

NOT PUBLIC UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

**STATEMENT**  
**OF**  
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**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
**BEFORE THE**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL**  
**OF THE**  
**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**CONCERNING**  
**MILITARY PERSONNEL TALENT MANAGEMENT**  
**ON**  
**8 FEB 2022**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Chair Speier, Ranking Member Gallagher, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to provide an overview on Marine Corps' talent management and personnel policies and initiatives.

## **TALENT MANAGEMENT**

### **Background**

Your Marines are the centerpiece of the Marine Corps – always have been, always will be. Our highest priority is recruiting, developing, and retaining elite warriors with increasing mental toughness, initiative, and intelligence, culminating in the aggressiveness and lethality to fight and win. Force Design 2030 is not possible without the continued excellence of our Marines. That is why the Commandant of the Marine Corps recently released Talent Management 2030 (TM2030) - the strategic plan for modernizing Marine Corps talent management. Like Force Design, TM2030's foundational objective is to create a more lethal and capable force for the future fight and for our nation.

I know many members of this subcommittee are familiar with the Commandant's TM concept and its foundational tenets: Marines are individuals, not inventory; talents can be identified and developed; matching talents to duties maximizes performance; incentives power the system; there is always a boat space for talent; and data drives decision making.

This concept is an attempt to implement many of the authorities Congress has given to us in a coherent, holistic approach. We are grateful to the Congress and the subcommittee for these tools.

I am pleased to bring to you today a small snapshot of many of the programs and initiatives we are executing today to realize the concept for your Marines. We continue to adapt and learn, and I am sure, with your assistance, we'll be able to meet our objectives under TM 2030.

The Marine Corps has been in the talent management business since its creation, but today we face a modern challenge in a dynamic competition for talent. We have always strived to recruit and retain the best and brightest of our Nation's youth and have proven very successful at meeting our recruiting and retention goals with the right Marines, in the right billets, at the right time; and with a force representative of the American people – a force that is now over 43% diverse. However, the legacy personnel system under which we have been operating was designed in the industrial era with assumptions about human capital (which are now superseded by modern technological advantages of the information age). While improved upon over the years, this system is not well suited for the cultural and technological changes of today's world and tomorrow's Marines.

TM2030 describes a fundamental redesign of this system, empowered by the new statutory authorities provided by Congress, at a critical juncture for change. It details how the Marine Corps will implement new models for recruiting and retaining talent, modernize an assignments process consistent with our warfighting philosophy, introduce new measures to increase career flexibility, and optimize access to modern digital tools, processes, and analytics, consistent with industry standards. The vision for TM2030 is a transparent, collaborative, data-driven, and commander-focused system to manage and improve talent. It will better focus on the individual talents of each Marine. It will empower Marines and improve transparency, objectivity, and flexibility in their careers. With a modernized talent management system, we will better harness, develop, and compete for the unique skills and strengths demanded of Marines. Victory in the competition for talent is a Marine Corps with improved performance and lethality in combat, and a force that fulfills our Congressional mandate to be 'most ready when the Nation is least ready,' today and on the battlefields of the future.

Like Force Design, TM2030 will be a multi-year effort – a service-wide strategic design process that we have already begun to execute. While 2025 is the objective for full implementation, we are developing and introducing initiatives now to ensure we can meet the requirements of Force Design as soon as possible. Some of our initiatives were already underway prior to formal publication of TM2030; some of the new initiatives will require more time to ensure successful execution. It is important to note the significant delay and disruption a full-year Continuing Resolution will have on our efforts. We ask for your support for predictable funding at this critical time.

As we embark on this new strategic landscape, we will not allow for the real impacts of life and service to our Corps on families to be a blind-spot; our fighting effectiveness is not just built in unit training, it is supported and maintained with a Marine's support structure at home and within their communities. The talented force will have all the markers of the current Marine Corps – Marines in specialties, with specialty skills that contribute to the fighting effectiveness of our Corps. These talented Marines rely on the institution to provide them, their families, and, often times, their communities with stability. As mentioned throughout TM2030 – talent management is not just managing exquisite skills – talent management is also deeply connected to the life a Marine builds when not training with their unit. To that end, we recognize the importance of Marine and family stability and support as a major line-of-effort for successfully achieving our talent management goals.

