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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
VICE ADMIRAL ROBERT P. BURKE, U.S. NAVY
CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
AND
DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
(MANPOWER, PERSONNEL, TRAINING & EDUCATION)
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
PERSONNEL POSTURE OF THE ARMED SERVICES**

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished Members of this subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the personnel posture of the United States Navy and our manpower, personnel, training, education (MPT&E), and family support programs.

READY AND CAPABLE GLOBAL NAVY

For over 240 years, the U.S. Navy has been a cornerstone of American security and prosperity. In an increasingly globalized world, America's success is ever more dependent on the U.S. Navy. As Chief of Naval Personnel, I am responsible for manning our ships, squadrons, submarines, and stations with Sailors ready to undertake the challenging jobs and tasks demanded of them. This entails recruiting talented individuals and providing efficient and effective training pipelines that transform Sailors into highly-skilled maritime warriors – the best in the world! My team manages the single resource that cuts across every warfare specialty, platform and organization in the Navy - our most prized treasure - our Sailors. As we stand on the horizon of a new Fleet with new operating concepts, we must also seek out people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, critical thinking skills and the mental agility to operate across the spectrum of change that lies ahead. This requires a personnel system that is equally agile and flexible, ready to meet the challenges and uncertainty of a great power era.

COMPETING FOR TALENT

While recruiting and retention are generally healthy, it is clear that competition for talent is steadily increasing. Propensity to serve has declined among young people possessing the requisite academic and physical aptitude necessary for service. The improving economy is beginning to impact recruiting and retention. We are in strong competition with the civilian sector and the other military services for the same talent pool. As our Navy grows in the years ahead, our need for additional highly talented people will increase, even as we enhance our ability to retain our current talent base and reestablish required Fleet wholeness.

It has been more than a decade since we experienced widespread challenges in the recruiting and retention markets. In the period since, the civilian unemployment rate has become a less accurate predictor of retention and recruiting behavior. The Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) recently concluded a study on the impact of various economic metrics on retention, and created a useful economic index, which is more indicative of overall economic health, relying more heavily on factors beyond unemployment, and more closely matching historical retention and recruiting behavior. Comprised of different economic variables and monthly economic forecasts, we consider it a reliable leading indicator.

Current forecasts suggest difficult times ahead. Several MPT&E metrics, which normally serve as the bellwether for change in Navy workforce behavior, are consistent with an improving economy, and demonstrate that the competition has indeed begun. Forecasts predict regional labor shortages in working age population in some states and skill-sets, e.g., computers, mathematics, and healthcare. Technically-skilled labor is at high risk for both shortages and

accelerated wage growth, based on a large number of anticipated retirements and few new workforce entrants. These labor market factors may pull Sailors in certain critical skill-sets away from the Navy and into the civilian job market. We must heed these market indicators and take preemptive action to retain key labor skills as challenges increase in the coming years. We are using these predictive analytics to apply modest increases in enlistment and retention bonuses ahead of need, rather than wait for the large reactionary swings of the past.

End Strength

Navy end strength and budget growth, in fiscal year (FY) 2018 and FY2019, will further efforts begun in FY2017 to restore Fleet wholeness, while beginning force growth. Following three consecutive years of declining end strength, we will achieve growth through a balanced approach of maximizing retention, increasing accessions, and ensuring the right Sailor, with the right skills and experience, is in the right place to meet mission requirements (a metric we call “fit”). To position us for success in implementing anticipated force structure growth, we recently initiated a number of important policy changes. We have effectively eliminated voluntary Enlisted Early Transition Program (“early-outs”) and incentivized early return to sea duty for career Sailors, to narrow gaps at sea and retain Sailors through completion of their service commitments. Despite aggressive use of all policy levers throughout FY2017, we only just met our end strength requirement, a challenge caused largely by a cut in accessions we had to take in FY2016 due to Military Personnel, Navy (MPN) funding limitations associated with Budget Control Act top line requirements. While overall strength is near programmed levels, the funded levels at the end of FY2017 left over 7,500 gapped sea duty billets because new accessions primarily fill sea duty billets. We also face significant challenges in meeting the demand for specific technical skills in our Nuclear, Cyber, and Special Operations programs, certain type/model/series aviation platforms, and in the Healthcare Professions.

