



**JOINT TESTIMONY OF
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**ON
“ALWAYS READY:
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A UNITED STATES COAST GUARD MEMBER”**

**BEFORE THE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD & MARITIME TRANSPORTATION**

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Introduction

Chairman Ezell, Ranking Member Carbajal, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your continued support of the United States Coast Guard men and women who serve our Nation every day.

We are honored to provide this joint testimony on the Coast Guard workforce and the investments required to keep our members always ready. Service readiness begins with the readiness of our people. In an operating environment defined by ever increasing mission demands, evolving threats, and aging assets, our people remain our greatest strength and our decisive advantage.

We appreciate the Subcommittee’s continued support for Coast Guard men and women, and their families, and welcome the opportunity to discuss the path ahead.

Force Generation and Training

The Coast Guard must grow by 15,000 members to staff, support, operate, and maintain the new assets funded through the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Reconciliation and improve readiness. This growth includes crews for our cutters, aircraft and small boats, medical and childcare providers, and maintenance technicians.

The Coast Guard’s recruiting and training enterprises will drive this effort. In Fiscal Year 2025 the Service exceeded its enlisted accession goal by 21 percent and recruited more than 5,200 active-duty members. The Coast Guard is on track to surpass that level in 2026.

The Service must sustain this momentum and convert accessions into lasting growth. We will do so by training the workforce with modern tools, updated curriculum, and improved facilities, supported by investments in Training Centers Cape May and Birmingham-Southern.

Additional investments in accessions, training, and support, as outlined in the FY 2027 President's Budget, remain essential to Service readiness. These investments will help ensure that current and future Coast Guard men and women, and their families, have the support structure necessary to conduct all Coast Guard missions.

Force Modernization and Restructuring

Modernization is not only an acquisition priority, but an imperative for workforce evolution and effectiveness. With support from the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Reconciliation, the Coast Guard is undertaking its most significant fleet recapitalization effort in generations. Continued investment in cutters, boats, aircraft, command-and-control systems, and sustainment capabilities remain essential to combatting the burden that aging assets present to readiness.

Modernization also requires organizational changes. As the Coast Guard aligns people, processes, and platforms to meet current and future requirements, the Service is overhauling its force structure and training pipelines to better connect our workforce capacity and mission demand to operational success. The Coast Guard is also developing specialized career paths, optimizing mission support functions, and surging resources to unit commanders to ensure they have the personnel and equipment needed to execute their missions safely and effectively.

Workforce Health and Safety

A healthy workforce is a ready workforce. The Coast Guard is strengthening education, prevention, reporting mechanisms, response capabilities, and accountability to combat sexual assault and the criminal behaviors that enable it, including sexual harassment. Our people must trust that the Service will address misconduct, support victims, and hold leaders responsible for maintaining climates in which every member can serve safely and with dignity.

Healthcare access remains a significant concern for many Coast Guard families, particularly those stationed in geographically remote communities. Timely access to primary care, specialty care, behavioral health services, and family support resources directly affects Service readiness and retention. The Coast Guard is increasing behavioral health capacity, improving access pathways, and leveraging telehealth and other remote tools to better support our members and families wherever they serve.

Reliable and affordable childcare enables members to report for duty, accept assignments, stand watch, deploy, and remain focused on mission execution. Similarly, members should not have to choose between serving at a critical unit and finding safe, affordable housing within a reasonable commute. Continued support for childcare subsidies, partnerships, and capacity expansion remains essential to reducing stress on Coast Guard families and improving retention.

Across the Service, Coast Guard members continue to face significant infrastructure challenges driven by aging facilities, deferred maintenance, mission growth, and the impacts of natural disasters. These conditions affect the daily lives of our workforce. Improved barracks, reliable utilities, effective industrial support facilities, and resilient waterfront infrastructure are basic requirements for mission execution and workforce stability.

Operations

Workforce readiness comes to life at the unit level, where Coast Guard men and women stand the watch, answer distress calls, interdict illicit activity, protect our ports and waterways, enforce the law, support national defense, and respond to disasters. A day in the life of our members is defined by service and adaptability. It also depends on the readiness of the systems, facilities, and the support structures behind them.

Coast Guard men and women continue to answer the Nation's call. However, sustained and increasing operational demand without commensurate investments in workforce readiness increases risk. We must protect readiness deliberately and consistently. Sacrificing in this regard is not acceptable.

Conclusion

The men and women of the United States Coast Guard serve because they want to make a difference for the Nation. They stand the watch in demanding conditions, in small communities, major ports, and in joint force environments. They are America's greatest strength.

To stay always ready, we must continue to generate and train the crew, modernize and restructure for the future, protect workforce health and safety, invest in our shore infrastructure, and sustain front-line operations with the resources and support this workforce deserves.

The Fiscal Year 2027 President's Budget provides the critical investments needed to restore and strengthen Service readiness, begin the required personnel growth, and build the capacity required to reach and sustain an expansion of 15,000 members. The Budget invests across the full readiness chain by funding operational asset recapitalization, modernizing critical shore and training infrastructure, expanding behavioral health staffing and sexual assault prevention and response programs, and strengthening vital family support initiatives such as childcare and housing assistance. Together with continued support and increased funding, these investments will ensure the Coast Guard has the personnel, platforms, and facilities needed to meet current operational demands and secure readiness for the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for your continued support of the United States Coast Guard. We look forward to answering your questions.