One of our first actions after publication of TM2030 was to leverage strategic-minded innovators to think through our talent management issues and provide resource-informed planning to organizational change. This group reports directly to the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, but is co-located with the Marine Corps service personnel chief at Manpower & Reserve Affairs in Quantico for optimal effectiveness. The Talent Management Strategy Group (TMX) will

be the leading organization to challenge orthodoxy and create an intellectual environment of strategic talent management.

Currently, we have distilled TM2030 goals into three key lines of effort within the human resource enterprise: (1) Build and retain the talented force; (2) Manage and develop the talented force, and (3) Inform and interface with the talented force. The Marine Corps' strategic advantage remains deeply entwined with the development that occurs as each Marine earns the title, and is developed within our ranks. The modernization of our human resource enterprise in order to recruit, develop, and retain talent has many tasks ahead; I highlight a few of the major ones we are implementing and others we are studying for possible use in the future:

### **Build and Retain**

Mature the Force – As outlined in TM2030, the design of the Marine Corps for the 21st century requires a force of Marines possessing the maturity and capability to decide and act without the centralized leadership structures of recent conflicts. We view maturing the force as a call to action for retaining more experienced Marines, always making room for the most talented Marines in our ranks, and finding mature citizens to serve our Corps. The matrix for success in maturing the force is currently under study and experimentation—with an emphasis on retention. As we fully develop the requirement for a more mature warfighter, the manpower actions will be implemented and the design process will take effect.

Improving initial MOS assignment – We are developing a better, more predictive, data-driven matching tool that will optimally align applicant interest, Primary Military Occupational Skill (PMOS) skill requirements, and the needs of the Marine Corps. By using our new Marine Corps Occupational Skills Matching (MCOSM) tool for enlisted Marines and Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test (CCAT) for Marine officers, we plan to better align a person's interests and talents with the needs of the service. Potential applications for MCOSM extend beyond accessions, and we

plan to utilize it to assist in PMOS classifications and career retention. The overarching goal of MCOSM is to better align Marine's interests and skills in order to leverage talents to improve performance and thus increase their satisfaction and, ultimately, total Marine Corps retention.

Retention Prediction Network (RPN) – We are currently developing the RPN, a program used to identify potential recruit's likeliness to join and continue to serve through their first enlistment and beyond. The objective is to provide a new tool to help ensure we recruit the right individuals to the Marine Corps, with the right attitude for service, and the known willingness to see through the challenges of earning the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor. We are planning on making MCOSM and RPN operational in FY25.

Psychological screenings – Our Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) is a tool the Marine Corps is using to help identify a recruit's potential for service in the Marine Corps. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery provides details on a person's cognitive aptitude for service, but in the 21st century, we need more information to capitalize on better analysis, to understand the force we are recruiting and expecting to confront and defeat our adversaries. TAPAS will help us better understand the personality and character attributes of potential Marines. This program works in direct relation with MCOSM and RPN to provide a better and more holistic perspective on our Marines, and the sharing of this data with a Marine's future command team will ultimately provide for a better informed and aware leadership structure around every American who joins our Corps.

CCAT is similar to the newly developed TAPAS; it is designed to assess a Marine officer's aptitudes and traits in order to better align them to PMOS placement at The Basic School. In concert with the other assessment tools, CCAT will begin to place Marines of diverse backgrounds into occupational specialties across the warfighting functions of the Marine Corps. The end state of this effort will be a talented Marine placed into a specialty most aligned to their natural talents and

traits, with an expected benefit of rapid growth of skill and maturity – ultimately resulting in a higher retention of Marine officers of higher skill.

Lateral Entry (Pilot Program) – In TM2030, the Commandant made known his intent to provide “an open door for exceptionally talented Americans who wish to join the Marine Corps, allowing them to laterally enter at a rank appropriate to their education, experience, and ability.” Such an open door would “be limited and primarily reserved for recruiting highly qualified applicants in select specialties, not used as a means to recruit en masse.” Currently, the Marine Corps is exploring courses of action to make use of the statutory authorities Congress has given us to open that door, by offering constructive service credit to officer candidates who possess graduate-level education, certifications, and experience in certain high-demand career fields. Furthermore, the scope and accession model will be open to prior-service recruitment – capitalizing on those Marines that left service as a non-commissioned officer, earned a degree or gained extensive experience, ultimately invited back to service as a senior non-commissioned officer or officer.