The President’s Budget for FY2019 supports growth in accounts for Fleet manpower, student and training, special and incentive pays, and Transients, Patients, Prisoners, and Holdees (TPPH), furthering Navy’s commitment to fully fund Total Ownership Costs for people. Funding Total Ownership Costs ensures adequate lead-time for Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves, student training and special and incentive pays. This is critical to maintain good faith with our Sailors to increase retention and better position us to properly man the growing future Fleet.

Recruiting

Recruiting risk was moderate in FY2017, although recruiters were already experiencing challenges in meeting mission goals in an improving labor market, with decreasing propensity of qualified youth to serve in the military, constrained marketing and advertising budgets, and security clearance delays. We continue to closely monitor the labor market and other leading indicators, appropriately adjusting risk mitigation strategies to accomplish the mission.

Meeting an increased FY2018 recruiting mission will be even more challenging as market conditions continue to improve. We have begun to position ourselves to address these challenges by restoring 226 Fleet Recruiters and Career Recruiting Force billets across the

Future Years Defense Program (FYDP), and re-phasing the end strength growth-profile to reduce risk and stress on the supply chain.

Since 2015, overall recruit quality has declined slightly, as indicated by a decrease in the number of new-contract applicants scoring above 50 percent on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT). The number scoring at least 65 percent, necessary to fill special programs such as Naval Special Warfare/Operations (NSW/NSO), is also in decline. During 2017, we missed new contract goal for NSW/NSO for the month of September, and for the year. Nuclear Field shipping-goal also presents unique challenges to the recruiting force. The requirement and necessity for a fully-adjudicated security clearance imposes delays in shipping future Sailors from the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) to Recruit Training Command (RTC).

We continue to see strong interest in commissioning opportunities through both the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) and Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) program, as the number of highly qualified applicants vastly exceeds the number of available appointments. Officer accession sources continue to attract the finest applicants and graduate well-rounded, technically competent leaders for commissioned naval service.

Enlisted Retention

For FY2018 and FY2019, production of new Sailors will be largely limited by first term Sailor training capacity, making retention of every capable Sailor critical to operational readiness as the Navy grows. We continue to maximize retention behavior by focusing on retaining proven performers in the right mix of ratings and pay grades through targeted use of enlisted retention incentives to position us to meet current and future mission requirements. In light of growth anticipated in the coming years, we expect most ratings will find it difficult to continue achieving required retention. While aggregate enlisted retention remains high, Nuclear Field, Special Warfare, Advanced Electronics, Aviation Maintenance and Information Technologies retention require focused efforts.

Previously-mentioned changes in force management policies to retain Sailors through completion of their current obligations include adjusting High Year Tenure (HYT) gates for Sailors in pay grades E3-E6, discontinuing the Enlisted Early Transition Program, revising our Physical Fitness Assessment separation policy, and reducing Recruit Training Command (RTC) attrition. We also expanded reenlistment and rating conversion opportunities. Special and incentive pays continue to play a vital role in retaining Sailors in high-demand and/or high-investment skills under the greatest stress. Monetary incentives will continue to be an integral part of our retention strategy as we proactively address force structure challenges to meet operational requirements. As part of Sailor 2025, we will also pilot use of a merit component to enlisted retention bonuses.

Officer Retention

Competition is increasing to recruit America's top talent into our officer corps, train them with cutting-edge technology and techniques, and retain their expertise to preserve our competitive advantage in the maritime security environment. Generally, officer retention is

sufficient to meet most community-milestone requirements. However, we continue to face challenges within some historically retention-challenged communities, particularly among aviators in specific model/type/series platforms, nuclear-trained Surface Warfare officers, Submarine officers, and within Naval Special Warfare, specifically among Navy SEALs.

Active Component aviation concerns are primarily among the Strike Fighter (VFA), Electronic Attack (VAQ), and Helicopter Mine Countermeasure (HM) communities – each did not retain sufficient numbers of O-4 pilots to meet all operational department head requirements in our aviation squadrons. Similarly, the Reserve Component is struggling to retain aviators in in these same communities, as well as among Maritime Patrol (VP) and Fleet Logistics (VR) squadrons.

