with familiar with all of the services, only one in four of today's youth qualify for military service without a waiver. We know that serving in uniform is a family game. Those who choose to serve today most often have family members who serve or who have served. Twenty years ago, forty percent of our youth had a parent who served. Today, that is 15 percent. And today's parents are much less likely than just a few years ago to recommend service to their children. The veteran population in 20 years will be about half of what it was just a few years ago. These parents and veterans are the influencers who will convince the next generation to serve. Even for those parents and veterans who want their children to serve, it is increasingly difficult. Of today's youth, almost nine in ten say they will definitely not or probably not be serving in the next few years.

Some broader societal trends are also working against military service. Youth unemployment rate is at a historical low. Youth today have choices. Increasingly, college is seen as the path to success today in life, and today's youth do not see the connection between military service and education, despite a very generous G.I. Bill, and other education opportunities while in service. We are increasingly disconnected geographically as well. Just under half of our recruits come from six states. Generally, officers come from the Northeast. The enlisted come from the South. Our veterans, our best influencers, are increasingly moving to the southern states, where recruiting is already strong. We risk seeding huge swaths of the country to underrepresentation in the all-volunteer force. I won't discuss the so-called digital divide, because, frankly, the jury is out on whether or how much that really affects recruiting and retention.

I would balance this preceding evidence of a military-civil divide by stating that the armed forces of today, except for our ability to recruit and retain women, broadly look like the society that we represent. That is true racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically, all of which is



a very good sign. Do we have challenges? Yes. But we can also point to enormous successes to include the past 18 years of war; a situation not foreseen when the all-volunteer force was created. I think it is safe to say that the all-volunteer force has turned out to be much more resilient than we imagined, and as long as we continue to peer into the future with events like we are participating in today, I'm confident that we will preserve the all-volunteer force well into the future. Thank you, and I look forward to our discussion.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you, Mr. Kurta.

We'll begin the commissioners' questions, and just to remind commissioners, including myself, we have 5 minutes on the clock, and we'll start with round 1 and myself. So first of all, thank you all for being here today and for providing your testimony. We greatly appreciate it.

Earlier this morning, we had our panel that talked about sort of how we identify, recruit, and retain critical skills, which in my mind is sort of like the canary in the coal mine. If we can't get a small population of people we really need, how are we going to get the larger population of all the other people and skillsets that we need. So I guess one of the things that was raised in this morning's conversation was the permeability of being able to move, whether it's active to reserve, civilian back into the military, to help to break down sort of these barriers that we're seeing between the military and civilian society and try to increase the awareness and opportunities across the military and civilian side.

So, from your expertise, because according to Dr. Cohn, we don't have crisis, so we might have some time here. How should we take a look at, and what recommendations would you give us in how to try and how to break down the culture that makes it hard for us to do this on both sides; both the civilian and the military side? Anybody want to take it on?



Dr. Lindsay Cohn

Just a clarification; how to break down the culture that makes it hard to get critical skills into the military?

The Honorable Debra Wada

Well, critical skills, but also just how do we break down the culture of both in the military side to be able to have that permeability but also from the civilian side in understanding that this is a requirement that we would hope that all Americans would stand up and raise their hand to do if asked.

No?

Dr. Lindsay Cohn

Okay. So, I was mentioning this to one of the commissioners earlier. A few years ago, there was another commission, and I apologize if I get the name wrong, but it was the Commission on the Reform of Military Retirement, or Commission on Military Retirement and Compensation Reform, right? And they came up with a large number of recommendations about reforming the retirement system, about reforming the way compensation was done, a little bit about reforming promotion. And then, Ash Carter, former Secretary of Defense, had his Force of the Future initiative. And I think, honestly, both of those came up with a lot of very good recommendations about how to make the career arc of people in the military more flexible. I had some of the same recommendations in my statement, but I think one of the things that you will want to look at, and others have mentioned this as well, is, for example, making lateral entry more possible for people who already possess certain skills, expanding and making more flexible the types of scholarships and maybe even student debt payoff programs to incentivize people to study certain skills and then go into the military. Also, to create certain tracks in the military where people don't necessarily have to do command, where they may be more specialist, warrant



officer type things, if you will. I think there are definitely ways that you can make short-term service in the military more attractive to people with certain skillsets who are willing to take a pay cut for a while to do that kind of service. But it can't be devastating to their economic health. If it's devastating to their economic health, if it kills their 401(k), they're not going to do it.

The Honorable Debra Wada

So, I'm going to turn to Mr. Kurta, because these proposals are not necessarily new. We've seen them over time, and it's been difficult for the department to help the services implement some of these recommendations. Help us identify what those barriers are and how we can help break them down.

Mr. Anthony Kurta

Well, I think you mentioned it when you said culture. And, you know, we have to be careful when we talk about culture, because the individual service cultures are actually, I think, warfighting advantages. So, when we do these top-down reforms, we also have to be careful to do them and let the services implement them within their own unique identities and cultures to a point.

You mentioned permeability, so this is my plug for continuing reserve component duty status reform, which I think will help people go from reserve component to the active force, and even back in and out of the force altogether. Dr. Cohn mentioned the blended retirement system helps people at least have a portable 401(k) when they come in and out of the services; less economically devastating. We have to continually look at does each individual, critical skill need to be in uniform? When we say it's a military capability, we tend to automatically say it has to be a uniformed person, and that's not always the case. We have much more, I think, room to maneuver in there than we have thought.



And then the continuing DOPMA reforms that the Congress has given us the latitude in, in last few years; I would say, you know, we got those authorities much quicker than the services were ready to implement them. But in the last 2 years, and I don't want to call out services specifically, because they have their own needs; but I would say they are increasingly using those in innovative ways beyond which even we thought of in the Force of the Future; we thought of, you know, when the HASC and the SASC were thinking of these. And so, I'm encouraged by the innovation that the services are showing.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

I yield to Vice Chair Gearan.

The Honorable Mark Gearan

Great, thank you. Well, let me join with our Chair, here, in thanking all of you for your thoughtful testimony that was submitted as well as your oral testimony. We thank you so much for being with us.

Mr. Chivers, if I could direct my question to you; first, thank you for your writing. That has exposed some important issues to those of us readers. But I was drawn to your provocative thought exercise that you posed in your oral testimony. Having reflected on it for your testimony, you could help us think through, perhaps, what would be the ideal civilian-military relations in American society?

Mr. C. J. Chivers

So, we're never going to achieve fluency where people can really speak who have not served in the military as to what military service or war is like. So, I don't think that's a realistic goal. It would be nice if we were at least conversant in what our military does and who our



military people are, and we're far from that now. I notice. I'm raising a bunch of teenagers, and I speak often on campuses and colleges and know who comes to my talks.

Now, obviously, I have a strong point of view, so I draw a self-selecting crowd. So, if you're a data scientist, don't look at my crowds as necessarily reflective of the larger population. But pretty much the only people who turn up when I speak, when I am out there, are veterans, ROTC students, people who are considering military service. It is very walled off. Even after people come back from the wars will leave the service, and under the G.I. bill, they go to campuses and they cluster even within their cohort on the campus. Not across the board, of course, but the information stays walled off.

My ideal is that we just know each other better. That we're able to speak to what military service actually is, and what it means, you know, overseas as well. I mean, we're an island nation, so we're not very good at peering across the ocean across the board, as Dr. Cohn said. There's not much history of Americans being particularly invested in our foreign policy. My ambitions here are pretty low, but we could at least have people talk about military life. And we see because now days we know who looks at our articles because of all the data information we have. You know, if I wanted to write an article about a sky penis, I'd get an uncountable number of clicks. An article of the same size and placement about some of the social issues that we've just talked about in the military about pay issues, or as you were talking about, you know, retaining women in the military; recruiting, retaining, training women in the military, these have far less numbers of clicks. The conversation's just not happening.

The Honorable Mark Gearan

So, Commissioner Khazei always wisely reminds us that this is for the first a commission established of military, national, and public service. Senator McCain and we joined these three streams. So, take that up or expand that, if you might, in your thinking to the other kinds of awareness and conversations. Is this a marker of citizenship that you're talking about that we



need more conversation around? Does this lead you to reflect on civic education? How do you think about the broader implications of this given our work?

Mr. C. J. Chivers

I don't have specific policy recommendations for you. I tell everyone, religiously, I do description, not prescription. I try to look at a problem and describe it as accurately as I can. I don't have a lot of competencies, academic or professional otherwise to tell experts how to come to their own conclusions. I'm saying you have a problem. How you fix it that's kind of out of my lane. I consider myself kind of like the engine temperature indicator on the dashboard of your car. I tell you when it's too hot and if you should pull over. I'm not the mechanic.

The Honorable Mark Gearan

I think I've had that car from time to time.

Mr. C. J. Chivers

We all have.

The Honorable Mark Gearan

I know. Thank you though for sharing that with us.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you, Commissioner Gearan.

Commissioner Allard.



Mr. Edward Allard

Yes, thank you.

Secretary Kurta, considering the parties involved including the military, the government, and the other elements of American service in society, what stakeholders, which one do you feel is more responsible for helping us remove the citizen-military divide?

Mr. Anthony Kurta

A great question. I can't really point to a single stakeholder, but I would say it's a collective responsibility. But I think our bodied politic must do something to incentivize national, public, and military service, and I don't think that they're necessarily mutually exclusive. I mean, if we can enhance among the youth an interest in public service or national service; I'm not sure exactly how you distinguish between the two, but use those broadly, then I think that is all the better in the end for the all-volunteer force because I think some of that will naturally trickle down into military service. But I don't think there's one element of society that can do this, but our collective body of politics needs to enhance that. And, obviously, this commission is a way to do that.

Mr. Edward Allard

If I may have a follow-up to that, do you feel that that service should be mandatory or voluntary?

Mr. Anthony Kurta

So not speaking as an employee of the Department of Defense, my own personal opinion is I am 100 percent on board with mandatory public service of some sort for everybody. I think it



is an element of responsibility of citizenship in this country that you give back at some point and in some method that we can prescribe.

Mr. Edward Allard

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

How about others of the panel? What do you think about that; the mandatory-voluntary aspect?