### **Manage and Develop**

Talent Marketplace – Our Talent Management Engagement Portal (TMEP) seeks to modernize the current assignments system with a transparent, data-based environment that allow Marines, commands, and headquarters elements to collaborate on the assignments process. At full integration, it will use advanced analytics and Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning elements to support a market-style assignment system. It will allow for more informed career decisions throughout a Marine’s career with information on billet availability, popularity, comparative assessments, and other information. Currently, this information is stored in several separate legacy systems, which limit transparency and ease of use. TMEP will solve these data management

challenges. Through an agile development approach backed by necessary resourcing, we will have a fully operational talent marketplace fielded to the fleet – at speed.

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Flexibility – PCS moves, while essential, are disruptive to Marines and their families, impact spousal employment and child and family education, and can create financial distress. TM2030 seeks to increase PCS flexibility with the ultimate goal of reducing the number of moves in a Marines career. This flexibility must be balanced, however, with both the needs of the individual Marine’s career and those of the Marine Corps. We are currently executing policies to gain PCS flexibility and efficiencies, e.g., reassigning locally when a career enhancing billet is available or using distributed learning rather than PCS for education. An overarching goal of TM2030 is to enhance choice and decision-making for Marines in their career progression.

360 Degree Leadership Review Program – The goal of this initiative is to improve leadership effectiveness by identifying blind spots and areas of improvement for personal growth. It will use an industry-developed, researched-backed tool that ultimately will help leaders identify their strengths and weaknesses through honest feedback from their supervisors, peers, and subordinates. An initial pilot of the program is scheduled for execution in 2022, with expansion to wider populations through 2023.

Junior Enlisted Performance Evaluation System (JEPES) –JEPES provides a single evaluation framework to recognize and reward talented, high performing Marines for both promotion and retention. JEPES has been in use for just over a year and uses primarily (75%) objective data that a Marine can directly influence, such as mental agility, warfighting, and physical toughness, while still allowing for command input (25%) on important intangibles such as character and ability to lead. It empowers our Marines by allowing them to review their promotion scores and performance evaluations on a web-based application, including access via mobile device.



Additionally, it provides Marines their relative ranking amongst their peers for each of their objective scores such as rifle range, physical fitness test, combat fitness test, education, and martial arts. JEPES is already operational fleet-wide for performance evaluation and promotion. Beginning in the spring of 2022, JEPES scores will be incorporated as objective measures for use in our first term reenlistment process. Additionally, throughout 2022, we will continue our work to further capture MOS-specific warfighting skills and qualifications.

Promotion Opt Out – We appreciate this statutory authority provided by Congress; we’ve incorporated it into TM2030 to create or enable career paths to increase the diversity of experience in our leaders. This authority allows an officer to opt out of promotion without penalty, and enable them to complete a broadening assignment, advanced education, another assignment of significant value to the Marine Corps, or a career progression requirement delayed by the assignment or education. This authority will be implemented in our FY24 promotion boards, which are executed in this calendar year.

Staff Career Track – We are exploring methods to better retain our talented officers who do not have the opportunity or desire to command. Historically, the Marine Corps has focused on how to develop officers into becoming commanders with emphasis on command leadership positions and experiences. This practice is ideal for some, but not for those who do not desire or have the opportunity to command, but who still possess the leadership, skills, and experience of value to the Marine Corps. We believe we can better manage and value our diverse human capital by leveraging experiences from other services, expounding upon service-level self-selection programs, and modifying our current promotion model to provide more opportunities for a wider array of our officer force. This tenet will be important as we seek to age the force with more mature officers possessing a diverse array of experiences and skills for the future fight.

Parental Leave Enhancement – We appreciate the enhanced parental leave authorities provided by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2022 NDAA. Expanding parental leave has been a high priority for the Commandant as evidenced by his inclusion of it in his 2019 Commandant’s Planning Guidance. We should never ask our Marines to choose between being a parent or a Marine. The life of a Marine is demanding, and the stresses placed on our Marine parents and their families are considerable. These enhanced authorities will help to mitigate some of those stresses and are in keeping pace with societal norms and modern talent management practices.

