

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Chairman Fallon, Ranking Member Houlihan, distinguished members of this Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the men and women of the United States Army. The United States Army is amidst a fundamental transformation. We are adapting and changing capabilities, force structure and recruiting enterprise in order to recruit and retain the best talent for our All-Volunteer Army. We are committed to upholding standards, merit-based leadership, and are prioritizing safety and wellbeing of our personnel.

Recruiting and Accessions

I am happy to report that the Army exceeded its Fiscal Year (FY) 24 Regular Army accessions mission of 55,000 with over 1100 in the Delayed Entry Program. This success comes after deliberate transformation of Army recruiting and from the unwavering efforts of recruiters across the country. We are building off last year's momentum and started off FY25 with historic recruiting numbers. The Army is on track to surpass FY25 accessions goals and has already achieved 70% of its recruiting mission as we enter our busiest recruiting season. We are doing this without lowering standards or sacrificing quality.

The Army is continuously transforming and refining its enlistment and retention incentives to efficiently recruit and retain the best talent. Active Army enlistment incentives encourage prospects to commit to high-priority jobs for longer periods, building and sustaining readiness. Qualified applicants can select from a menu of options that include both monetary and non-monetary incentives, reflecting the fact that potential recruits are motivated by a variety of different things. This approach increases satisfaction for the individual Soldier while allowing the Army to more effectively meet its mission requirements. In FY24, the Army increased selection into priority MOSs by an average of 19% while paying \$200M less in bonuses. There were almost 5,000 more requests for non-monetary vs monetary incentives, and the two most popular options were Critical Skill Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) selection and Station of Choice.

While pursuing quality accessions, the Army remains committed to retaining its best and brightest talent. The Army is modernizing its Enlisted Retention program to remain competitive with the other services and the private-public sector. These efforts

include professionalization of 79S MOS Career Counselor and the use of current Data Analytics to inform quality retention targets.

As a result of our wide-range of flexible incentives, many choose to serve for an additional one-to-three years. In fact, during FY24, the Regular Army retained 62.5K Soldiers (114%) of the target objective of 54.7K. The United States Army Reserve retained 11.7K of 12K (97.5%) and the ARNG retained 38.5K of 39.5K (97.4%). As of 31 January 2025, all components retained above their year-to-date (YTD) targets. The Regular Army retained 19K (131%) of the 14.5K FY25 YTD target. The USAR retained 7K (108%) of their 6.5K target and ARNG retained 14K (119%) of 11.8K target.

Innovative Talent Management

The Army continues to modernize its Talent Management Program to ensure we have the right Soldier, in the right place, at the right time. To achieve this, we've implemented a comprehensive, data-driven approach and published an updated Talent Framework. This framework identifies 137 knowledge, skills, and attributes (KSAs) essential for success in modern Army jobs. It provides a common language for talent management and allows us to better understand the strengths of each individual within the Total Force.

The Army is modernizing its personnel processes by leveraging analytics, robotic process automation, and machine learning to optimize talent decisions while returning time and resources to line formations. This effort has spurred a more comprehensive transformation of the promotion and evaluation process, with objectives to 1) improve the quality of candidates selected for promotion; 2) reduce manpower requirements for operating promotion boards; 3) reduce cognitive load; and 4) increase the transparency of the centralized board process. Our approach combines the strengths of analytics and human judgment, using technology to support and inform decision-making, while maintaining human involvement as the final arbitrators of all personnel decisions.

Additionally, we've established the first Army Talent Assessment Strategy. This strategy will guide the development of an assessment ecosystem that measures the KSAs outlined in our framework.

Next, the Army Coaching Program provides leaders at all levels with dedicated, trained coaches. These coaches empower self-development, guide professional goals,

enhance performance, and help individuals navigate critical career transitions. Since 2020, this program has trained more than 300 Army Coaches and provided coaching to more than 6,000 personnel.

Leader Selection and Personnel System Modernization Strategies

The Command Assessment Program (CAP) remains focused on objective assessments and informing merit-based selection for O-5 and O-6 command, Brigade Command Sergeant Major, and key leader positions. CAP collects, synthesizes, and uses objective and relevant data to inform the command and key billet slating decision process. It provides individualized feedback and executive coaching. The program assesses approximately 2,000 candidates annually to select the Army's most capable leaders and inform their alignment against half of the field-grade commands and key leader positions every year. The top third are selected for command, reflecting the Army's unwavering commitment to merit-based leadership.

