

UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE PRESENTATION
TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: MILITARY DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL POSTURE HEARING

STATEMENT OF:

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Fallon, Ranking Member Houlahan, and distinguished members of this subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to represent the United States Space Force. Our Space Force mission is clear: to secure our Nation's interests in, from, through, and to space. This mission is achievable because of the incredible men and women who are the Guardians of the United States Space Force. From intelligence analysts to cybersecurity experts, space operators to acquisition officers, and more, Guardians defend our country and freedom to operate in space, deter aggression within the domain while maintaining security and accessibility for military space power and the next generation of innovation.

To achieve Peace through Strength, the Space Force needs to grow smartly in order to respond to the challenges of the space domain. We must recruit and retain the very best talent, anticipate and meet the changing needs of the workforce, champion their professional growth, and provide support for Guardians and their families throughout the arc of their careers. These are the goals we rise to meet every day -- to take care of the people who will take care of securing our country.

It is a privilege to share with you the continued work of the Space Force in ensuring the warrior ethos is the nucleus of our Service as we re-establish deterrence with a U.S. Space Force capable of providing combat credible forces to execute military operations in the space domain.

END STRENGTH

Space Force capabilities underpin national security. As we build our military to match threats to capabilities and stay ahead of strategic competitors, we must continue to grow the U.S. Space Force. These capabilities will also assist in delivering the Golden Dome for America and highlight the central role space-based capabilities have in protection of the U.S. homeland.

Additionally, the Space Force is actively building Service Components to provide dedicated space capabilities and expertise to the Combatant Commands, further increasing our operational footprint.

As our military end strength grows, we are reforming the civilian workforce through realignment of personnel to critical functions in direct support of warfighter requirements. The Space Force was created to be lean with civilians performing critical roles for Space Missions. As we optimize our workforce to ensure it is the right size for Space Force, our focus is on retaining civilians with essential expertise.

RECRUITING AND RETENTION

The Space Force faces a unique recruiting situation -- a smaller pool of eligible candidates with STEM skills that are in high demand in the commercial sector. Despite these obstacles, the Space Force exceeded its Fiscal Year 2024 enlisted recruiting requirements by 4% and is on track to meet our Fiscal Year 25 recruiting goals.

To shape a sustainable long-term pipeline of Guardians and ensure effective future talent acquisition, the Space Force is establishing a Recruiting Squadron. The squadron will influence and support recruitment efforts, while scouting and attracting top talent aligned with future missions. The Space Force Recruiting Squadron is projected to achieve initial operational capability by Fall of 2025 and will continue to mature over the next year to reach full operational capability with 27 Guardian recruiters by Fall of 2026.

This year the Space Force will also debut new marketing platforms. On International Space Day, May 2nd, planetariums around the country will begin showing a video providing viewers with a basic understanding of Space Force missions and the Service's role in protecting our everyday way of life. Then in July, the Elevator Level 62 Mobile Platform Experience will make its debut. This is a multisensory, interactive mobile asset that recreates the experience of being 62,000 ft above the earth. Visitors experience different aspects of life as a Guardian -- a rocket launch, navigating through space debris, and Space Force military and humanitarian missions.

Continued investment in the Guardian Recruiting Squadron and fully funding marketing needs are critical to attracting and recruiting talented individuals in this competitive market.

Because the Space Force is competing with a robust commercial space industry, a proactive strategy to ensure successful retention rates is imperative. That is why the Service is focused on fortifying conditions to ensure Guardians understand how they contribute to the lethality, agility, and mission accomplishment of the Space Force. Emphasizing Guardians' value and contributions as highly trained professionals and joint warfighters positively influences their decision to remain in military service and is why Space Force retention remains healthy and on target. I am proud to share with this committee that, at the end of 2024, overall Guardian retention was 92%.

MANAGING TALENT

The implementation of the Space Force Personnel Management Act (PMA), enacted in the Fiscal Year 24 NDAA, enables the Space Force to establish an innovative talent management system with flexible service options. PMA defines conditions for Guardians to serve on Space Force active status in both full time and part time work roles, providing Guardians flexibility to move between roles aligned with service mission needs. Implementation is now fully underway.

The PMA also enables Space Force to transfer Space missions currently in the Air Force Reserve to the Space Force. In June of 2024, the Space Force opened the first application window for Air Force Reserve professionals to transfer into the Space Force full-time. Following three selection boards, approximately 300 full-time Reserve space professionals are projected to transfer into the Space Force in Fiscal Year 2025. Future transfer application windows are tentatively planned for this summer.

