

**Chair McCollum – Opening Statement
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. Military Service Academies Overview
March 2, 2021**

This morning the Subcommittee will receive testimony and an update on our Military Service Academies.

We welcome three witnesses:

- Lieutenant General Darryl Williams, Superintendent of West Point;
- Vice Admiral Sean Buck, Superintendent of the Naval Academy; and
- Lieutenant General Richard Clark, Superintendent of the Air Force Academy.

Gentlemen, thank you for appearing before us today. We appreciate you being here to share the current state of the Military Service Academies.

Each of the Service Academies house some of the best and brightest of our young generation. Many of these women and men will hold leadership positions in their respective Services for the next thirty years. Given this fact, it is imperative that they are well educated, not only on executing the military missions of the future but also are grounded in the ideals on which this nation has been built and the oath that they take to serve. Each of the topics we will discuss today will encompass how effectively each of the Academies is striving to achieve these two goals.

Some of the topics for today's hearing that I hope we can hear more about include:

- The admissions structure and academics at each of the service academies – and how our academies are reflecting the diversity of our country and preparing cadets and midshipmen for the myriad challenges ahead;
- Some of the social issues each academy is dealing with – notably sexual assault, racism, diversity, and character, – and what the way forward is for each. Congress is here to support you in these efforts.
- The impact of COVID-19 at each of the service academies and how it has impacted learning, operations, and the well-being of the student body, faculty, and campus workforce; and

- A discussion of maintenance, restoration and resiliency efforts for each of the campuses – West Point and the Naval Academy have buildings over 100 years old, and the Air Force Academy with buildings that are, on average, over 60 years old. The Military Service Academies’ campuses have not escaped the impacts of climate change and we welcome each of the Superintendents to share their concerns and ideas to address these environmental calamities.

We also look forward to hearing what more we as Members of Congress can do to help the service academies in the nomination process.

With that, I thank you again for appearing before the Committee today to discuss these issues.