Dr. Kathleen Hicks

I don't work for the Department of the Defense, so I'll go next. I don't have qualms with it. That said, I suspect we at least are at a point, because we are not in crisis, where you could attempt a voluntary, highly incentivized approach. So, in other words, it looks great on your resume. It's helpful getting future employment. It pays decently. It's rewarding in its experiential effects, et cetera. I think that is beyond worthy as an endeavor for the United States and long overdue.

Mr. Edward Allard

Thank you.

Others? I still have a few more seconds, here.

Dr. Lindsay Cohn

I would simply say in principle, I think mandatory national, public service can do lots of good things. As a practical matter, I think implementing it in the United States would be incredibly difficult and expensive. So, in principle, there are good things about it. In practical terms, I think it would be a lot more difficult than many of us realize.



Mr. Edward Allard

Thank you very much, Dr. Cohn.

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

In reality, I would probably would not go with the mandatory approach. I believe that you can instill a sense of service, whether it's military, national, or public service through relationships, building, interacting with folks; whether you as an adult are showcasing to young individuals serving in the public; whether locally, at your local communities, local government. Everything is very local with regards to trying to instill sort of this type of motivation. Education is local, I think, at that point. That's why I believe that these youth outreach programs are very important with regards to our interaction and community building and relationship building, not only with just the young individuals, but definitely the community and the adults. In the end, I believe that you'll get the outcome that you need, which is you'll have individuals that will take the multiple tracks to go either into military, national, public service, or even all three.

Mr. Edward Allard

Thank you very much, Mr. Gonzales.

Any thoughts? Pass? Okay, I yield back.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you, Commissioner Allard.

Commissioner Barney.



Mr. Steve Barney

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Dr. Cohn, I really appreciate your very thoughtful suggestion to us that perhaps we should as a nation maybe refrain the way that we look at some of these issues to ensure that what we're really doing is focusing on things that have a desired effect, whatever that effect should be. But I've heard both from you and from Dr. Hicks that perhaps we're not in a crisis situation. Yet, when I listen to Mr. Kurta's testimony about some of the aspects of recruiting and retention, we also recognize that the recruiting and retention experience that the military services will have depends on, to a great deal, about other things going on in the nation; whether it is the economy doing well or not well.

So, here's kind of where I'm going with this. If we're not currently in a crisis, should we be at all concerned about the long-term viability of the all-volunteer force to serve the nation? Because I personally am concerned that the AVF could sort of be the proverbial frog in the pot of water. You know? If we're not in a crisis now, can we afford to wait until it is too late in order to do those things that are needful? And I know, Dr. Cohn, in some of your written testimony, you did have some very thoughtful ideas about how we can look at improving, I think, in what you described as the quantity of people who are perhaps both eligible and also propensed to serve. How could we perhaps do this in a way to improve the sense that some have that there is a military-civilian divide, but to also ensure that we don't get to a place where the AVF is unable to respond to the nation's needs?

Dr. Lindsay Cohn

Thank you. Yes, I absolutely think that we should not sit back and do nothing. As Dr. Hicks pointed out, as several panelists have pointed out, and as I'm sure all of you are aware, the United States population is changing quite rapidly. Dr. Hicks talked about generational change. I mentioned in my testimony cultural change, demographic change. All of those trends are



problematic for the continued health of the all-volunteer force. So, I absolutely think that we should do something now before it gets bad.

The reason that I sort of emphasize the we're not in a crisis now point is because I think that with absolute respect to all of Chris's work, which I think is fabulous, I think it's important for us not to expect too much from what we can accomplish from these kinds of changes. In other words, so many of the political and sociopolitical outcomes that we're trying to achieve; getting people to pay more attention to the wars; getting people to want to know more about the military; we don't have good evidence that raising awareness of the military as a form of service will have those results.

So to your question in terms of what we can do, I think we've already heard in your staff memorandum, in the interim report, Secretary Kurta have all mentioned really good ideas -- and Mr. Gonzales have all mentioned really good ideas for how we can reach out and appeal to more of the population. The other side of that coin though is the institution itself; the military itself. One of the reasons that I push back on the idea that awareness is a problem, I'll just tell a quick, personal anecdote. I grew up in a military family: great-grandfather, grandfather, father, brother, all of them. I was fully aware of the military. I was fully aware of what you could do in it, all of the job possibilities. It never once occurred to me that I could join the military. It never occurred to me until I went to college and needed money, at which point I was like this is an option. And the reason it didn't occur to me was because I was in a Marine Corps family, and I knew of exactly two female Marines, and it simply did not occur to me that this was a place I would go.

And so, I want to point out that awareness is not enough. You need to think that this is something you could do; some place you could belong; someplace you could be accepted and have a place. And so, I think it's important to understand also that we need to make sure that the military culturally, organizationally becomes more flexible and more welcoming, so that more people not only know about it but think, yes, that's something I could do.



Mr. Steve Barney

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you, Commissioner Barney.

Commissioner James.

Ms. Jeanette James

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'd like to extend my thanks as well to the panel for being here today and sharing your time and your expertise.

Mr. Chivers, I'd like to ask a couple of questions kind of in a two-part question. So, from this panel and from other panels, we've heard a lot about today's youth and the differences between today's youth and, perhaps, youth in the past. You've spent; it's clear from your testimony and I have not read your books but they're going to be on my summer reading list; but you've spent a lot of time, yourself as a Marine and then more recently with the military, with military members in some pretty extreme circumstances. So, from your perspective, what are the differences between Marines of the past, for example, when you were in the Marines, and Marines that you're with today? Are you seeing those differences in the individual Marines that we continue to hear about are the differences in the youth today?

Mr. C. J. Chivers

So, you're asking me questions about generational politics, and I don't really believe in generational politics for a couple of reasons. One, when I was in the Marine Corps, I know we were trained by many people who had been conscripted who had served with conscripts, because I signed up right after the Beirut bombing in 1983. So, there were many people who had been in



the late '60s or through the mid '70s. And, you know, we were told we were the Pepsi generation. That we weren't as tough as they were. You probably were told you were the Pepsi generation. Then I went out, you know, about 20 years later or 15 years later. I'd have to do the math. I don't know exactly and started hanging out with a younger generation of Marines overseas and on bases here. And they all told me they were the Pepsi generation, and what was it like to be in the old Corps when I was in?

This is an old trick that one generation plays on the other. The current generation, you know, I've listened to a lot of criticism of millennials. We all have. It's become a cultural trope. I watched the young people through a whole range of years now; for more than a decade. Young people come up and perform admirably as volunteers across all sorts of extreme circumstances, and I thought that the sendup of the millennial generation as being disengaged or not committed or not hardworking was a bunch of bullshit. I didn't buy it for a minute. I used to tell platoons this too. People would say, "Wow, you were in the Marine Corps in the '80s. That must have been so much harder than the Marine Corps now, and you guys must have been so much better." Because they had this all in their head from their drill instructors and all and from the sergeants who were training them. And, honestly, I used to tell them, you know, if my platoon came up against yours, you guys would have kicked our asses. You guys really have a lot of experience. You have a lot of NCOs who have been to war and have been very well trained, and they have brought up you guys. And I would get, sometimes, into firefights with units, and their first time in a firefight. And at a snap, they would perform very well. So, the answer is I don't buy generational politics. I think every generation has good people.

Ms. Jeanette James

Thank you. So, the second part of my question is we continue to talk about the military-civilian divide. From the Marines that you've been with, do they feel that divide? Is it something that they're aware of? Is it something that they're concerned about?



Mr. C. J. Chivers

So, as you put your filters on with me, you should think, remember that all Marines think they're different. That's the nature of the organization. They feel separate. They want to feel separate, and so they joined to not be in the Army or in the Air Force. And, institutionally, the organization has a chip on its shoulder, and it's proud of it. So, yes, Marines do feel separate. I was speaking more broadly about the generation of combatants across the services and across the wars. I feel like many of them have come home and don't feel connected to the society that they served. But Marines, I think, across time have always felt like they belong to a special other, and we probably don't want to extrapolate off of that, because they're weird.

Ms. Jeanette James.

Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Commissioner Haines.

The Honorable Avril Haines

Thanks. It's hard to build on that. I guess, Dr. Hicks, maybe trying to build off of that, one thing that I liked about your testimony that resonated for me was that in the context of civil-military relations, it seems to be that there are a lot of different dimensions to look at this. It sometimes gets sort of characterized as just there's a problem with civil-military relations, and it really comes in a series of different flavors and perceptions. In the context of the first piece of your testimony, where you talk about the policy divide, in a sense, one of your points is that



there are not as many shared experiences, as you noted. Something that I've been wondering about is one unique aspect of this commission is that it combines military, national, and public service, as prior noted, and we're supposed to be thinking about incentivizing and enhancing opportunities across all of these different ranges. And I've wondered whether or not there's a way to look at that and our recommendations on trying to enhance service across these different ranges and have an impact on the civil-military divide piece. And one way could be, setting aside the mandatory versus voluntary piece, just having a greater, universal expectation of service and if that created a common experience much the way General McChrystal talks about it sometimes. Would that have an impact on civil-military divide? Would it give that?

But then there are also a lot of other ideas that have been raised with us; things like having recruiting stations that don't just do military recruiting, but do other types of recruiting; developing a culture of service that think about service across these different lanes and how that might help. And I just would be very interested in your reactions and then others as well.

Dr. Kathleen Hicks

Sure, I mean, that appeals to be greatly. I think based on what I wrote and what I have said today you can probably tell I think a big piece of this is about the shared experience. The experiences are, of course, differentiated, to include inside the military, but certainly military and civilian, national, and public opportunities will be different. But having a backbone of civics education and including inside that sort of that lifelong experience of being a citizen, the incentivized opportunity, or perhaps even over a generation an expectation of service I think does create and buy-in and a sense of shared experience that's important. That's thing one.

Thing two is part of that shared experience, based on part of those opportunities, I could foresee many greater opportunities for civilians to do work in and around national security issues that, while not military in nature, help them understand the role that civilians are intended to play



in the process of how we make national security decisions. You can imagine many manifestations of how that would play out. So, I'll leave it at that.

The Honorable Avril Haines

Thank you.

