

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

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**ON MILITARY PERSONNEL TALENT MANAGEMENT MODERNIZATION AND THE
EFFECTS OF LEGACY POLICIES**

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Introduction

Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Gallagher, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the men and women of the United States Army.

The Army's number one priority is our people—our Soldiers, Army Civilians, Families, and veteran Soldiers for Life. All of the Army's personnel programs and initiatives are focused on taking care of our people, treating them with dignity and respect, and promoting a culture where every individual can not only serve our country honorably, but can do so in a way that allows them to advance professionally as far as their talent and skills will take them. There is no better investment to ensure the readiness of the Army.

We continue to focus on the *Army People Strategy's* mission and vision to *acquire, develop, employ, and retain the diversity of Soldier and Civilian talent needed to achieve Total Army readiness*. Additionally, three critical enablers from the *Army People Strategy* continue to set conditions for putting people first: Army Culture, Quality of Life, and a 21st Century Talent Management System.

Personnel Modernization

The foundation of Army Readiness is Personnel Readiness. New technology, programs, policy, innovations, and management models are transforming the Army's Personnel Systems and will provide our Soldiers and Civilians with more opportunities to excel, give our Army the enduring advantage of a transparent, data rich personnel environment, and improve our ability to compete for and retain talent.

The Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A)

The Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A) is the number one Human Resources (HR) modernization effort for the Total Army and it is fundamental to the Army People Strategy. IPPS-A is the Army's new web-based HR system which, once fully deployed, will deliver a single, comprehensive, data-rich HR and talent

management system to the Total Force. IPPS-A will integrate personnel, pay, and talent management functions into a secure system, providing Soldiers and units with unmatched access to their HR, talent, and pay data.

In September 2022, the Army plans to introduce the revolutionary capability of IPPS-A to the Active and Reserve components. Release 3 of IPPS-A will provide mobile access capability for self-service, business intelligence, and strength analytics tools, as well as automated workflow that will improve transparency of actions for Soldiers while enabling our commanders and leaders to make informed decisions for a readier force. IPPS-A will facilitate the Army's ability to better manage the talents of the Total Force based on Soldiers' knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

The introduction of IPPS-A coincides with the Army's execution of a systematic approach to achieving HR data cleanliness, identifying authoritative data sources and services, and decommissioning legacy applications and systems which will be centralized in IPPS-A and a few other key systems. This HR information technology modernization effort is linked to a future cloud migration of all HR systems, and is designed to facilitate the creation of a data-rich environment that will allow us to fully implement a talent management system to recruit, retain, and incentivize the very best personnel.

Talent Management

The 21st Century operating environment demands more from every Soldier and Leader in the Army. This environment and the critical human experiences of Multi Domain Operations will place unprecedented demands on Soldiers, pushing them to the extreme limits of their cognitive, physical, and emotional capabilities. Continued investment in acquiring, developing, employing, and retaining talent will keep our Army at the forefront of human capital development and performance while providing the nation with a multi-faceted team that can fight and win in unpredictable conditions. To maintain our competitive advantage, we must determine the critical human attributes—among those being technical proficiency—to operate in this environment. The Army

must continue to build a talent management system capable of acquiring and leveraging critical talent data—the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and preferences of its Soldiers.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 NDAA Authorities

The FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) provided the Army with new authorities to modernize the officer personnel system. The Army Talent Management Task Force (ATMTF) has implemented eight of the nine authorities granted in the FY 2019 NDAA. These authorities enabled the expansion of opportunities for the Total Force to increase its talent pool or to fill critical shortages in technical fields the current operating environment demands.

With the implementation of the FY 2019 authorities, the Army has placed special interest in the advancement of individuals with specific, high-demand technical skills. Of note, 17 Cyber officers received direct commissions, and another 87 candidates across multiple branches and functional areas are currently in the process. Additionally, 538 positions have been approved for brevet promotion. The Senate has confirmed 60 nominations and the officers are awaiting orders, with an additional 27 pending Senate confirmation. Brevet promotions allow the Army to temporarily promote officers to the next rank to serve in positions the Secretary of the Army deems a critical shortage. The officer receives the financial compensation of the new rank while in a brevet status.

