

RECORD VERSION

**STATEMENT BY
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BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

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ON SENIOR LEADER MISCONDUCT

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished Members of the Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify on senior leader misconduct. On behalf of the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Dr. Mark Esper, and our Chief of Staff, General Mark Milley, thank you for your support to our Soldiers, Army Civilians, Families, and Veterans.

The Army holds its senior leaders to the highest standards. The trust and confidence of the American people, which is intrinsic to who we are as an Army, is rooted in our character and credibility. We do acknowledge problems exist, and we take senior misconduct very seriously. Over the past decade, the Army Inspector General agency substantiated allegations against only 3% of the general officer population per year. While recent headlines on Army senior leader misconduct give the appearance of widespread misbehavior, the truth is most transgressions are technical violations committed by a very small minority. The most common substantiated allegations involving general officers are: misuse of government resources, failure to follow regulations, and failure to take action.

Substantiated allegations for inappropriate relationships or sexual misconduct over the past decade involved less than 1% of general officers. This includes five general officers substantiated in each of the past two years. This small fraction of senior leaders does not represent the honorable service and character of the entire General Officer Corps.

Whistleblower reprisal remains the number one allegation. The substantiated rate for whistleblower reprisal cases is 4%. A significant factor in the low 4% substantiated rate is misuse of the whistleblower reprisal process. This typically occurs when a Soldier or civilian is held accountable by a senior official for misconduct or poor performance, following a protected communication. The resulting claim of reprisal creates challenges for senior commanders who hold people accountable, and then are faced with an Inspector General whistleblower reprisal investigation.

With respect to training and prevention, the Inspector General Agency:

- Routinely briefs new general officers on senior official misconduct trends at the Army's orientation course. The IG also provides incoming division and corps commanders misconduct trends and assistance associated with their new command, post, or installation.
- Developed a senior leader exportable training package that provides awareness of recent and common issues that hinder senior leaders and their staff.
- Conducts detailed working group sessions with every Army battalion and brigade pre-command course to ensure every incoming new commander and command sergeant major is updated on the most recent misconduct trends. These are our future general officers.

The vast majority of the 685 general officers serving are doing the right thing – every single day. A positive trend over the past five years has been a 51% reduction in the number of General Officer substantiated cases – from 32 to 15. This includes a decrease in substantiated allegations for official travel violations, inappropriate political activities, non-federal entities involvement, conflicts of interest, and improper endorsements.

In closing, the overwhelming majority of Army General Officers abide by the letter and spirit of our laws and regulations, and utilize sound judgment in their stewardship of taxpayer resources. Those who do not are held accountable. The bulk of substantiated allegations are not the salacious acts of misconduct that occasionally make the headlines. Most are technical violations committed by a few within the general officer ranks. Through continued education, training, professional development – and, when needed, thorough investigation and appropriate adjudication – we are committed to ensuring all leaders continue to maintain the trust and confidence of the American people.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for your continued support to our Soldiers, Army Civilians, Families, and Veterans. I look forward to your questions.