While Aviation Incentive Pay (AvIP) and Aviation Bonus (AvB) are the primary, and most-effective, monetary incentives for addressing aviator retention shortfalls, as with other communities, Navy is applying a combination of monetary and non-monetary incentives focused on meeting aviator career expectations and quality of life/service. Increases in statutory caps for both pays, enacted in the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), were well received and appreciated by naval aviators. The Aviation Department Head Retention Bonus (ADHRB) offered to aviators in pay grades O-3 and O-4 targets communities with the greatest retention challenges, including VFA, VAQ and HM. Aviation Command Retention Bonus (ACRB) incentivizes officers in pay grade O-5, particularly those needed to fill post-command commander assignments.

Submarine and Surface Warfare (Nuclear) Communities are working to retain their best talent by combining monetary and non-monetary incentives. Monetary incentives include retention bonuses for officers willing to commit early to future service, and special duty pays for challenging nuclear billets.

We restructured Naval Special Warfare Officer Bonus Programs to increase bonus take rates. We now offer two SEAL officer retention bonuses at critical career decision points: Naval Special Warfare Officer Continuation Pay (NSWOCP) to paygrades O-3 and O-4, and Naval Special Warfare Officer Retention Bonus (NSWRB) to pay grades O-4 and O-5.

Historically, targeted bonuses have proven most effective and cost-efficient in addressing retention problems in specific communities, jobs, and experience levels to retain high-quality personnel to meet operational requirements. Additionally, recently-implemented adjustments to add performance components to Surface Warfare Officer bonuses were very effective – we are moving to make similar adjustments to aviation officer bonus programs. We are complimenting monetary incentives with non-monetary initiatives, to include open communication and transparency in officer detailing, mentorship, and Fleet feedback mechanisms to optimize retention policy changes.

SAILOR 2025

To attract and retain the very best Sailors in an increasingly competitive talent market will require continued flexibility and transparency in our policies and practices. Sailor 2025 is a

dynamic set of over 45 initiatives designed to help us do just that. It is a roadmap designed to improve personnel programs by providing Sailors with choice and flexibility.

Sailor 2025 is modernizing personnel management and training policies and systems to identify, recruit, and train, talented people more effectively, and manage the force of tomorrow while improving warfighting readiness. The modern, innovative, information technology (IT) infrastructure we are building will help improve the way we recruit, train and retain talent, more accurately and efficiently assign talent across the force, better design and account for compensation packages, and generate a system that affords greater flexibility and permeability. Sailor 2025 is built on a framework of three pillars:

- A modern personnel system,
- A career learning continuum with modernized delivery methods, called Ready, Relevant Learning (RRL), and
- Shaping resilient, tough, Sailors bolstered by a family support network that fosters a career of service.

Personnel System Modernization

The first pillar is a wholesale modernization of our entire personnel system. We are creating flexible policies and additional career choices, and empowering commanding officers with tools to retain the best and brightest Sailors. We have already implemented programs, including the Meritorious Advancement Program, increased credentialing and graduate education opportunities, and Tours with Industry. We are also working to expand “Marketplace Detailing” pilot initiatives, overhaul the performance evaluation system, modernize delivery and tailoring of advancement examinations coincident with a rating modernization effort, and achieve greater permeability between the Active and Reserve Components.

Ready Relevant Learning

The second pillar “Ready, Relevant Learning” (RRL), is a holistic approach to training our career enlisted force, which will accelerate the learning of every Sailor for faster response to rapidly changing warfighting requirements in increasingly dynamic operational environments. Today’s legacy training does not take full advantage of existing and emerging technology for knowledge-transfer. Oftentimes, the skills acquired during accession pipeline training atrophy due to delays between receipt of training and on-the-job performance, increasing the burden on the Fleet and potentially compromising operational readiness. We are using the science-of-learning to transform the current training model to identify modern training solutions delivered at the point of need, better preparing Sailors to operate and maintain equipment at its technological limits, and meet rapidly evolving warfighting requirements. It will require sustained focus across three lines of effort: (1) career-long learning continuum, (2) modern delivery at the point of need, and (3) integrated content development.