Similarly, the PMA will enable the Space Force to implement section 514 of the FY25 NDAA which directed the transfer to the Space Force of the space functions currently performed by the Air National Guard. In collaboration with the Air Force and Air National Guard, the Space Force has begun initial planning for this transfer and will continue working to implement Congress' intent.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Space Force is focused on developing Guardians with the foundational skills and experiences needed to build a combat-credible force that will control a highly contested, lethal, and uncertain 21st Century security environment marked by adversary partnerships and the proliferation of advanced weapons. We are optimizing our force through implementation of innovative workforce development efforts for officer, enlisted, and civilian Guardians.

We are developing a multidisciplinary officer corps, preparing officers to address complex operational and technical challenges, to lead the Space Force's efforts to control the space domain. Simultaneously, with the introduction of the Vosler Fellowships, the Space Force has reimaged enlisted professional military education with a customized curriculum emphasizing agile teamwork and a Tactically Responsive Space mindset. The new fellowship model focuses on leveraging industry and academic networks, short-term training for staff, and a new experiential learning model to educate enlisted Guardians. There are three Vosler Fellowships structured across key career milestones, with each course enhancing leadership and operational capabilities while building upon the previous fellowship's framework. We are also developing Space Force-specific enlisted development programs, incorporating fully qualified promotions and codifying our foundational warfighting capabilities into our functional career fields.

For civilian Guardians, the Space Force developed a two-week pilot course to optimize civilians for mission readiness. The first course launched in October 2024 at the Space Systems Command, bringing together civilian personnel to gain better understanding of Space Force operations and strategic objectives. This program equips civilians with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively support space superiority.

PAY AND COMPENSATION

I want to thank you for protecting the increase in pay for our junior enlisted Service members when passing the continuing resolution to fund the government through the end of this fiscal year. Additionally, this year the Space Force will expand eligibility for the basic needs allowance. We also launched assignment incentive pay for extreme cold weather environments. And we conducted a special duty assignment pay review, implementing a new process to ensure proper compensation and improved financial stability for our enlisted Guardians serving in critical roles.

Retaining talent in highly technical fields is a priority for the Space Force. As a result, we've increased the Selective Retention Bonus (SRB) and secured policy exceptions to offer SRBs widely, based on Space Force Specialty Codes. Our commitment to meritocracy is reflected in the new military evaluation form to be fielded in Fiscal Year 25. It is tailored to the Space Force to ensure performance evaluations align with service-specific values, focus on mission accomplishment, and better reflect Guardian roles and responsibilities.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life directly impacts recruitment, retention, and the overall readiness of the force. The well-being of Guardians and their families is essential and contributes to a strong and resilient force.

The Space Force fosters a strong sense of community and provides support for Guardians and their families through various resources and programs. This past year the Space Force launched the Quality of Life Learning Channel, a centralized platform with key resources, including childcare support, travel reimbursement updates, and health and wellness guidance for Guardians and their families.

The Space Force was designed as a lean service. We rely on numerous United States Air Force programs to support our service members and improve quality of life for Guardians and their families. These dedicated support professionals have ensured access to fitness centers, childcare and youth programs, and food operations ensuring mission readiness for Guardians. This year, Space Force bases reached a 7-year staffing level high across Child Development Centers, filling 87% of current vacancies and reducing the unmet need by 71% since April of 2022.

Guardian health and fitness is another key component of readiness and resiliency. Critical at all points of service, this is especially true when employed-in-place and supporting 24/7 missions. The Space Force has operationalized its Holistic Health Approach with Guardian Resilience Teams that work directly with service members and their families to provide multidisciplinary expertise to build skills and enhance resiliency of the force. These teams have had more than 300,000 touch points with Guardians across the enterprise since July 2024. They are located at every Space Force Base, the National Capital Region, Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA), Kirtland Air Force Base, and a remote Guardian Resilience Team has been established for geographically separated units and remote Guardians.

CONCLUSION

Chairman Fallon, Ranking Member Houlahan, and distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you again for this opportunity to speak to you today and represent Space Force Guardians and their families. As the space domain becomes increasingly contested, we remain steadfast in our mission to secure our Nation's interests in, from, through, and to the space domain.

This mission is not just about technology, strategy, or capability – it is about people. It is about the Guardians who have pledged to protect our country, push the boundaries of innovation, and uphold the warrior ethos that defines our Service. These men and women operate in a challenging environment where precision, vigilance, and adaptability are not just valued but required. Their commitment ensures that our Nation remains secure, our warfighters stay connected, and our future in space remains one of strength and leadership.

We must continue to recruit the best, develop their talents, and provide them with the support they need to thrive – because when we invest in our people, we invest in the security of our Nation. With the right resources, the right policies, and the commitment of leaders like you, we will ensure that America remains the preeminent space power for generations to come.

The Space Force is not just preparing for the future – we are shaping it – as we build a ready, resilient Force responsible for preserving the United States’s advantage in space.