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

Commissioner Haines, I would look at it from the youth approach. I also sat as the department's representative to the National Civilian Community Corps, and first started with it as part of its startup as a military person that was detailed to help start it. But as a representative there on the advisory board, the legislation created barriers, and the bureaucracy created barriers to create that sort of intermixing of service. I would also say that even in our own youth programs itself, we don't. In JROTC, we talk about it being a citizenship program, but yet we are focused still on our own military culture with regards to that. There are ways in intertwine sort of national service and military service and public service in the curriculums that are being provided, as well as, like I said, incorporating what the NCCC does truly integrated with what DOD does as opposed to creating sort of this legislation that says figure out a way to help each other out, but remained focused on your priorities. I mean, we say that to our military recruiters. Those who are not qualified for military service, refer them to national service. But that seldom gets followed through. So, I believe that, truly, you take a look at legislation that will truly impact policies and the resources necessary to do those things, it can happen. And just the same way with JROTC or any in-school program, when you're talking about citizenship that the curriculum itself would include national service along with military service. That's my two cents.

The Honorable Avril Haines

Thank you.



The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you, Commissioner Haines.

Commissioner Kilgannon.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Kurta, I'd like to direct my question to you please, and invite any of the other panelists who'd like to weigh in on it. You mentioned in your testimony that young people can't name the different services of the military, and Mr. Chivers said something to the effect that we should be conversing in who military people are. Are these things that can be taught in high school, for example, what the military is at a basic level; the services, the difference between Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines; the nature of the relationship between the military and the civilian leadership? And I'm not talking about recruiting or aspiring or trying to get people interested. An analogy might be even though somebody may never vote in their life, we put a value on them knowing how a bill becomes a law. And even though somebody may never serve, should they at least have some basic knowledge that is given to them in high school so that they are aware, and it decreases that divide?

Mr. Anthony Kurta

Well, obviously I think in their education opportunities there's plenty of opportunity to increase the awareness across the board. But you know, it's also not just the youth necessarily that need to know more about the military. From our own kind of own selfish point of view of the all-volunteer force, we want the influencers to know more about the military as well. And part of the lack of the ability, you know, to concentrate on that, the one item of our youth not being able to identify the five services, part of that is squarely the fault of the Department of Defense, as we seeded all of the recruiting opportunities and advertising to the services. And



they're much more transactional, right? They advertise in order to get a recruit to sign on the bottom line and send them to boot camp.

So recently, and it's kind of came as a follow-on to the Force of the Future that was mentioned was, we got our own advertising in OSD back in to the, I would call it, the influencers and the DOD brand awareness. So just spots to talk about, you know, you used to see them on TV: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, well, I mean, there's the five right there. And, you know, you play it enough, and people have at least a basic level. So, there's many different ways to enhance the awareness. Education is certainly one of them. We do it through JAMRS, who I know has talked a lot; many of you are very familiar with them -- and has talked a lot with your staff. But as we get back into that game, we're already seeing a direct connection between those advertisements, people seeing it, raising their awareness, and being much more likely to recommend military service to those that they influence.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Thank you.

Any others?

Dr. Lindsay Cohn

If I could just add something to that, and we were speaking about this earlier. I just want to contextualize this in terms of larger societal trends, right? In other words, not to be a wet blanket, but this isn't just a problem with the military. Some terrifying percentage of Americans can't identify all three branches of government. So, yes, civic education, absolutely that is one of the things we really need. To speak to one of the points that Chris brought up of people returning from war and not feeling like a part of their communities, I mean, Robert Putnam wrote *Bowling Alone*, what, in 1992? Nobody feels like a part of a community. These are really big societal problems. And we should care about them with respect to the military perhaps more because we ask these people to do so much and because they are so important to the health of



society. But we also need to recognize that these are not just things where we can tweak the military and fix everything. These are larger societal trends, at least to some extent, and fixing them through the education system in a country where education is radically decentralized is difficult.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Any others?

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

Well, Commissioner Kilgannon, I would agree that there are ways to imbed, sort of, the information as just information for knowledge in a sense. I think one of the tactical issues I found out with our own JROTC program is our curriculum with regards to citizenship is more considered by local school districts as a general elective credit, as opposed to a civic credit where a lot of other things are being taught to these JROTC students with regards to government, civic engagement, things like that. And, unfortunately, we would have to work with the 20,000-some school districts in order to ensure that the curriculum moves from sort of a general elective sort of credit to one of the core credits that these school districts are now pushing with regards to whether it's government or civic credit. That would be beneficial in that way. And maybe those that may not be JROTC students maybe in the same class as non-JROTC students just being exposed to that sort of general civic sort of lesson as opposed to just the student their self.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.



Commissioner Khazei.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Thank you. Thank you all for your service and your compelling thoughts. I have a couple of questions, and I want to start with Mr. Chivers. I find your warning light on the engine very compelling. We've heard similar things from Andrew Bacevich, from General Laich. I know you're not a prescriber, so you may not even have an answer to this question, and you didn't say you're calling back for a return of the draft. You just said what if we had one.

So, the challenge about being back the draft, I think, one is the military loves the all-volunteer force. So, they don't want it. I don't think people in this country would go for it. So, in a democracy how do you do that, even if you have a compelling reason? So short of bringing back the draft as a way to get everybody with skin in the game, I'll ask this of you and anyone else who wants to comment, do you have any other ideas? I've seen the division. I have friends in the military. I've worked on a campaign on closing the civilian-military divide. What could we do so that when you go to college campuses maybe some young people show up who haven't been in the military. Do you have any thoughts, or maybe you don't, but I do think it is a real concern that we have to think about. What action could we take?

Mr. C. J. Chivers

So, the first part of what you said I'll agree with that there's about no chance of bringing back the draft. What I say is I could sooner grow tomatoes on the moon. It's just not happening. The military doesn't want it. The population largely doesn't want it. And in the short term, I mean, I tried to in my statement weave in there that the all-volunteer force I think, as I heard in the years immediately afterward, led to a force that was more ready and more motivated, easier to lead. And it was a management success, in the short and now across a long period of time, has been a success. That's why I call it a thought exercise.



I thought a lot about how do you get people to pay attention otherwise, and I don't have an answer. I've spent years thinking about it. You know, we work very, very hard to try to bring home accurate, intense, difficult descriptions of what these wars were like, and people don't consume that. The public conversation, and I assume you guys all go to the supermarket. I got a bunch of kids, so I'm a supermarket expert. Supermarkets are full of food, right? Except almost none of its food; it's almost all bad for you, unless you go around the edges where the meat and the fish and the vegetables are. In the middle, it's all this junk that they call food that you shouldn't even eat, and you know it's going to kill you if you eat it for 5 or 6 years. You're going to be obese, and the whole country's obese. Well, not exactly. I'm not a data scientist, remember? You know what I mean.

All this, it's the same thing. We're trying to get people to pay attention to the national conversation. They are more likely, we know, everyone on their phones and the internet and a lot of the media conversation is full of nonsense. There's wonderful stuff in the conversation if you, just like if you go to the supermarket and eat the right food, buy the right food, take it home and eat it, you can be healthy. It's the same thing with what you consume as your media diet, and the media diet is really not that connected to the wars. They're much more connected to entertainment and culture and political nonsense. There's a lot of great political reporting too, but as you know the conversation has gone a little haywire across our adult lives.

So, I don't have a solution. I've wracked my brains on it to the point of wondering where if, you know, all the work that people do in the field actually has much value.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Thank you.

Dr. Cohn and Dr. Hicks, you both wrote very compellingly about where the military is and where it needs to go in terms reflecting society, the change in demographics, who's serving, Generation Z, et cetera. And it's not just up to the military. We all have to play our part in that. How do we do that? I mean, what you've recommended, you've had a bunch of great



recommendations. How do we, actually, and what could we recommend to see that that shifts so that the military does fully represent who we are so that the future Lindsay Cohn growing up feels like, yes, it's for me. Not just when you get to college and need a scholarship?

Dr. Kathleen Hicks

Let me just say a few macro things, and then turn it over. I think all the discreet recruitment and retention improvements, personnel reforms, Force of the Future related, and things that follow on from it, those are very important to the answer. But I think we jump to that very quickly. And what we know, whether you're in civilian society or military society, is when people are looking at institutions where they're going to see it as their profession or even just a place to spend several years; they are looking at the leadership of that organization. They are looking how well it reflects their values and their viewpoint.

National service and a sense of citizenry, I think, can help with that, but to the demographic point, fundamentally, if they're looking at a series of white males who are representative of a subset of the population and if there's an added perception, which I think is debatable, but an added perception by some that they are political in nature -- I certainly think it's debatable that they are. I think it's debatable also whether there's a perception of that -- then you have a really hard time attracting a more diverse base. I think the statistics the secretary pointed out are true, obviously, but they are representative of the base of the military, and I think we take too much comfort in that. I think what people look to when they look at who comes to their campus, who are the speakers at commencement, whose pictures are on the wall; I walked into the Pentagon for over 17 years of my life and saw a whole plastered wall of white males. That can be very challenging for youth to decide that's where they're going to spend their careers.



So I think a lot of onus is on the military to understand what every major corporation in American has had to understand, which is they have to ship the representation at the senior level if they're going to really attract people in a broad nature who are from a diverse population.

Dr. Lindsay Cohn

So, I agree with everything that Kat just said. And I also want to emphasize all of the personnel reforms, recruiting reforms that we've talked about; very important. Don't want to deemphasize that. What I'll try to do here is summarize the argument that I made in my submitted remarks, which is related to what Kat just said in terms of making the organization the type of organization that is inclusive that looks inclusive that feels inclusive. And the argument is that what we now consider military culture is only partly functional to the military's mission. A lot of what we consider to be military culture is simply the imbedded remnant of the culture of the dominant groups that have comprised the military for so long. And I think that because we are going to need so much more diversity for multiple purposes, right? Number one, to reflect the society, but number two; as Jackie Schneider has argued very well and I know you had her here as well; to do the missions that the military will need to do, to have the aptitude.

If we need that more diverse military, the culture has to change. We have to revisit which aspects -- and by culture, I'm talking specifically about behavioral norms, ethical norms. What's the right way to behave? What's the right way to respond to certain types of behavior? How should we look, et cetera, et cetera? So that's what I mean by culture.

