Gilbert R. Cisneros Jr.

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Mr. Gilbert Cisneros was sworn in as the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on August 24, 2021. As the Under Secretary, Mr. Cisneros serves as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for force readiness; force management; health affairs; National Guard and Reserve component affairs; education and training; and military and civilian personnel requirements and management, including equal opportunity, morale, welfare, recreation, and quality of life matters.

Gilbert is a former military officer, philanthropist, veterans advocate, and Member of Congress with national security experience. He was born and raised, in Southern California.

Gilbert enlisted in the United States Navy in 1989 after graduating from high school. He was selected for the Broadened Opportunity for Officer Selection and Training Program and was commissioned as an Officer in the United States Navy in 1994. After 10 years of service, he left the Navy and went to work for Frito-Lay. In 2010, with his wife Jacki, he started The Gilbert & Jacki Cisneros Foundation, focused on helping students find a path to higher education with scholarships and college access programs. Along with supporting education initiatives, such as Better Make Room, they have also supported organizations, such as It's On Us, to end sexual harassment and assault on college campuses, and the USO, which supports our active duty troops. He also founded The Cisneros Hispanic Leadership Institute at his alma mater The George Washington University, which not only provides scholarships for Latino students, but is also becoming a leading institute for policy issues that affect the Latino community. Prior to serving in Congress, Gilbert was a member of the President's Advisory Council for the Arts and a member of the DNC Finance Committee.

A strong advocate for our service members and our veterans, Gilbert served on both the Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees when he represented CA-39 in the House of Representatives. He championed language in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to foster greater diversity in our military officer corps. He fought to address the issue of mental health and suicide amongst both our veterans and service members. After the death of Spc. Venessa Guillén, he was invited to participate in discussions about the status of Latinos in the Army and helped to introduce the I Am Vanessa Guillén Act to make sexual harassment a crime within the Uniform Code of Military Justice. He has been an advocate for military families on issues of housing, child abuse, and exceptional family members. He has been outspoken about the military taking a bigger role in protecting our planet, and secured language in the NDAA to have the military begin to convert all non-tactical vehicles to no-emission vehicles. As a former Naval Officer, he secured language in the NDAA that will evaluate and strengthen the Navy's

process to not only make better warriors, but better ship drivers. He is also the co-founder of the Military Transition Assistance Pathway (MTAP) Caucus to support and advocate on behalf of military service members returning to civilian life.

Gilbert attended college on a Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) scholarship and received a B.A. in Political Science, from George Washington University. While in the Navy, he received his M.B.A. from Regis University. At the age of 43, after starting his education foundation, he went back to school using his G.I. Bill and received an A.M. in Urban Education Policy from Brown University.

Gilbert has received numerous awards for his military service, philanthropic work, and as a member of Congress. Most recently he has received an award from the United States Navy Memorial for his years of service to our country and he was recognized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce with their Abraham Lincoln Award for his bipartisan work in the House of Representatives on behalf of small businesses.