We are currently in the first stage of this career-long learning continuum line of effort, known as Block Learning, which divides existing accession level training content into smaller blocks, which are moved to real-world points of need in the Sailor’s career, shortening initial

accession training time and making Sailors available to the Fleet sooner. Block Learning uses existing training content while we reengineer the training to meet objectives of the future RRL training continuum. To date, we have completed Block Learning analysis for 54 rating paths, approved changes for 25 ratings, with nine now delivering training in this new continuum.

The second line of effort of RRL will provide modern delivery of training by taking advantage of emerging learning technologies to allow Sailors to more efficiently receive training at the point of need – at the waterfront, or aboard the operational unit. These training solutions will apply science-of-learning principles to make training more effective, efficient and available by leveraging technology, thereby, minimizing the necessity of repeatedly returning to a brick-and-mortar schoolhouse. Over the last year, we initiated requirements-development for modernization of 29 ratings, and began identifying and aligning IT capabilities to support delivery of modernized content, ashore and afloat. Requirements-development is critical to the third line of effort of RRL, integrated content development. Here, Fleet leadership defines training requirements and aligns training content and delivery methods with Fleet needs.

Career Readiness

The third pillar, Career Readiness, seeks to remove barriers to continued service and improve Sailors' work-life balance, health, and wellness. Our goal is to enhance Sailors' career readiness by better developing leaders, and removing obstacles that negatively influence a Sailor's decision to stay Navy. The Navy is more powerful and lethal when we leverage and capitalize on the talents and strengths of the entire military and civilian workforce, and instilling an environment in which everyone feels valued and respected, which is a force multiplier. Toward that end, we have incorporated the One Navy Team concept into leader development efforts to make our force stronger, more resilient, and more competitive with the best public and private sector employers, equipped and ready to deter war and protect the security of our nation.

MANPOWER PERSONNEL TRAINING & EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

Recruiting, training, and managing Sailors in today's demanding operational environment using historical, industrial age, assembly line techniques of the past, is costly and unsustainable. To effectively combat current and emerging threats, maintain maritime superiority, and continue competitively recruiting and retaining America's top talent, we must move-out now with purpose and a committed sense of urgency to transform and modernize the MPT&E Enterprise.

Our efforts will greatly improve Fleet readiness, integrate pay and personnel systems, fix auditability issues, and improve service delivery through a holistic, end-to-end, transformation that will directly, positively, affect the entire Navy "Hire-to-Retire" lifecycle. Following industry best practices, we implemented a new operating model, restructuring the Enterprise around three fundamental lines of business:

- Force Development - the recruiting, on-boarding, and training of new Sailors,
- Force Management - the management of our force from first command to retirement or separation, and

- Enterprise Services - ensuring that Force Development and Force Management have the tools and resources to meet mission objectives efficiently and effectively.

We are establishing the *MyNavy* Career Center, a multi-channel centralized customer service solution that will enable Sailor self-service, streamline Human Resource operations, and provide 24/7 call center support. Three *MyNavy* Career Centers will consolidate the workload of over 60 geographically dispersed Personnel Support Detachments with better standardization, improved auditability, and significantly improved customer service. In early 2017, we fielded the first incremental release of *MyNavy Portal*, which continues to evolve rapidly with each new planned release, bringing additional functionality and integration to the system. Development of the integrated Navy Pay and Personnel (NP2) system is underway, with an early prototyping field test at Naval Station, Great Lakes, in progress since late 2017. In 2018, we will begin early testing of *MyNavy* Career Center functionality, and commencing a second, larger scale, test of NP2, which will build-out and test Commercial off the Shelf (COTS) initial operating capability (IOC) elements.

Combined with Sailor 2025 and Ready, Relevant Learning, MPT&E Transformation will open the door to new ways of managing the force, with improved transparency, connectivity, and customer service. Fleet leaders will see faster action, and more-accurate data on personnel and training needs. Ultimately, Navy will benefit from a more agile, adaptive, and better trained force, ready to meet an increasingly complex mission.

OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT REFORM

In conjunction with our Sailor 2025 effort to modernize personnel management programs and training systems, we are reviewing officer management statutes and policy to provide our officers with similar tools and flexibility to those we have already provided to enlisted Sailors. We have achieved a solid start within existing authorities. However, achieving the point-of-service support expected by our officers, and the standard of agility and responsiveness needed by Fleet commanders, requires a more flexible set of officer management tools. We can accomplish this through relatively modest adjustments to the current officer personnel management framework, while maintaining core Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) attributes. We are grateful for your interest in this area, and your partnership, as we work to modernize DOPMA to meet the future needs of all of the Services.