Some of it is functional, and we should not throw that away, right? Tony pointed that out. But not all of it is functional, and some of it needs to change as the society changes and as the force and as who is in the force needs to change. And the really important point here is that culture doesn't change by itself. You can't wait for it to change to get all these people in. The reason that I am so concerned about this is because when I was at the Pentagon briefly, I was asked to do a little bit of research, because I was the pointy-headed academic, on the women in



the services review for the special operations community. And what I found in my research was primarily that if you need to change a culture, in this case the male-bonding culture, you can't just tell people that's bad, don't do that anymore; take down the pornography off the walls, and then everything's fine. You have to replace it with an alternative culture. You must replace it with an alternative set of norms that make sense. You can't just tell people stop doing what you did, and then it will be fine.

So, I really think in addition to everything Kat said, in addition to everything your interim report recommends that if you want to get the force of the future, you're going to have to revisit and redefine what makes up military culture.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Commissioner Skelly.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you. Mr. Chivers, if I could ask you to put your descriptor hat on. Going back to the car dashboard, I wonder, in your view of America not being bought in on the force, because the force is so small, is there a voter participation-rate light? Is it relevant or not?

Mr. C. J. Chivers

So, I would agree with Dr. Cohn that these are larger problems than just the military; much larger.



Ms. Shawn Skelly

Does it apply to the issue of military?

Mr. C. J. Chivers

I think it's similar to voting or other forms of participation across our entire culture that the country, our citizens, are more interested in their rights than their responsibilities. We're a very large country. We're a very diverse country. We live our lives in very different ways, very different communities, apart from each other, and we're scattered. And we celebrate so much our rights and the ideals of liberty and independence. I mean, those are real features in the civic discourse. But responsibilities much less so.

So, I think I agree that this isn't just a military problem. This goes across. You see it in voting, and you see it in all sorts of other areas; you know, just in who turns up at community service events in my town. I mean, it's the same people all the time, right? You guys may do the same thing. You volunteer and you bump into the same volunteers, and they're a very, very small set of the community you live in.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thanks. I got one more for you, actually, leading back into the conversation that was just going on before I came up. As an observer, which leads to you being a describer, a descriptor, does who you see in the force matter, whether or not it's representative of the nation and its demographics? Does that have relevance in your observations?

Mr. C. J. Chivers

I'm glad you asked. Yeah, and I have to agree with what we heard just to my left here a few minutes ago. The military does a poor job of representation with women. And, you know,



what Tony said was we're doing pretty good demographically, except with women. Well, women are half the country. So how are you doing good? That's half the country.

I have five children. My oldest son thought about joining the Marine Corps. He's got a medical issue; he's not. My next son looks like he's a shoe-in. My daughter, number three, is a teenager who's doing really well in school. She wouldn't think of this for a minute. I won't ask Lindsay what her reasons were, but, you know, my daughter is aware of the deep misogyny in the military and the non-punishment and non-reporting of assaults. And I am sort of a shadow editor of a section that interacts with active duty, military, and veterans at the New York Times, called the "At Work" section. And we receive submissions, and we informally poll people on active duty or veterans all the time. It's a matter of course. It's a matter of routine. And we try to look for and reach beyond a lot of people who look like me, right? I mean, I look the stereotype. I'm an Irish-Catholic with a long line of military service in my family going back to World War I at least. And my father was in Vietnam. My brother's a Marine. I'm a Marine. It looks like my son's going to be. My cousins are Marines. I mean, it's in there. We try to reach beyond that, and what we find, it would shock you. What we hear that people confide in us, the experience of being a woman in the military.

So, yes, I think representation matters, and if you want a broader participation and a better reputation, then the military needs to fix this, you know? Because I'm just watching it in my own household. As they rise up, who gets interested? He's like, "I'm interested." "I'm interested." And then my daughter's like, "What are you talking about? I wouldn't even consider it."

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you.

Dr. Cohn, I accept your consideration about how the current situation of military relative size to the population distribution echoes a lot of our history, unlike some former cabinet



secretaries. I had a history degree, but I'm not a historian. But I read a lot, and so I appreciate it. I buy that. But one thing that I think is markedly different from that time, and maybe I'm out over my skis, is information. Access to information, the speed of it, and the scope that it can reach; you can near real time if not live just about every event in your life.

How does that inform the societal pressures that go into the calculus as to why folks are away from the military, and they know what happens in the military, especially the bad things?

Dr. Lindsay Cohn

What a great question; a complicated question. So the first thing I would say to echo something that Chris just said is in terms of media consumption, one of the things that we all, we being academics, all believed would happen when the internet happened and access to information happened and information improved was that society would be much better informed and we'd have much better participation -- you're laughing already. Yes, it did not happen. Access to information has not changed the level of informed-ness of the population in certain ways. Obviously in an aggregate we're all more informed than we used to be, but it turns out that whatever type of information you consumed before the internet was there, you just consumed more of that type of information that the internet is there. So, it has not caused people to be more informed in that sense.

More to the point of what about the fact that now we can see pictures? Now we can see reporting, we can read incredible, firsthand accounts. I don't know the answer to that in comparative historical terms. What I can tell you is that it doesn't seem to be the case that reading about or knowing about the bad side of the military has a specific effect, but what does have an effect is the fact that the military has been at war for so long at a high operational tempo with high operational stress. In other words, people aren't necessarily worried about getting gruesomely killed. What they're worried about is having a really, really difficult life that doesn't seem to be worth it, because it's not going anywhere, right? So, I think in that sense, the



availability of knowledge definitely has affected recruiting. I mean, we know for a fact that one of the reasons that fewer people are interested in serving is because they're not interested in going into a military where they have to deploy five or seven times to a fight that no one knows what it's accomplishing.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you, Doctor.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you. I hope you folks are doing well, because we have time for a second round. No objections? Great.

We have heard as we've gone around the country that after 9/11, our bases have shut down. We've gotten, from the military side, much more secure. But the sort of unintended consequences is that even communities around bases now, like we went down in Jacksonville, consider the base almost like a prison where people don't leave. And so I was just wondering, would it be, in terms of trying to break down the military-civilian divide and also trying to incorporate sort of the military-national-public service aspect of what we're trying to do, is there ways we can try to break that down? So, for example, could we use privatized housing, which we know there is in some cases excess capacity, to allow sort of our national service participants to be able to be eligible for that benefit? Not necessarily giving them the housing allowance, but at least allowing them onto the bases so that there's a greater mix of military and civilian that may not have similar backgrounds. Because right now, we allow DOD civilians to do that. I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that.

Mr. Anthony Kurta

Well, certainly we can, and as you know, that waterfall in housing extends all the way out to civilians in general if we get that far. So, it would certainly be within our capability to



incentivize service by making some of those things available. But when you kind of talked about the bases being a little more insular than they were, I mean, you know it was great in early '90s when everyone opened up the gates and there were no gate guards and you could drive everywhere you want. You know, unfortunately, it's just a fact of life that we can't do that today. So, if we can't necessarily easily bring, you know, society to the base, we've got to bring those people on the base back out to society. So, while the base physically may be insular, the people on it cannot be. And so, it's one of our fundamental missions to go out and engage that society. More and more of our folks live out on the economy. You know, we've moved things like commissaries and Exchanges out onto the economy. And so, you know, they become more of a real readiness platform where they used to be the whole of somebody's life, socially and in all aspects of life. But now they're really the place to work and a readiness platform, and we've got to continue to get our people involved in the community around them.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Appreciate it.

Mr. Chivers, you make me think about your comment about, "You're never going to have a draft." So, part of the commission is two-part, right? One is how do we inspire all Americans to serve in military and national service. But the second part and the initiative of why we exist was to look at selective service, whether we should continue to have selective service and whether it should be modified. And given the sort of mil-civ divide, the department has stated that while they don't believe they will ever need the draft, they do state that they believe that we still need selective service. And so, I wonder, and being a former staffer, we should never ask questions we don't necessarily know the answer we're going to get. But I'm going to throw it out here; in terms of the selective service still being sort of the last attachment between military and civilians and whether that still exists and if there's other factors we should consider as we look to that question of selective service.



Mr. C. J. Chivers

I don't want to do a policy prescription, but what to do with selective service, I can say that in my own household, people don't even know what it is. The draft notices come, and they get thrown out like junk mail. There's no connection to it, because they don't think they're going to be drafted. They're not educated about it; we talked about that. You know how a bill becomes a law, but you don't know the names of the five services. It's similar. But I remember in the first draft notice; they don't call them draft notices, but the selective service documents we had to confirm his data on it, he didn't know what it was. He barely paid any attention to it whatsoever. But I don't have a policy prescription for you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Do we have any other interest from our two academic researchers here?

Dr. Kathleen Hicks

I'm delighted to be called an academic researcher, first of all. I will just say that in my household as well, the selective service announcements have come, and we do use it as an educational opportunity. But it does require that, to explain what it is. So, it's not something I think youth are familiar with. I'm supportive of continuing the selective service approach, and I believe it should be extended to include all 18-year olds, so specifically women.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thanks.

Vice Chair Gearan.



The Honorable Mark Gearan

Great. Thank you.

Mr. Gonzales, given all your work in youth programs and outreach, I'd be interested in your reflections. Peace Corps does a very good job working with former Peace Corps volunteers; returned Peace Corps volunteers and going out to high schools and community groups and into the community to share their experience. And they do a lot of great work to recruit and certainly the awareness of Americans, young people, about the Peace Corps. That also has similar awareness problems, but it's one way.

Do you think there's any applicability of that with the military service in terms of broadening the awareness and outreach to the communities?

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

Yes, I mean I believe there is. I also believe that we are currently doing those things in the different types of outreach programs. Some are one-day, one-shot type of opportunities, but the studies have shown that some sort of continuity, constant contact with these individuals over a certain frequency of time is truly necessary as opposed to just this, "I'm here today to talk to you about what I did in the military." I think that's one of the things that needed to be looked at with regards to how we deliver these outreach programs. So even when we talk about the larger picture, which is how do you integrate those that are involved with national service and military service? Unfortunately, our own policies pushed out our national service programs off of our military installations rather than figure out a way to incorporate those programs together and intermix what's actually happening national service-wise with the folks that they would be engaged with for support of those community services itself.

Those things can be done. I think they can be emphasized with regards to how we do it. The issue becomes the venue, you know? Do we have a good relationship with our school



districts to allow that venue to be open and available to our former military folks to speak to them? Do we have folks that live in that area there that we can access to be able to do those? So, I believe that is part of the strategy that is needed, but I also believe that it's not just showing up and doing a presentation. I believe there's some follow-up that needs to occur with regards to that, whether you call them mentors or anything else. Those are things that need to be done to truly engage the former member with the society itself.