As CAP has matured, the Army has seen a decrease in the number of high-risk candidates certified for command. The Army is committed to retaining that talent and is transforming the Officer Retention Program. We do this by incentivizing high performers through monetary and non-monetary tools, incentivizing service beyond active-duty service obligations and by reviewing and modernizing the Officer Personnel Management System XXI.

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

IPPS-A is the Army's online Human Resources (HR) solution to provide integrated HR capabilities across all Army Components. It provides a platform to align with the Army's efforts to sustain a ready, effective, efficient, and lethal force to support the Nation. Next, the system will be modified to complete all movement order types for the Total Force, facilitating Audit 2028 requirements. Finally, IPPS-A projects to release one-time payments for Army military pay starting in FY26. One-time payments include Death Gratuity Payments, adoption reimbursement, and Temporary Lodging Allowance.

Within IPPS-A, the Army is transforming talent management, by offering a suite of features designed to enhance force readiness and improve the Soldier experience. Enhanced auditability is achieved by automating transactions and creating detailed logs,

ensuring responsible resource management and compliance with auditing standards. Total Force Visibility is made possible for the first time through a single, centralized platform for viewing personnel data across all Army components, providing leadership with critical insights for strategic planning.

With the upcoming integration of DD214/214-1 forms and automated one-time payments, IPPS-A will further streamline transitions for separating Soldiers. This widespread adoption and proven ability to process millions of transactions accurately demonstrates IPPS-A's progress towards creating a more agile, ready, and Soldier-centric force.

Transition Assistance Program

The Army's commitment to caring for its people through the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is multi-faceted and designed to support Soldiers during a crucial period of their lives, their separation and departure from the Service. By providing comprehensive, personalized, and ongoing support, the Army prepares Soldiers to become Veterans. During the transition, Soldiers and their families are prepared for building successful civilian lives through varied career opportunities from civil service to becoming an entrepreneur. We've learned that our best recruiters for the next generation of Soldiers are those who came before, the last generation of Soldiers and our Soldiers for Life. TAP is dedicated to supporting Soldiers as they transform into civilian life.

Career Skills Program (CSP)/ SkillBridge (SB).

On average, 10% of transitioning Soldiers participate in a CSP/SB. About 7,250 CSP/SB applications were submitted during FY24, of which 58.9% of the graduates were junior Enlisted Soldiers (E-1-E-6), 17.5% were senior Enlisted Non-commissioned Officers (E-7-E-9), 14.9% were Warrant Officer/Company-grade Officers, and 8.7% were field-grade officers.

The Army recently revised the program to ensure junior enlisted Soldiers receive the maximum benefits of the program with the lowest barriers to usage. While any separating Service Member may participate, more senior-ranking Soldiers and Officers require approval from the first General Officer in their chain-of-command. This ensures that funding is maximized by junior enlisted, the population who needs these career

enhancing opportunities the most.

Response to Reductions across the Civilian Workforce

In response to the President's Executive Order "Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative" as well as OPM and OMB's memorandum "Guidance on Agency RIF and Reorganization Plans", the Army has been focused on reshaping the force by maximizing existing voluntary separation and recruitment restriction tools at our disposal. Specifically, we continue to comply with the DoD hiring freeze and are finalizing a process to ensure no vacant civilian position is filled, and no new civilian positions are created, except in cases where exemptions are approved by the Secretary of the Army. In addition, we continue to support and facilitate the voluntary separation (through either resignation or retirement) of thousands of civilian employees from the Army's rolls via the OPM Deferred Resignation Program (DRP). The Army has also been evaluating its year-to-date use of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP) and determining the extent to which opening one or more VERA/VSIP windows would further assist in right sizing the civilian force. Our use of these tools aligns with the Administration's directive to streamline the federal workforce and ensure effective resource allocation.

The Army works closely with the commands to ensure our workforce can maintain the readiness and capabilities that the Army must have to meet its missions worldwide.

Conclusion

The Army remains focused on its mission: to fight and win our Nation's wars. To meet our mission requirements, we rely on Congress's support as we modernize and refine our workforce. This relationship and these investments in our people will ensure the Army's readiness today and into the future.

The Army's number one priority is warfighting—with our people being our most important resource. The people of the United States Army—these Soldiers who serve our nation, both in and out of uniform, along with the families and Army civilians who support them—are our strength and our legacy. Congressional support for our Army enables our

ability to transform our force while showcasing our abilities and offering opportunities to allow careers and Families to flourish.

Thank you for your generous and unwavering support of our outstanding Soldiers, Civilian professionals, and their Families.