TAKING CARE OF SAILORS AND NAVY FAMILIES

Family Framework/Support Programs

In October 2017, the Chief of Naval Operations published the Navy Family Framework to reinforce the importance of the role families play in mission success and to outline five organizational goals for enhancing mutual support between the Navy and our families:

- Improve Navy family support programs,
- Better connect with, and inform, Navy families,
- Improve spouse training and expand our education network,

- Increase meaningful command leader engagement with Navy spouses and families, and
- Reinforce Navy families' connection to the Navy and its core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment.

Family Support programs are critical to enhancing mission readiness and assisting commanding officers, Sailors and their families in managing the unique demands of the military lifestyle, balancing military commitment with family life.

Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers ensure military families are informed, healthy, and resilient through robust programs to include, relocation assistance, non-medical and family counseling, personal and family life education, personal financial management services, information and referral services, deployment assistance, domestic violence prevention and response services, exceptional family member liaison, emergency family assistance and transition assistance.

Navy child and youth programs provide quality childcare. Navy morale, welfare, and recreation programs provide core fitness and recreation for Sailors and families to enhance quality of life and encourage life-long positive and healthy leisure pursuits. As part of Sailor 2025, we extended hours of operation at fitness centers and child development centers in response to the demand signal from Sailors and their families, which positively influences decisions to remain in the Navy and improves our ability to meet Fleet readiness requirements.

Suicide Prevention

Suicide remains the second leading cause of death in the Navy and prevention remains among our highest priorities. We experienced a 27 percent increase in deaths due to suicide last year, a rate of 20.2 deaths per 100,000, greatly exceeding the 2016 rate of 15.9, as well as the previous high rate of 18.1, in 2012.

There is no single cause, and no single solution, to this complex problem. We are tackling each major contributing factor at both the individual and community level, studying each death in detail. Individual factors continue to be relationship problems, legal problems, career and academic setbacks, and mental health problems. Sailors who have died by suicide felt a loss of belonging and connectedness; felt ostracized and alone; and lacked adequate coping and problem solving skills, and emotional regulation. Fleet training efforts have revealed that increasingly Sailors are responding appropriately when shipmates require help. We continue to focus on initiatives to enhance our ability to reduce suicide within our ranks:

- Our six Operational Stress Control Mobile Training Teams provide resilience and toughness skills for Sailors and their families, and tools to remain psychologically healthy.
- Embedded mental health providers within units, including all large deck ships and expeditionary units, improve access to care, remove barriers to seeking care, and embody a culture of help-seeking behavior.
- Waterfront clinics are under development in Fleet concentration areas and civilian resiliency counselors are deployed to assist in managing non-medical problems that affect Sailors.

- Reserve Psychological Health Outreach Program ensures that Reserve Component Sailors have full access to appropriate psychological health care services.
- The Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL) Program, implemented last year, provides rapid assistance and ongoing risk assessment and support for Sailors in the 90-day period following a suicide-related behavior. SAIL supplements medical care with non-clinical resources that address other life problems confronting the Sailor.
- Defense Suicide Prevention Office collaboration to implement skills training at accession points and throughout Sailors' careers and provide a strong foundation for follow-on training.

Suicide prevention coordinators partner with command leaders to enhance the sense of community and ensure everyone feels valued and a part of the mission. The most recent version of the command climate survey assesses the extent to which Sailors feel they belong, and gives leaders more insight into problem areas within the command. Our 21st Century Sailor Office reaches out to the commanding officer of each command that experiences a suicide-related behavior or death by suicide, to guide them to available resources and reassure them of our availability, support, and empathetic ear.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)

We are reviewing and evaluating the Navy SAPR prevention strategy, and training content, to ensure we are achieving the desired impact, e.g., knowledge transfer, issue awareness, and intervention skills. We continue to collaborate with academia, and other federal and non-federal organizations, in investigating research-informed and evidence-based prevention strategies aimed at reducing, and ultimately eliminating, destructive behaviors.

