



## **NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND PUBLIC SERVICE**

### **Public Minutes of February 2020 Commission Meeting**

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (the Commission) held a meeting on February 20, 2020, at its offices in Arlington, VA. The entire meeting concerned pre-decisional and deliberative matters and was closed to the public pursuant to Public Law 114-328, section 554(b)(3).

#### **Attendance**

Commissioners present:

- Mr. Edward Allard
- Mr. Steve Barney
- The Honorable Dr. Janine Davidson
- The Honorable Avril Haines
- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck
- Ms. Jeanette James
- Mr. Alan Khazei
- Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
- Ms. Shawn Skelly
- The Honorable Debra Wada

Commissioners absent:

- The Honorable Mark Gearan

Staff present:

- Paul Lekas, General Counsel
- Peter Morgan, Director of Operations
- Jill Rough, Director of Research and Analysis
- Sandy Scott, Director of Government Affairs and Public Engagement
- Other Commission staff

February 20, 2020

**Business Meeting**

Chairman Heck convened the Commission at 0800 ET. All Commissioners, except for Vice Chair Gearan, were present for the meeting.

Chairman Heck moved to close this and other business meetings to occur on February 20 because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated. A motion was made and seconded, and all Commissioners agreed.

Chairman Heck then moved to approve the minutes for the January 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the minutes subject to technical edits and clarifications.

Chairman Heck noted that the Commission will convene in March to present its final report and recommended, thereafter, that the Commission convene periodically via conference call. He also recommended that the Commission convene for one day, possibly in July, as a final meeting before the Commission disestablished.

Recent Engagements

Vice Chair Wada reported on her attendance at the Friends of National Service Awards, which Ms. Skelly joined, as well as the Corps Network 35<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference and the Service Commissions Annual Leadership Convening. Mr. Kilgannon reported on a meeting with the Sisters of Notre Dame. Chairman Heck reported on meetings with Wounded Warriors, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. Ms. James reported on a meeting with the Reagan Institute regarding civic education and the possibility of convening an event with them in April as they open their new building in D.C.

Commissioners identified the American Legion, the Military Officers Association of America, Student Veterans of America, and Disabled American Veterans as additional organizations to connect with in the near term.

Mr. Scott provided further detail on recent events attended by Commissioners. He noted that Commissioners attended each of the four major national service conferences in the week of February 10. He noted significant presence of members of Congress at the Friends of National Service Awards and played for the Commission a clip of Senator Coons' speech in which he referenced the Commission's upcoming report.

Communications Update

The Commission received an update on communications and press coverage since the January meeting. It was noted that Chairman Heck published an op-ed in *The Hill* and Vice Chair Wada was interviewed on *Inside Edition*. In addition, the Commission has announced the report release date of March 25 and has announced the public stakeholder event for March 26.

### Legislative Update

Paul Lekas, General Counsel, updated the Commission on its legislative proposals. He explained that staff had completed work on the proposed bill along with a section-by-section analysis, redlines against existing law, and a chart cross-referencing the legislative provisions to recommendations in the final report. He discussed plans for sharing the legislative proposals with Congress. He stated that the SASC Personnel Subcommittee has scheduled a hearing for March 31 and preparations for that hearing are underway.

Jeff McNichols, Government Affairs Director, then briefed the Commission on engagements with congressional committees and staff.

### Operations Update

At 1000 ET, following a break, Peter Morgan, Director of Operations, presented on operations matters related to the Commission wind-down process. He discussed the status of the Commission's Government Purchase Card, its access to the government travel system, and its handling of records and archiving processes. Mr. Morgan also reported that the Commission remains within budget. The Commission then discussed options for ensuring that its research material and other documents remain available to the public once the Commission disestablishes.

### Legal Update

At approximately 1030 ET, Ms. Rikleen provided a legal update and ethics training. She discussed the Commission's responses to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, provided guidance on future public events, and conveyed guidance on appropriate discussions with individuals and organizations outside of the federal government. Ms. Rikleen then provided a refresher training on the Hatch Act and the Commission's ability to accept gifts from outside sources.

The Commission then recessed for lunch.

### Communications Training

Following the lunch break, at 1230 ET, the Commission reconvened for communications training. This was led by Mr. Scott, Ms. Schneider, and Public Affairs Officer Cristina Flores.

### Rollout Update

At approximately 1525 ET, Mr. Scott led a further discussion about plans for the March 23-27 rollout week. Mr. Scott and his staff discussed efforts to arrange meetings with members of Congress, the March 25 press event to announce release of the Commission's report, and the March 26 public forum. Mr. Scott's staff also discussed the Commission's efforts to communicate the final report across traditional and social media.

### Future Events

Mr. Scott's team then addressed events being planned for April through June. They explained that the Commission plans to hold a virtual townhall meeting in April and an event with the McCain Institute at Arizona State University in May. They noted that the Commission is

working to arrange additional speaking engagements at conferences and with Presidential libraries.

Mr. Scott noted that the Commission is scheduled to testify before the SASC Personnel Subcommittee on March 31 and that additional committees and subcommittees are exploring possible hearings. There is also expected to be engagement with State and local groups and further meetings with members of Congress and their staff.

At approximately 1630 ET, the Commission adjourned its February meeting.

Prepared by Paul Lekas, General Counsel

Adopted by the Commission on March 23, 2020.