The Honorable Mark Gearan

And more broadly, I take it that you don't see any inherent conflict in having a more united bridge of awareness building with other domestic and international forms of service, like AmeriCorps or Peace Corps, with the military?

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

No. I believe that incorporating all of them together sort of exemplifies the fact that what you choose as part of your giving back to society is a reflection of who you are and sort of utilizing the skills necessary. You can interchange. You can quickly say that, "Look, I do want to enlist in the military. But I also now want to take those certain skills and also now continue it on in some sort of national or public service."

I don't believe that these should be stove piped like the way they have been done over the years, and that's why we see this sort of conflict with regards to, or disconnection between, you know, military, national, and public service. Because we have taken action to show that. We've pushed them out. We don't incorporate and utilize and leverage the national civilian community corps. They first started out on our BRAC facilities, and then later we pushed them out to say, "Find your own facilities," type of thing. So I think it would have been best to try to figure out a way to incorporate that national service program into our military, so that when these kids or youth, I should say, come into this program at a military installation, now they're exposed not only to national service, but also to what the opportunities there may be in military service.



The Honorable Mark Gearan

My time is nearing, so if you could help me out briefly.

What's your reaction to that from the Defense Department point of view?

Mr. Anthony Kurta

Well, I'm a believer that, you know, the rising water floats all boats. So, I think if it's part of a larger conversation on national and public service that, again, that is only to the benefit in the end of the all-volunteer force and the Department of Defense.

The Honorable Mark Gearan

Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Commissioner Allard?

Mr. Edward Allard

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

I've got to admit to Mr. Chivers that I'm so old that they didn't have Pepsi back in my day, so it didn't impact me.

Secretary, I'm very curious. You said something about 250,000 recruits every year. How far out does DOD determine their manpower or person-power needs? And then a subject



of that is how do you determine what critical skills you need, and at what point is that determined so you can kind of grow people into those critical skills if necessary?

Mr. Anthony Kurta

Well, I mean, the services generally look in 5-year timeframes, because that's the budget horizon. But, you know, there're long-term, strategic plans that each one of the services have that kind of calls out, you know, and from there the services decide what skills they need. They take cues from things like the national defense strategy, which is recently out and focuses us on the great power competition. So, all of those things go into the broad discussion.

And then various public interactions, threat perceptions. I mean, today, everything's on software engineers, cybersecurity. You look at all of the technological advances that we need to make and that we're focusing on in the department. Obviously that trickles down to both immediate and future needs for different skillsets. And then the services with their mission sets will often have different answers to those problems.

Mr. Edward Allard

Thank you. I yield back.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Commissioner Barney.

Mr. Steve Barney

Thank you.



Secretary Kurta, when we had a chance to visit just before the hearing, you mentioned that in a couple of weeks you're coming up to yet another career milestone as you prepare to retire from the service. And, you know, part of me wonders what would compel a person so close to being ready to retire to submit themselves to something like this? And it occurs to me it's the same thing that probably compelled you to serve honorably in the Navy for 32 years, and then to continue to serve in that civilian capacity. So, I'm sure my fellow commissioners and I thank you very much. We congratulate you on your service and for being here, today.

So, we've been talking about this issue of this so-called civilian-military divide, whatever the heck that is. But I want to kind of tie into this question about how the civilian-military divide issue might relate to two things. Number one is our ability to recruit the people, and when I say recruiting, I'm thinking broadly both recruiting enlisted personnel, as well as bringing in officers who will serve. But also the other question that is to the level of, you know, national policy makers, and that is: How does this idea of a civil-military divide affect our willingness as a nation to use force, to use our armed forces in matters that involve our international affairs as a nation?

Mr. Anthony Kurta

Great questions and thank you for your comments. As it affects recruiting, the divide really kind of goes into propensity. We talk about propensity all the time. And obviously the services are having an increasingly difficult time when those that are even willing to consider, for whatever reason: whether it's nobody in the family has served; whether it's as the panelists have talked about that you don't see somebody in the service that looks like you; whether you don't believe the lifestyle is something that you would want; whether you watch TV and the only images of veterans are injured, ill, and wounded; those things all make the preservation of the all-volunteer force increasingly difficult. Because we tend to only fish in the pond of propensity, if you will. And so, part of that is our own fault. We've got to go create more propensity, which all this will do, so we can fish in different ponds. And, you know, I can't offer you a



departmental view on the second part of that question, but I would say, on a personal level, I think it rings true, just to my own common sense, is that the less skin in the game the population has, the easier it is to -- you know, war is something that other people do, right? We have people that do it. They volunteer for it. They get paid well for it. And so, if we as a nation decide to use force, then we have people that will do that for us. And so, it doesn't create an effect on the nation as a whole. That, you know, just as a matter of common sense can't be good for us.

Mr. Steve Barney

Right. Thank you.

Mr. Chivers, I was thinking back to your earlier testimony as well, and I wondered, how do you, if you might not use the words the civilian-military divide, how would you actually describe this idea that you mentioned that some may feel anything you don't have to worry about becomes somebody else's responsibility. Can you help us understand how that might tie into this idea?

Mr. C. J. Chivers

The idea about the ease of use of force?

Mr. Steve Barney

Yes, sir.

Mr. C. J. Chivers

So, I mean, there's different ways to look at that. At the commander's level, it's irrelevant. At the political level, I think that, if the politicians don't have to worry about there being a political blowback, to use force is easier. They don't have to worry, you know. The



wars have gone on so long. Now they're relatively small compared to their scale, say -- I don't have numbers. I'm sure people do. But around 2008 or 2009, between Iraq and Afghanistan, probably about 250,000 people on the ground; that's a big number. And it had been going on for several years, and it wasn't going well. At that point, if service was randomized, I think you have had an antiwar movement in this country of some size. It's almost invisible now.

So, there's different levels to look at this. At the political level, I think that the absence of randomized service makes the use of force much, much easier, and it makes the blowback politically almost nonexistent. But when we go to a lower level than that, I don't think the origins of the service have too much to do with operations. I think that the commanders have the resources in front of them that they have, and they apply them to the puzzle before them.

Mr. Steve Barney

Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Commissioner James.

Ms. Jeanette James

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Gonzales, I'd like to start with you. In your written and your oral testimony, you mentioned two of the three options that are listed in our staff memo under, "Increase Youth Awareness." You talked about the youth cadet programs; JROTC. You talked about fieldtrips.



The one you didn't talk about was increasing the use of the ASVAB, or the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery Test.

We've heard from experts, and we've also, when we were, I think, in Iowa, we spoke with recruiters. And we talked to them about using the ASVAB in the high school setting. We've heard a mix of views on it. We've heard from some folks that the school districts are open to it. We've heard, probably not surprising, that other school districts in other areas are not open to it.

So probably a two-part question, maybe a three, from your perspective, is that something that the bang is going to be worth the buck in terms of increasing the awareness and maybe eventually making a dent in the civilian-military divide as young people there are offered the opportunity to take the ASVAB and get some sense of what the military needs and what they'd be able to do; what their skills are? So, if you could tackle that, and anyone else on the panel that has a view.

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

I can address the importance of creating sort of opportunities or more opportunities. And I believe that those opportunities should be made available. I think my fellow panelists, Mr. Kurta, can address sort of the process with regard to internally, because we've even had our own issues with regards to allowing our own youth that are participating in DOD programs, like our National Guard Youth Challenge Program, which are high school-age kids, to be able to take the ASVABs multiple times in order to be able to truly understand where their skillsets may be best utilized in that regard.

But from the standpoint, truly, that's why I go back to the type of relationship or the type of outreach efforts that the department needs. You can break that barrier with regards to school districts actually allowing or not allowing the ASVAB being taken based on what they truly know; what the local military organization is all about, whether it's active guard or reserve. I think when they've been exposed to the fact that you're not just going to be a trigger puller; that



there are a lot of different opportunities for individuals if they choose the military as an entry point into the workforce and that even those opportunities can be transported to other civilian

opportunities. That, I think, will help out with regards to opening more opportunities for these school districts to say, yes, we'll allow that to happen. But I think currently there're some things that need to be adjusted, even internally, so that even within our own structure, we can still provide that testing through the folks that want to take it and understand their skillsets.

Ms. Jeanette James

So, if a parent who was thinking about whether or not they wanted to allow their son or daughter to participate in taking the ASVAB; if they were unsure or if they were resistant, what would you tell them? How would you explain the benefit of their son or daughter taking that test?

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

Well, again, I'd go back to the fact that it's another way to assess the individuals', sort of, interests with regards to their skills or potential skills. We don't know where these young individuals may wind up, but we do know they have an interest in doing something. Why not open the door so that they can at least understand that up front? I mean, these kids are only 16, 17 years old, and you're asking them to figure out what they want to do at that point in time without giving them sort of the background and information that says, "Hey, you can do these things, and you can do these in a certain pathway that allows you to possibly go in the military and then move beyond the military."

I think the issue always becomes that we don't view the military sometimes as a way to get to some sort of end that is beneficial for our student, our kid itself. We view it sometimes as, "Hey, this is a way to get out of what you're current situation is," as opposed to saying, "No, this is a way that can get you to where you want to go," which is truly not just in the trades area, but



also in some professional areas too. There are those that decide that would say, “Look, I got into it, and now I want to stay in the military,” so we need to keep those doors open and convince the parent that all we’re doing is giving them the opportunity to get information. We’re not asking them that this is their only pathway into the workforce.

Ms. Jeanette James

Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Commissioner Haines.

The Honorable Avril Haines

Thanks.

This is going to be a little bit rambling but let me try this. And it’s really for Mr. Chivers and Dr. Cohn. Something I think I’ve observed, at least in the context of our hearings going around the country and talking to people about public service; I want to propose to you, and I think from your perspective, Chris, just whether or not you also in an unscientific way have observed this, whether you agree with it or it resonates with you. And then, Dr. Cohn, I think I’d like also to hear from your research perspective whether it’s consistent with what you’ve seen and ask you, sort of, a piece of it; how to respond to it.