As part of the Army's 21st Century Talent Management System, we have developed alternatives to promotions based primarily on time in rank. Officers now have the option to opt-in or opt-out of promotion consideration. For example, a Servicemember may choose to be considered for early promotion based on early completion of a school or a "key-development" position. Conversely, a Servicemember may choose to "opt-out" of promotion consideration at a specific time to seek an educational or developmental opportunity, or for a family consideration. These options give Servicemembers more flexibility to balance their professional, personal, and family priorities, while ensuring the Army has the right people with the right skills in the right jobs. Of the nearly 8,006 officers eligible to opt-in to promotion boards based on date of rank, 962 opted-in to be

considered early for promotion; 101 were selected. In addition, 96% (133 of 138) of the officers who applied to opt-out of a promotion selection board have been approved.

Army Talent Attribute Framework (ATAF): Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviors (KSBs)

The ATMTF developed and is implementing the Army Talent Attribute Framework (ATAF) to meet emerging talent demands of the future operating environment. Individual KSBs required to perform in the Army are identified through a comprehensive Army-wide job analysis and matched with individual assessments to address organizational talent gaps and to enable rapid team building. ATAF will enable us to articulate assignment requirements, align talent to positions, and support individualized career paths as Soldiers profess their unique KSBs. We continue to refine the framework to include the common KSB lexicon, coupled with improved assessment of professed KSBs in order to provide a more granular understanding of current and future talents required across the force. This ATAF serves as the cornerstone of the Army's Talent Management efforts.

Assessment Ecosystem: Command Assessment Program (CAP)

- The Command Assessment Program (CAP) continues to expand and improve the Army's ability to select more capable leaders at the battalion and brigade levels. In November 2021, the Army completed the third iteration of the CAP and nearly 3,600 leaders at Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, GS-14, GS-15, and E-9 levels have assessed through CAP over the last three years. CAP has also expanded to include Acquisition Corps Leaders and Program Executives, Medical Corps Commanders, Brigade Command Sergeants Major, Division Chaplains, and candidates from the U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard. Additionally, CAP participants are offered the opportunity to utilize Executive Coaching under the Army Coaching Program. This program provides professional feedback to support the development of leaders and their understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses. When compared to the legacy Command Select List system, CAP assesses and identifies leaders who

are more cognitively capable, better communicators, more physically fit, more self-aware, and less likely to exhibit counterproductive or ineffective leadership traits. The Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military recognized CAP as a promising practice for identifying leaders who are committed to the wellbeing of those under their command, as well as screening for leaders who do not show similar commitment. While it is too early to draw definitive longitudinal trends, recent results from the Command Assessment Programs are as follows:

- **Battalion Commander Assessment Program (BCAP) –**
 - To date, 2,178 Army Competitive Category Lieutenant Colonels competed for battalion-level commands and key staff positions in BCAP. Of those, 1,900 (87.2%) were found ready for command.
- **Colonel Command Assessment Program (CCAP) –**
 - To date, 603 Army Competitive Category Colonels competed for brigade-level commands and key staff positions in CCAP. Of those, 511 (84.7%) were found ready for command. The majority of these officers will take command in the summer of 2022.
- **Sergeant Major Assessment Program (SMAP) –**
 - To date, 334 Sergeants Major competed for brigade-level Command Sergeant Major (CSM) positions. Of those, 287 (86%) were found ready and will fill approximately 130 brigade-level CSM openings in the near future.

Talent Marketplace: Army Talent Alignment and Assignment Process

The ATAP is a decentralized, regulated market-style hiring system that aligns officers with jobs based on preferences shaped by the unique KSBs of each officer, as well as the talents desired by commanders for their available positions. To date, 60,000 officers and warrant officers have been assigned using the Talent Marketplace. During the most recent marketplace cycle, 68% of officers participating in the market obtained a Top 3 preference while 83% of officers obtained a Top 10 preference. Talent markets also enable the Army to experiment with monetary and non-monetary incentives to fill critical

positions and retain talent. Monetary incentives included Selective Retention Bonuses, Assignment Incentive Pay, and Special Duty Assignment Pay to remain highly competitive among other governmental agencies and private industry. Non-monetary incentives such as advanced specialty training, stabilization, credentialing, and broadening assignments are also available.

While the “marketplace” is currently the principal element of ATAP, gathering data throughout a Soldier’s career is critical. Innovations on objective assessments are providing the Army with valuable information about its people’s talents. These assessments, administered at various stages throughout a career, complement subjective evaluations to integrate talent data into selection and assignment practices. Finally, ATAP is embedded in IPPS-A. As we continue to refine our analytics and capture information about the Servicemember through assessments, we will leverage this data rich environment allowing us to fully implement a talent management system to recruit, retain, and incentivize the very best personnel.

