

The Honorable Shontel M. Brown
House Armed Services Committee Member Day Testimony
April 28, 2022

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, members of committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would like to address several issues today.

Cyber Workforce

In recent years, the committee has highlighted the importance of cybersecurity and the need to secure the Department of Defense (DoD) information network. Currently in the United States, there are almost 600,000 vacant cybersecurity jobs. The staffing shortages, coupled with the DoD's failure to provide accurate civilian cyber work role descriptions—as stated in the DOD Inspector General Report: DODIG-2021-110—present a clear challenge to the DoD and the cybersecurity of many of our businesses.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to direct the Secretary of Defense to establish a cyber workforce program with the authority to manage and expand the cyber workforce using the National Institute for Standards and Technology's Cybersecurity Workforce Framework, which documents a list of cybersecurity tasks, knowledge, and skills required to perform those tasks. The purpose of this cyber workforce program would help identify and assign cyber work roles and provide a cyber workforce training management system.

Elements for consideration in choosing a contract partner should include commercially available cyber workforce management systems that meet the identification, tracking, and report of cyberspace workforce requirements in the DoD Instruction 8140.02.

To achieve these ends, I also urge the committee to recommend an increase of \$5 million to the DoD's operation and maintenance budget.

Gambling Addiction

According to the National Council of Problem Gambling, the Department of Defense (DoD) generates \$100 million annually from the three thousand slot machines on overseas bases. It is estimated that as many as 56,000 active-duty members meet the criteria for gambling disorder. Additionally, prior DoD surveys have found that active-duty personnel are more likely to have gambling problems than civilians.

As you know, Congress attempted to address this issue by including a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 that requires members of the armed forces to be screened for gambling addiction.

Gambling addiction is a serious problem—one that has affected the military community in a harmful way—but it is treatable with proper help and resources. The stress that comes with deployment along with the unique military culture can lead to depression, substance abuse, and other mental health issues. We must do better to serve our men and women in uniform.

I urge the committee to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to expand the gambling addiction treatment program at the Louis B. Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center to establish a Center of Excellence (COE) for the Treatment of Gambling Addiction that would provide active-duty personnel with the highest quality treatment and rehabilitation services. The COE shall include, but is not limited to:

- Telehealth capacity for nationwide treatment of gambling addiction, including active duty personnel;
- Online training programs for VA, Department of Defense personnel in gambling addiction prevention, treatment, research, and recovery; and
- Capacity to implement the above programs with appropriate staff, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors, and other professional staff who possess a national certification in gambling addiction.

Thank you again, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Roger, and the members of the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony. I stand ready to work with you to help strengthen our cyber workforce and provide the resources our servicemembers so rightfully deserve to lead a healthy lifestyle.