So what I’ve seen is that the millennial generation, consistent to some extent with what you’ve identified in the Z generation, and I’m never really sure who I’m talking to, exactly; but the younger generation has definitely, in the context of our discussions, indicated, in a sense -- I



think you used the term, “intrinsic motivation,” in your testimony -- but to do things for society, to have impact, to be involved, and to help their community.

What has been interesting to me is that I haven’t seen them connected, per se, to their citizenship or to nationality in that sense. There is a desire to do something and to help people around them, but it’s almost more as a global citizen than it is as a national citizen. And yet, it does seem to be from a broader frame as we’re looking at the mandate for the commission, I think we see value both in promoting greater cohesion within the country, but also to promote greater participation. Participation can be in the context of voting. It can be in the context of civic participation, getting involved in government, and a variety of ways; but also, service, obviously, a fundamental piece of this. And so, one question is, is that consistent also with what you’ve observed, and then I’ll get to the rest of my question coming out of that.

Mr. C. J. Chivers

I think I spoke to this earlier to a question that Commissioner James had. I see more interest in rights than responsibilities, and that’s across generations. It’s not just with young people. I mean, I’ve spent a lot of time on campuses and then as a parent with teenagers now, and I do see a lot of community service. And I have to say, a lot of the community service I see is because it’s required, or at least they think it’s going to burnish a college application or a resume. So, this intrinsic motivation that you mentioned that Dr. Cohn had mention or talked about, I don’t see that at a sort of a critical weight. People talk a lot more about their rights, you know; being left alone or being able to own a firearm or being able to pursue their faith or to speak. I hear about this all the time, but responsibilities as a national thing not so much. I don’t know where the data is. I’m just speaking from what’s around me in my life.

The Honorable Avril Haines

Okay, but just to be clear, because I think from my perspective, what I’ve seen is actually an intrinsic motivation to do something to help. In other words, not a focus on their own rights, but just not connecting it, per se, to national as opposed to global.



Mr. C.J. Chivers

Certainly not connecting it to national, to the national ideal or to the idea of being an American. I do see a lot of people who go out and do things, you know, like beach clean-ups or work in our food kitchens in our town or are active in their churches. I do see that, but it's actually declared that that's acting local. They actually will pull that away from the idea of a nation. That's about their own community, and it's explicit.

The Honorable Avril Haines

Okay, but not necessarily transactional in that context, right? In other words, not helping their local community simply because it's something for their resume or because they're required to do it; but actually, caring about their local community?

Mr. C. J. Chivers

Well, the people who I see who are doing community service, both transactionally to polish up an application or resume, or because, you know, a lot of surfers are really active in beach clean-ups and in their community. In both cases, whether it's transactional or not, it's tied to the idea of their village or their town or their city. It's very much liked the idea of local-voring; how you eat. It has an ideal that is explicitly not national.

The Honorable Avril Haines

Yeah. Okay.

And, Dr. Cohn, I think both in response to what I've just said but let me just add a little bit more for you. Which is, essentially, to the extent it is consistent with what you've seen as well, I guess one of the questions is -- and I'm really held by your description of the experience you had in the defense department looking at the culture of women in Special Forces, and



thinking through how do you actually change that culture by replacing it with something else? And I think one of the key questions is how do we actually connect to the extent that there is that intrinsic motivation; that intrinsic motivation to a citizenship piece to a nation interest?

Dr. Lindsay Cohn

I wish I had a really easy, good answer for you on that. The first thing I would say is that yes, your experience comports with most of the evidence that I've seen in that most of the polling, most of the research indicates that both millennials and Generation Z are interested in service of some kind. They do want to give back. I agree with Chris as well that much of it is more locally oriented, and that they do not seem to connect it much to citizenship or nationality. I think in my testimony I mentioned one polling item that indicated that both millennials and Generation Z are far less likely to think that the United States is the best country in the world, for example. In other words, they show a lot less of what we would traditionally think of as patriotism. So, yes, broadly.

And so, to get to your question of what do we do about it. How do we deal with that? This is why I think it's important for us, and Chris's point is, I think, critical here. It's about what community you serve and what community you belong to. And one of the things that I've said in my testimony was to the extent that the United States or America is narrowing the definition of who belongs to our community and who is included or broadening it that will affect who wants to serve it. You don't want to serve a community that you think doesn't include you. And so, if what we're seeing in terms of this sort of trends of attitudes and beliefs and sort of ideological or political attitudes and beliefs among younger generations; they tend to be much more cynical about the country. They tend to be much less trusting of institutions, of national institutions. And so, I think you've got a really worrisome trend there in a country that is both culturally and organizationally very decentralized, very individualistic, as Chris as mentioned a couple of times. You've got a trend of young people feeling less and less connected to that national identity, and you've got some political trends that are actually moving in the direction of



excluding people from the definition of that community as well. And so, I think that's, again, to go back to my, you know, "This is a larger societal problem," I think it's a larger societal problem.

The Honorable Avril Haines

Thanks very much.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Commissioner Kilgannon.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Mr. Kurta, in your oral testimony, you referenced the challenge in DOD's ability to recruit and retain women in the armed services. Why is that?

Mr. Anthony Kurta

I think, fundamentally, it's we have not been able to make the question service and family vice service or family. And so, I think as we bring in, both in the officer and the enlisted side, young women and hope they stay for a career, there often becomes, you know, a point where they decide to have a family. So, the question is can they continue to do what they are doing; serving, and be successful in having a family? And too often, we make them choose between one or the other. Not for lack of trying career and mission programs, permeability, in and out of the Reserves, a number of things that we do to try to get the conversation to how to serve and have a family.

I think that's the fundamental question. I don't, however, want to minimize the observations that we've heard here earlier that we still lack at the upper reaches enough senior women in uniform such that all the young ladies on both the officer and the enlisted side see



themselves well represented at the upper reaches. And then there is a little bit of the culture problem as well. It's not the inclusive culture that we strive for. We know we still have a long way to go there. You just look at the sexual harassment and sexual assault numbers, and you know that we have plenty more work to do. I think all three of those kinds of bracket mostly our ability to recruit and retain.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Does the research indicate maybe anything even more fundamental that women are saying, "It's just not for me? I'm just not all that interested in it?"

Mr. Anthony Kurta

Well, I think generally we find that women are less propensed than men. Our studies indicate that. That said, as Chris mentioned, you know, they're half the population; over half of that in college graduates. Skillsets increasingly are there. So, whatever those fundamental reasons are; we talked about fishing in the same pond. We have to increase the propensity of young women to join and stay in the service if we want an all-volunteer force in 20 years. As I look at all of the threats to the future force in 20 years, to me that's the single most formidable obstacle, because we've been at it for 30 years, just about. And concentrating on that problem, we've only had limited success.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Thank you.

Mr. Gonzales, with respect to youth awareness, youth programs, your testimony seemed to suggest to the commission that we're not thinking big and bold enough. What would you recommend to us as the big idea in that area?



Mr. Ernie Gonzales

Well, I think just from the DOD's perspective, or even on the larger scale, as I've mentioned that we are sort of stove-piped in how we approach military, national, and public service. It's been done already with regards to creating barriers between certain programs that, already supported by Congress and the administration itself, we don't create the sort of opportunities to merge these things together. Even within DOD and in my statement, I say that, you know, it's stove-piped with regards to how we approach outreach specifically with one of the largest outreach programs that we have in JROTC. And so, it's not surprising to see where the demographics are with regards to where these programs are placed, because, again, it's decentralized at how it's being done.

Same way with national service, itself. I mean, we should be figuring out a way to leverage what we're doing and work with all the service programs itself, whether it's National Civilian Community Corps, whether it's even the Peace Corps itself, I think it would be best served if they were informed about these types of opportunities. And in reality, I think they just need to know at an early age, just like how we sort of get kids involved in sports at an early age. I mean, we have to create sort of that information and then, in the end, they will realize that they'll continue to want to participate.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Great. Thank you very much.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Commissioner Khazei.



Mr. Alan Khazei

I want to continue to build off of Commissioner Kilgannon's question. Mr. Gonzales, I noticed before you brought it up in your resume that you served on the board of the National Civilian Community Corps. I had a chance to work with Senators when they created that, and I'd like to also mention they specifically put it on foreign military bases. And they had someone from the Defense Department. In fact, the first head of it was a retired general, because they wanted the connection between military and civilian service. I appreciated what you said, Mr. Kurta, about a rising tide lifting all boats. General Stanley McChrystal came to me with that. That's been his message since he took up the cause of civilian national service. He feels that not everybody's going to serve in the military; only one percent. And if we actually had a larger call to service, more people would join the military, because it would be more of something that everybody's challenged to do.

I think, Mr. Gonzales, you have a particularly valuable experience for us, because you have been in charge of youth outreach and you've had this cross connection and I really appreciate everything you've said. So, two things: One, if you have any further ideas, and you're also really good at like, "Well, the military doesn't allow us to do this." They put you on the board, but then there's limits in terms of connections. If you have any further follow-up for us or for our staff; you've already been generous with your time and testimony. I would love to hear more ideas, because we are looking at that. How do we create more of a universal system? It stands to think of military and civilian service as two sides of the same coin, but to this younger point. The other thing we've been talking about, and it came up earlier; selective service. So, we've been looking at should women register, but we've also been looking at should we think about selective service in a new way; as a call to service? Yes, still use it for potential registration for the draft, but should we adjust this or add to it or maybe have an additional box people could check? "I'm also interested in civilian service or opportunities to serve in public service: local, state, and federal government." So that it's not just thrown in the trash as Mr. Chivers said. You used it as a chance to educate your kids, but not everybody does. But to



really try and encourage young people when they turn 17 or 18 to think about, “Maybe I should serve my country,” what would you think about that, Mr. Gonzales; if we thought about selective service in a new way?

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

Well, I would say that I’m sort of still in favor of that piece. I think the fact is that through sort of awareness and sort of understanding, what we’ve seen in some of the studies that we’ve done with these youth outreach programs is that there is a tendency to have an interest. The question becomes what type of follow-ups occur after that exposure occurs.

You know, I say the same things in regard to some of our programs where high school kids have expressed an interest. But because of where they may be going to high school, as I said, we may not be there because that’s not a high-graduation rate high school. We tend to go to those that truly would have the right type of candidates. So I think that is where we’ve seen over the long term these studies that have been done, whether it’s through the Wilder Research up in Minnesota or the University of New Mexico working with the Albuquerque school district itself is that, in the long term, there are kids that have expressed an interest. The question is where are we when that happens? And so just informing them, keeping them engaged with selective service or at least knowledgeable about it, I think that would still be a benefit. And we will then be saying, “Hey, we have too many.” You know? It’s easy to select, and we would rather be in that situation rather than always saying we’re not doing enough.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Commissioner Skelly.



Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you.

You're still in the hot seat, Mr. Gonzales. I believe it was in your spoken testimony where, I think, you used the word anecdotal about some of the observations, recommendations; how you connect some of those things because of the lack of really deep data in there. I'd like to go down the anecdotal rabbit hole a little bit with you.

What's your appreciation as to how the effects or the education that is imparted through those youth outreach programs that you've been a part of? There's informing people who don't really have knowledge, and there may always be a blank slate or neutral with regard to a particular thing, such as the military and the opportunities to serve. Do you think any of those programs have the ability to dissuade people with negative connotations?

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

Yes. I believe that they have the ability to dissuade, negative connotations, only because now they are seeing and hearing and interacting with -- as I mentioned in my written statement, we talk about the fact that the STAR-based program, which was a K through 12 elementary STEM, science, math; the science and engineering and math piece was a delivery piece. The other part of that sort of outreach effort was truly engaging with schools that are nearby our military installations that truly did not know about what was going on behind those. I was surprised to learn that when we had a STAR-based program in Pensacola that the kids that were attending that program never really came to go see the Blue Angels, because of the fact that, you know, it wasn't sort of inherently a thing for the parents to think about. In this case, what we've seen is over time that the community itself has been more supportive of this type of engagement with regards to the opening of information and knowledge about what the military has to offer for their own child, as they continue to try to figure out what they want to do.



And so, I believe that that can occur and, you know, I have seen it where initially parents would write an objection to DOD sort of being involved with their kids, and over time that has changed. And even with our high school dropout or kids that are out of school, where parents have been very, sort of, against them wanting to be involved in the military, they saw the changes that occur based on relationships that they built with these military personnel from the National Guard and truly said that this was the greatest thing that could have happened, because my son or daughter was on this path to not continuing on with their education but found a way to say how can I give back to society, whether it was a military service, or as we tried to do, connect them to the National Civilian Community Corps because they were interested in national service that way.

So, I believe that that could happen. And it's anecdotal, because, yes, from a program manager's standpoint, I always looked at ensuring that the most dollars would get to those individuals and that, truly, we had to rely on feedback from that community to be able to sort of analyze what was going on. But if it were truly done appropriately, we would have taken the necessary dollars to do that national sort of data collection and evaluate how the impact was going to be overall.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you, sir.

Dr. Hicks, I'd like to hopefully create another side of the coin or at least round out what we just talked about with regard to influencing people about their impressions. In your submitted testimony, you didn't, I don't think, really hit it with your spoken synopsis of it, with regard to the military-societal issue of your big three; the second one. You mentioned about a Gen Z responding of one poll made quality the top concern with regard to what they wanted from their future employer. And yet, I believe you stated that folks see inequalities in the military as is manifest today. Mr. Kurta mentioned at one point in his previous question-and-answer sessions about influencers.



How do you feel that influencers get into the equation when the influencers are probably more sensitive, or at least equally as sensitive, as the folks that are a potential candidate for joining the military; when they see these inequalities and then those Gen Z folks, themselves, are actually most sensitive to inequalities and how that might manifest in the perception of the force and the health of the force in society?

Dr. Kathleen Hicks

You know, anything I say would be anecdotal really or supposition.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

I don't think we're going to be peer-reviewed. I don't think that Congress counts.

Dr. Kathleen Hicks

Yes, I haven't done any research on this myself. I do suspect the influencers in general being older. So, there's peer influencers, and then there's parents, et cetera. In the category of parents, et cetera, I think they're less likely, obviously, not being, you know, necessarily reflecting those same generational drivers are less likely than the generation themselves to be focused on those issues. So, if like Mr. Chivers I use my own children as an example, I would say their parents have more of a propensity to suggest national service and military service and patriotic values, et cetera, and that doesn't sing to them in the same way. I think peer-group influencers that's a huge piece of it, obviously, with any generation. So, to the extent that the generation itself is, and again, greatly generalizing, focusing on issues of equality and justice in how they think about institutions and how they think about where they want to go with their lives that becomes very important to be able to speak to that. And I think the military can make a case. I just think they would be far better off in trying to make the case if they could present the data, if the data sort of displayed itself complexion-wise pretty obviously, which is not the case at the senior levels today.



Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you, Commissioner Skelly.

We have a few minutes, so I'm going to do a lightning round for all of you on the panel. So, if there's any last-minute thoughts, recommendations, cautions that as we take on our charter if you'd like to share with us. I'll turn it over.

We'll start with you, Mr. Chivers.

Mr. C. J. Chivers

So, I'll give you, the commissioners, my sympathies. Because I didn't know a lot about this panel until I got here, and I'm listening carefully. And I read up before I came, as well, and your mission, to me, seems really challenging. No, let's not use euphemism; really fucking hard. Because you're trying to, as we sit here today, trying to separate the idea of service, or as you, Commissioner Haines, said, you know, people who have a desire to have more purpose in their lives, whatever it's connected to, from a willingness to spend 4, difficult, regimented, hierarchal, restricted years in violent organizations that have spent almost 2 decades now with wars that did not set out what their organizers achieved, no matter the party in power; no matter who's in the house and the senate or the presidency. And who often have leaders who have been publicly hapless; we won't name them, but you know who they are, or dishonest after a number of extraordinarily bad incidents; whether it's Marines United; whether it's been issues of civilian casualties. So how do you tease getting the people who want to do that, and there are people who want to do that, we know. They are about one percent of the country; from the people who



just want to serve generally. I don't necessarily see a coherence in what you're trying to do. It's not your fault. You were assigned to this, but it's pretty difficult to take the general willingness to serve from the willingness perhaps to serve the organizations that have the record that they've had over the last 20 years. So, you have my sympathies.

Dr. Lindsay Cohn

Well, you already know that I think you have a difficult job. I think if I just have a chance to say a couple of other things, I would re-emphasize I agree with Mr. Gonzales, absolutely, that there is not -- I don't see competition among the different types of service that you are trying to incentivize. I think all different types of people are available to the idea of wanting to do something good, even if it is partly transactional. I think maybe that's the point that I would leave with you is that any population has a tiny, tiny number of people who just want to serve, and they don't really care about the economics of it. And there will be a tiny percentage of people who absolutely have no interest, and they just want to make tons of money. But the rest of the people, the huge majority of the people, are open to the idea, but can't afford to do it if it's just awful, right? We in the U.S. are very lucky that we have recognized this with respect to the military, and we give them pay and benefits that I think are appropriate to the type of job that we're asking them to do. I don't think that we've necessarily recognized that with respect to the other types of service that you guys are looking at.

But I definitely think that increasing awareness of the vast array of opportunities that people have to do something, you are going to find that people want to serve but some people want to serve in the Peace Corps and some people want to go into the civil service and some people want to go into the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and some people want to go into the military. And I don't think you'll have a lot of problems with people saying, "Oh, well, if I can do this, then I don't want to go into the military." So, I don't see competition there. But in general, again, just the issue of, I know I sound like a broke record, inclusiveness;



the community needs to include people if you want them to serve the community. If they don't feel like it's their community, they will not serve it.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Mr. Gonzales.

Mr. Ernie Gonzales

Well, in my written statement, I did make some sort of out-of-the-box, radical recommendations with regards to how policy and resources should be restructured, especially within DOD. But it's sort of interesting that when I first got into my job, there used to be a federal interagency, a group that focused on national and community service. And it was headed by the folks at the domestic policy office within the White House. It raised the level of interest with regards to how the federal agencies could truly work together and promote, sort of, service; whether it's military, national, or public service and leverage the resources that were necessary to do so. And it was a great forum to have that discussion and to talk about what could be done. But over time, and to this time, now we have a commission, but I think that's the issue is that as a true initiative, I believe it needs to be a mission in and of itself. I want you to identify it as a mission and for you to identify the appropriate resources. Otherwise, it becomes, as I said -- it gets a startup. Over time, people say sort of say, "Hey, it's great." It gets eliminated, and then all of the sudden now we're in some sort of, I won't say crisis, but we're sort of having a discussion about it.

So, over the 25 years, I've seen the pendulum swing back again to where it says, hey, you know, something needs to be done. And in my case, my recommendations in my paper talk about, well, these are some of the radical things that need to be done. Eliminate the legislative barriers that prevents us from working with each other. You know, look at how we can leverage all personnel, especially in DOD, to be that type of outreach person that could help with these



multiple contact times, specifically within JROTC, and you won't have this sort of Sun Belt look of where all these programs are. As we've mentioned, people are retiring and then moving south. The Guard and Reserve personnel that are actually living up in the Northern Tier are great assets. They may even be educators themselves. And so, we should figure out a way to access them to support our programs in that regard. And I would say, true, that you're already doing things to up-base access. The question is how much are we willing to do that so that you do look at creating sort of the career schools, or whatever's necessary? That you don't have to have them go all the way into the base, but just be exposed to getting through the gates and then allowing base personnel, active guard and reserve, to interact with those youth that never had the opportunity to come on board and see what it was like.

So those are my thoughts.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Dr. Hicks.

Dr. Kathleen Hicks

Thank you, again, for the opportunity today. I can tell from your questions, you all are very appropriately invested in maintaining the health or ensuring over the long term the all-volunteer force, which I think is incredibly important. But I would just close out by hitting again that that's half the equation when it comes to civil-military relations. And, in fact, the bigger issue in my opinion is the civilian side of the equation is undereducated, undertrained, undersized, and is not taking up its civic responsibility. And I think that's well within your writ, and I hope you pay attention to that piece. I have some recommendations in my testimony.



The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Secretary Kurta.