### **Inform and Interface**

AI Implementation – We are modernizing many of our legacy processes and manpower models used to access and assign Marines across the Force. Our collaboration with Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory to develop our Retention Prediction Network will enable our recruiters to better prepare future Marines to complete recruit training and their first enlistments. Several of our legacy manpower models are undergoing a significant transformation that leverages advanced data analytics to produce our recurring enlisted and officer staffing goals. Even the legacy process we use to assign Marines to course dates at their PMOS schools is being explored through our Enhanced Shipping Model. Measuring the impacts of these initiatives, as well as others, is partially done through our Exit and Milestone Longitudinal Survey (EMLS). Using EMLS, Marines are solicited to provide feedback on personnel and service satisfaction at specific milestones in their careers: upon entry, at first and subsequent reenlistments, when officers receive career designation, in conjunction with officer promotion selections (O4-O6), and at separation from a component of service.

Virtual Boards - Our Enlisted Career Retention Boards (ECRBs) strive to ensure that the Service retains the very best and most qualified Marines in competitive occupational specialties.

The Service executed the ECRB virtually last year during FY21, for subsequent term or career Marines seeking reenlistment in fast-filling MOSs. These boards consist of voting members from throughout the active duty force and virtually from around the globe. In FY22, we have expanded the virtual boards to our first-term Marines as well. To further improve our virtual board process, we developed Digital Boardroom 2.0, a cloud based application that increases the fidelity and accuracy of the information presented to board members to ensure that the best and most qualified Marines are selected. Digital Board Room 2.0 has the capability to fully execute virtual selection boards which will enhance the Marine Corps' ability to execute boards in a distributed fashion while safeguarding this critical talent management process. The introduction of virtual boards in no small way increased and further strengthened our partnership and transparency with the Fleet Marine Force. This ensures that our senior enlisted leaders have a larger impact on retaining our most talented Marines.

Crowdsourcing – We are reaching out to our Marines and soliciting ideas from across the Marine Corps to gain a better understanding of our Marines' personnel policy perspectives. For example, we have asked for Corps-wide input on what non-monetary incentives would influence their decision to remain in the Marine Corps. Previous themes have focused on career development, assignments, leave policies, promotions, and daily living conditions (barracks, mess halls, etc.). We have received over 700 suggestions and are reviewing them for feasibility. Initial feedback is that many ideas focus on enhancing Marines' opportunities to attend career-enhancing schools and on expanding PCS flexibility.

### **IT Systems Modernization**

One of the most vital, but often overlooked, aspect of virtually every Marine Corps' talent management initiative involves its information technology systems. The systems and applications the Marine Corps employ now to build and sustain the most lethal fighting force possible rides on

decades-old technology than spans over 70 disparate applications and databases. Modernizing our IT portfolio will consist of consolidating these systems into a small subset of interoperable multi-faceted applications that ride on a single IT system hosted in the cloud. Cloud migration allows the Marine Corps to gain IT efficiencies and effectively scale applications, databases, and services across the enterprise to meet emergent requirements in a dynamic environment. We have already made great strides in migrating the Manpower Information Portal (MIP) into a single cloud hosted IT system that supports 51 applications, 5 services, and 8 databases to facilitate manpower functions and enable TM2030. The migration of the MIP to cloud services has positioned us to implement agile development practices to further optimize its human resource applications. As more systems, services, and databases are migrated and refactored to cloud based applications, we will be able to engage in wide ranging optimization and be postured to capitalize on the promise of artificial intelligence and machine learning. These sophisticated, cloud-based, mobile-device accessible tools are the norm in the private sector and the same must be true in the Marine Corps in the near future.

### **Conclusion**

As our Commandant has stated, there is always a “boat space” for talent. TM2030 is the strategic guidance the service needs in order to compete for talent in the 21st century. The goal of TM2030 is to improve combat lethality and capability – through performance – by better identifying and cultivating an individual Marine’s talents through education, training, mentorship, and experience, and assigning them to positions where they can best contribute to the success of their unit and the Corps. As we transform our Talent Management approach, we recognize the need to base our study and assessments on visionary design, yet thorough resource-informed planning. Adapting a service to a new model of force development and management requires a decisive commitment to change and a bias for action to succeed. The Marine Corps has always been a

people business; everything in the service has focused on supporting the Marine at the forward line of troops. TM2030 seeks to ensure our manpower model continues to support that Marine as comprehensively as possible by meeting all the requirements a Marine has at home and abroad. We are truly committed to a new and innovative approach to talent management, and our focus will be broad and have perspective – we must recognize the impact of family and community to developing our Marines into a modern and capable fighting force our Nation demands.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Semper Fidelis.