We continue to refine our response capability with investigations into suspected misconduct, and both criminal and administrative accountability for individuals who violate the standards. We treat victims with compassion, and remain committed to providing quality care, conducting thorough investigations in a timely manner, and providing a fair and equitable system of accountability to ensure justice and maintenance of good order and discipline. Through partnerships across the Department of Defense, we continue to execute a strategy to prevent and respond to retaliation by better understanding the prevalence of retaliatory behavior, including reprisal, ostracism, and maltreatment.

Eliminating Destructive Behavior

We are eliminating destructive behavior by determining the most effective approach for prevention and education to reduce adverse social and health-related outcomes. We have engaged a Highly Qualified Expert in the field of behavioral science, to better address complex societal issues that affect Sailors and readiness. We have also applied a metrics-based, data science approach, to provide clearer insight into the nature of incidents resulting from destructive decisions, and to better identify leading indicators, target prevention efforts, and accurately focus action. For example:

- We have initiated primary prevention strategies that focus on a continuum of excellence, facilitating productive behaviors that support a more effective warrior ethos.

- We will evaluate tools for assessing recruits to better understand their needs and how to address them effectively. Leadership is the key to carrying out the national security mission while creating a positive environment for our people.
- We have engaged leaders to evaluate tools and policies that build trust, unit cohesion, and a positive command climate, while developing the most lethal naval force.

This year, we launched *Full Speed Ahead 2.0*, continuing our efforts to prevent and combat destructive behaviors and promote positive Signature Behaviors by emphasizing dedication to personal betterment, development of team dynamics grounded in trust and respect, and reinforcement of Sailors' commitment to Navy values to uphold a culture inclusive and empowering for all.

Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention programs support enhanced Fleet, family, and personal readiness through aggressive prevention of alcohol and drug abuse. Substance abuse places lives and missions at risk, undercuts unit readiness and morale, is often involved in other destructive behaviors, and is inconsistent with Navy's ethos and core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. The *Keep What You've Earned* campaign fosters improved decision making for Sailors to protect their career investment by creating an environment that encourages and teaches methods on responsible consumption of alcohol, offers alternatives, and educates about the consequences of poor decision making. Detection, deterrence, and prevention are key elements in combating drug abuse. Our *Prescription for Discharge* campaign educates Sailors on the proper use of prescription drugs. Expanded urinalysis screening has increased detection of wrongful prescription drug use and yielded a decline in positive synthetic drug results. We are committed to providing Sailors with the support network, health care, and skills, needed to overcome adversity and make responsible decisions.

OUR WAY AHEAD

The Fiscal Year 2019 U.S. Navy 30-year shipbuilding plan released this past month, lays out Navy's overarching plan in support of the National Defense Strategy, referred to as the Navy the Nation Needs (NNN). The six pillars of the NNN – Readiness, Capability, Capacity, Manning, Networks, and Operating Concepts – must remain balanced and scalable in order to field the needed credible naval power, guarding against over-investment in one area that might disadvantage another. This disciplined approach ensures force structure growth accounts for commensurate, properly phased investments across all six pillars – a balanced warfighting investment strategy to fund the total ownership cost of the Navy (manning, support, training, infrastructure, etc.).

Within this context, this shipbuilding plan defines the framework for working together with Congress to attain the 355-ship NNN warfighting requirement called for in the FY2018 NDAA. Among the investments this growth will require are increases in the MPN and Operations and Maintenance accounts, to support and sustain the larger Fleet, which may include an end strength increase approaching 35,000, fully dependent on the associated supporting units and squadrons, and training pipeline growth. Growth in the force structure is funded across the FYDP, to include key enablers such as additional recruiters, Recruit Division Commanders and instructors.

Finally, Navy continues to aggressively work through the combined recommendations of both the Comprehensive Review and the Secretary of the Navy's Strategic Readiness Review, under a consolidated Readiness Reform Oversight Council, for improvements on crew manning, individual training, and career progression, among other things. These lessons are being applied, not only to the Surface Warfare community, but across the Navy.

CONCLUSION

Navy must continue to attract, recruit, develop, assign, and retain a highly skilled workforce. As we continue to battle in this competition for talent, Navy is well postured to support Sailors and their families, and increase their resilience. I look forward to working with you as we continue to shape the Navy to meet current and emerging requirements.