Similar to ATAP, we have begun to implement the Assignment Satisfaction Key-Enlisted Marketplace (ASK-EM) to support Active Duty Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) being considered for Staff Sergeant (SSG) through Master Sergeant (MSG) assignments. On average, 7,000 to 9,000 NCOs participate in the market each cycle with approximately 30,000 NCOs receiving their assignments through this process each year. Unlike Assignment Incentive Marketplace 2.0, ASK-EM does not provide the unit the ability to vote on NCOs. However, we are working with the ATMTF to implement a two-sided market for the MSG and First Sergeant population once IPPS-A goes live. A pilot of this capability is expected by the end of FY 2023.

We are also exploring ways to empower subordinate commanders’ ability to retain talent in their formations and for Soldiers to stabilize in OCONUS locations. Currently, the approval authority for extending or curtailing OCONUS-based Soldiers’ assignments are managed at a much higher level than CONUS-based Soldiers. A CONUS-based Soldier can adjust their Year Month Availability to remove themselves from, or join, a

marketplace much easier than their OCONUS counterpart. We are exploring ways to afford OCONUS-based commanders and Soldiers with more flexible options to manage their assignment timelines. Overall, the vast majority of PCS moves for the entire population are due to separations, professional military education, and Soldier/Leader preferences in assignments.

Recruiting and Retaining Talent in Underrepresented Demographics

In an effort to increase underrepresented demographics into the more competitive branches within the Army, the Combat Arms Outreach—Engagement Team (CAO-ET) Pilot Program was developed and implemented. CAO-ET focuses on increasing female and minority cadet interest in branching combat arms. This effort seeks to increase the pool of diverse, talented officers in combat arms career fields to build a bench of enterprise leaders for the future. The concept is to detail a diverse group of company grade combat arms officers to conduct outreach engagements with cadets at Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs that have historically produced the most diversity. The engagement team discusses perceptions and misconceptions about combat arms branches; the importance of diversity; and the value of different perspectives, experiences, and talents.

This program was initially focused on the active component; however, through the pilot program we learned that there may be value in expanding the program to include the Total Force. Some cadets are decisively pursuing careers in the Reserve Component and the National Guard. As such, they inquired about ways in which the combat arms training postured reserve officers for opportunities in the civilian sector. The United States Army Forces Command provided officers from both the active component and the National Guard to support the CAO-ET pilot program; the team was able to address questions and concerns about serving in non-active component organizations. We assess that there may be utility in further developing this program to encompass the factors and variables that influence decision making for cadets who want to branch into the Reserve and National Guard.

Additionally, a key component of the Army People Strategy will be successful outreach efforts and our ability to build productive relationships with “affinity groups,” or those private entities that have close ties with the Army. The Army is developing and implementing mechanisms to efficiently integrate and synchronize Army diversity outreach and recruitment strategies to achieve optimal leader participation and acquire highly qualified Soldiers and Civilians from diverse backgrounds. The Army’s efforts include building trust and rapport with affinity groups, maintaining current successful partnerships, and finding new pathways to talent as technology, communication systems, and society evolves. Alongside the Army People Strategy, the goal of Army outreach is to create and maintain an equitable and inclusive environment where the value of diverse attributes, experiences, cultures, characteristics, and backgrounds of our Soldiers and Civilians ensure mission readiness.

The Way Ahead

The Army is pursuing four lines of effort (Acquire, Develop, Employ, and Retain Talent) supported by four critical enablers (21st century talent management, Quality of Life, Army Culture, and Resource/Authorities) to achieve a strategic outcome of cohesive Soldier/Civilian teams that are ready, professional, diverse, and integrated. The Army is successfully executing the Army People Strategy. The Army People Strategy moves the Army to talent management—to leverage the unique capability of each individual. For the first time in Army history, a people strategy is directing the prioritization of resourcing, policies, programs, and processes affecting the Army people enterprise.

Conclusion

We know that we must shift from simply “distributing personnel” to more deliberately managing the talents of our Soldiers and Civilians through policies, programs, and processes that recognize and capitalize the unique knowledge, skills, and behaviors possessed by every member of the Army team. This includes our ability to develop assessment methods and measures to evaluate individual attributes and potential. Further refinements to training, education, and other developmental approaches will ensure that every Soldier and leader can reach their full potential in order to fight and

win the Nation's wars. Every one of our people has unique talents and abilities they are willing to use in service to our Nation, and we owe them the opportunity to do so.

Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Gallagher, members of this committee, I thank you for generous and unwavering support of our outstanding Soldiers, Civilian Professionals, and their Families.