Mr. Anthony Kurta

So, thank you, and I just go back to our central question of the civil-military divide. I don't believe that we are in a crisis today. However, when we look at the risk, the risk of this question, which is if you take it out to its logical conclusion, is the potential failure of the all-volunteer force. We can't wait until we're in a crisis, because we could very easily be in a situation that is unrecoverable. So, the time to talk about this is now. The time to act is now. I don't know when we will be in a crisis. I don't know if that's 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, but marching on in the same direction without talking about this and acting could very well lead to crisis. And as you look at your policy recommendations, I would just say this and I go back to my naval heritage, but the ship of state turns very, very slowly. You make small rudder movements. The change in the ship's direction, sometimes it doesn't change at all, because the seas are too rough, or it's imperceptible change. You only turn that ship with large rudder movements. Now when you put the rudder over, the ship kind of heels. People get a little bit uncomfortable. Things are tossed around. You get everybody's attention, but that's the only way you make change. Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Secretary Kurta, Dr. Hicks, Mr. Gonzales, Dr. Cohn, Mr. Chivers, thank you so much for being here today, and for helping us take on some of these hard questions. We greatly appreciate it. We are going to let you go now, and we're going to the public testimony of this hearing. You



are welcome to stay. We have seats in the front row if you would like to continue to be part of the hearing.

The commission is committed to transparency and openness with the public. In keeping with these principles, the commission intends to provide the public with an opportunity to deliver public comments during our hearings.

Oh, I'm sorry. If you guys want to stay, you can. If not, you are welcome to leave. We're going to have witnesses behind you all. I'm sorry for not being clear.

Let me start again. As a reminder, in order to provide the greatest opportunity for as many participants to offer a comment as would like, public comments are limited to a 2-minute period per person. As noted on our website, signup for public comments took place between the opening of registration and the start of the hearing. When you signed up, you received a numbered ticket. To ensure fairness, tickets were randomly drawn. We will call out five ticket numbers at a time, and ask that when your number is called, please come forward, make a line behind the mic, and provide your comment. If time does not permit you to offer your oral comment, we encourage you to submit your written comment at our website at www.inspire2serve.gov. Additionally, if you have any written statements that you would like to submit for the record, please provide them to the staff at the registration desk.

I now invite the following ticketed individuals to provide comments, and we will start with 085, 086, 088, 084, and 089. During your comment, please be aware of the lights in front of me. The light will turn yellow when you have 30 seconds remaining and red when the time has expired. At this time, you will also hear the buzzer. Please introduce yourself to the commission with your name and affiliation before starting your comments. We can start with 085.



PUBLIC COMMENT

Ticket Number #85

Hi. My name is Li-Yon. I have a PhD in economics. I talked to you, this panel, before. I appreciate the time and effort in this area. Now your panel discussion is almost over, this may be the last chance for me to speak. Since you're looking for recommendations, I'll put in as the last word, I want to warn you society's in great danger. And the best approach is to restore justice fairness. We have to restore the real democracy, not a fake one, to have good liberty and freedom. And we've got to protect the people, because people are the only one in this world that you want to protect. It's not about profit, not about capitalism, or whatever. They can be faked, and they can be changed. The current capitalism is really phony. So, we've got to change, because now is basically, what I call, again, it's robbery-ism; abuse, murder, fraud, crime network, this related from local to federal to global.

The P2P, it's everywhere. And so, the organization, it doesn't work. They can hack into my computer. They can destroy my computer, and they can even have a computer sale person sell you a phony computer. If you return it, they don't give you credit. So, then I give you some points. The hate crimes, they use it to steal your house.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you very much, ma'am.

Ticket Number #85

And if you call the police, the police say they don't have it. They ask me to report to FBI, report to the civil service or FBI, they said they've been transferred to Baltimore. So, I want you to investigate all of this.



The Honorable Debra Wada

Ma'am, we appreciate your comments this afternoon. Again, if you would like to submit your written testimony to the commission, we have our staff available. We have other individuals who'd like to make their comments behind you, so thank you very much for your flexibility.

Number 086.

Ticket Number #86

Commissioners and staff, as I spoke to you this morning, I'm Dean Hesk, Colonel, Air Force (Retired), and a senior advisor to Service Over Self Organization. I commend the SOS initiative as a part, hopefully a big part of the solution, to lessen the civilian-military divide. We support the premise that universal, national service is needed, and we hope you will recommend a path to implement national service in your report.

As General Borland, our chairman, has testified he wants to emphasize that all Americans should serve our country. Since only a small percentage of our young men and women qualify for the all-volunteer force, we support the need to expand the opportunities for military service and training to all Americans. We do not recommend changing the all-volunteer force. Our program would add a military experience in noncombatant roles for ages 18 to 25 in small units of young people whose physical and mental qualifications would be only to take care of themselves. Absent exemption and given demand, they would train and serve in platoons of 30, companies of 100, and respond to the mission needs and the funding of the services, the Guard, the Reserve, federal agencies, and state agencies.

Trust in the military is a good thing, and it can be expanded by implementing this cost-effective solution to use DOD resources. If implemented, it is our recommendation and opinion that this program will lessen the civilian-military divide. Thank you.



The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you. Thank you for your comments.

Number 088.

Ticket Number #88

Hi, good afternoon. My name is Tori Bateman. I am a current Brother and volunteer-service worker, so one of those volunteer programs; long-term programs that would fall, sort of, like the AmeriCorps program. I share the panel today's concern. Some of the conversation focused around themes of American apathy towards foreign policy and military engagements around the world. As something I feel very strongly about, I think we need a way to increase public debate. I don't believe that some of the suggestions that came up and that have been coming up thematically in these conversations around allowing the Department of Defense and recruiters to increase their persuasion in schools would do that. I think a lot of the conversation, especially today, focused on presenting a very sanitized version of our military engagements to those populations of youth, and I really am not comfortable with erasing the impact on civilians around the world; our neighbors, people that we should be caring about, through whether it's civilian casualties or Afghanistan or drone strikes in Somalia. We need to be very intentional about making sure education is not erasing their stories.

More effective would be an emphasis on volunteer programs like Brother and Volunteer Service, which encourage community building through service in the homeless shelters, service, for example, with Pepper International, raise animals, things that build community bonds rather than break them. Also coming from a true to the Brother perspective, I know many, many conscientious objectors who are convinced of the moral aspect of joining the military. And today, I heard a little bit about how recruitment is a problem, because young people have choices now. And they're not sort of as economically pressured into the recruitment process. I think it's a really dangerous angle to take when we're considering economic pressure for a moral decision,



and I think that's something the commission needs to be very aware of as you make decisions. Thank you.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Thank you.

Number 084.

Ticket Number #84

Thank you. My name is Peter Jesella, a Vietnam-era veteran. In my 8 minutes, I hope I sparked interest in this commission's reflection on what I have to say about youth registering at 17. Congress allocates funding, unless it's a national emergency. It's strongly outlined in the justification for moving youth registration to the 17th birthday, and if Congress did its job and debated this in committee on the floor in the Senate and the House, both the cost and youth and adult input from across this nation would hopefully take place about this mission on civic renewal. I believe the cost of moving registration to the 17th birthday, encouraging high schools to take primary lead gathering native feedback from youth reactions, feedback at 18th birthday could come from the DOD recruiting budget of 1 billion dollars per year, because it would enhance better military recruiting, but also the nation's national security, and citizen awareness needs.

The bill in 1979 per the Congressional budget office projected an AmeriCorps-like program expanding to 1 million youth per year costing a few billion dollars per year, which Congress often seemed unwilling to support. However, with youth between 17 and 18 discussing the civic values of AmeriCorps-like programs, wanting to participate but unable due to the lack of funding that these youth could form a new voting block on this policy issue to target members of Congress that are unwilling to fund the billions needed, supporting candidates that do, and then show some success in removing the non-supporters from Congress. It would be



more agreeable towards a future Congress to look at the cost-benefit analysis of staying in office or not and supporting funding for 1 million per year of youth.

We are a corps-type program. When President Obama gave his first speech to Congress, he called for a legislative enhancement to AmeriCorps and to the Department of the Corporation for National and Community Service. A democratic Congress quickly passed these enhancements into law without any additional funding. Six months later, when funding requests were finally reviewed, only a small increase was done.

The Honorable Debra Wada

We'd be happy to take your written statement for the record, so if you could share it with our staff, we'd greatly appreciate it.

Number 089, and I also would call up 090 and 087 to come stand in line as well.

Sir.

Ticket Number #89

Madam Vice Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and the Members of the Commission, thanks for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Michael Smiths. I'm a public and trust fellow here in Washington. While a college student, I was recruited to join the Marines. I contacted the recruiter and applied. I was quickly turned down because of a preexisting medical condition. Shortly thereafter, I was recruited by the Marines again and turned down again. As a 21-year-old college senior, I applied to Officer Candidate School for the U.S. Army. I'm still in the process of seeking a waiver and turned 23 years old last week. I'm glad to finally have the chance to attend one of your open sessions, and had hoped to attend this morning's, but was returning from New York. I'm sorry I couldn't be there.



Instead, I want to share a thought about this civil-military divide and my own particular motivations to serve, which I think may be informative. I was born in France. I lived in Turkey and France before moving to the United States in 2000. Since that time, I've lived in Connecticut, Washington State, and California and in Massachusetts. I, throughout that entire time, was part of active communities, academic communities, business communities, and to the best of my recollection, I never met anyone in uniform or who had worn a uniform and identified themselves as such. When I went to study in Israel, I for the first time found myself surrounded by folks in uniform and folks who had been in uniform, whether in civil society or while running long-distance races, running beside and then past me as a community.

I quickly realized that this was something that I wanted to be a part of, but something in the United States. It dawned on me equally quickly that not yet being a U.S. citizen was something that was going to be an issue for that process. And that meant that in all of the states I've lived in, not once had someone suggested maybe it's time to apply for citizenship, to Mr. Chivers' point. And in all that time, no one had suggested that maybe the uniformed service is a career for you, as Dr. Cohn said in her own story.

This is, with the 0 seconds I have left, just to suggest that. It's one anecdote that as you make your recommendations as a commission, the aggregate of these anecdotes suggest that my case and cases of other people who seek to serve may have not known they wanted to serve, and when they do seek to serve, find themselves impaling themselves on procedural hurdles insurmountable for career bureaucrats, let alone 23 year olds.

The Honorable Debra Wada

Great. Thank you.

Number 090. No? Number 087.



So, if we have anyone left in the room who did not have their number called or has an interest and has not otherwise provided us a comment, feel free to come up to the mic now.

No? All right. So, I just want to thank everyone again for being here today and taking the time. For those watching us on Facebook, thank you for signing in. And at this time, this hearing is adjourned.

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