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MISSION IMPERATIVE:

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Thursday, May 23, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives,

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 9:30 a.m., in Room HVC-304, Capitol Visitor Center, the Honorable Adam Schiff (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Schiff, Himes, Sewell, Carson, Speier, Quigley, Swalwell, Castro, Heck, Welch, Maloney, Nunes, Conaway, Turner, Wenstrup, Crawford, and Hurd.

The Chairman.   The committee will come to order.   Before we begin, I would remind all members that we are in open session, and as such, we will discuss unclassified matters only.

Without objection, the chair may declare a recess at any time.

I welcome our members and witnesses to today's hearing.   I am grateful that you have joined us today to discuss the mission imperative in the Intelligence Community, significant improvement of diversity inclusion at levels from entry level to senior leadership and within all disciplines.

While there has been some improvement in recent years, the demographic profile of the IC workforce still does not mirror that of the wider population, and is lagging in attracting the best and brightest from all walks of life.   Fully taking advantage of the diverse intellect innovation and experiences here at home better prepares the IC and our Nation to address tomorrow's most pressing challenges, and allows us to analyze increasingly complicated and integrated world.

In holding this hearing, the committee hopes to learn how the IC is pursuing increased hiring and retention of people that represent varied economic, religious, cultural, ethnic, gender identity, and regional backgrounds.   Outreach to these groups must occur early and often, so I applaud your initial plan to provide insight into our IC disciplines and career paths to young minds, even at the middle school and high school level across the Nation.

Rest assured the committee is committed to partnering with the community to foster heightened awareness about IC employment opportunities through initiatives, education sessions, and recruiting programs outside of the traditional applicant pools on the East Coast.   To retain its high quality talent, the community must also ensure that accomplished and consummate tenured professionals of all backgrounds know that they

are valued and integrated members of the team.   To many employees of diverse backgrounds feel marginalized, even invisible, in the middle to later years of their careers.

All ideas should be earnestly considered when determining solutions for mission requirements.   Studies have shown that in teams with similar ability levels, heterogeneous teams are more creative than their homogeneous counterparts. Inclusion of heterogeneous endeavors will serve to strengthen finished products, technical capabilities, services, and relationships domestically and with allies worldwide.

It is recognized that significant improvement and diversity and inclusion in the IC is not a small task.   It will take considerable forethought, attention to layered cultural nuances, remaining cognizant of the delicate balance between emphasizing the important tangible and intangible advantages of a diverse workforce, vis-à-vis, the impression or viced impression that the solution is merely creating new quota systems.

We look forward to hearing about your best practices, highlights of accomplishments and strategic plans to address these challenges.

And with that, I now recognize the ranking member for any opening statement he wishes to make.

[The statement of Mr. Schiff follows:]

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Mr. <u>Nunes.</u>   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.   I would like to thank the witnesses for being here today and agreeing to appear.   The Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2019 National Intelligence Strategy, highlights diversity in one of its seven enterprise objectives in order to provide the foundation for integrated, effective, and efficient management of mission capabilities across the Intelligence Community.

This committee for many years has focused on this issue, and as the IC competes to employ the brightest individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and intellectual perspectives, I am glad that we can hold this hearing out in the public today.

We are going to have votes coming up soon, and so because of that, I will yield back.

And, once again, thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Nunes follows:]

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The <u>Chairman.</u>   I thank the ranking member.   I am honored today to welcome a distinguished panel of witnesses to discuss different facets of our hearing today.

First, the Honorable Kari Bingen, and I am going to apologize for making the introductions brief so that we can get to the testimony, principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.   The Honorable Kari Bingen was nominated by President Trump as the principal deputy and unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate in May 2012.

We are also joined by Ms. Rita Sampson, Chief of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the principal advisor to the Director of National Intelligence and all matters related to diversity within the IC.

And, finally, Mr. Harry Coker, Executive Director for the National Security Agency. In this capacity, Mr. Coker works with NSA's direct and deputy director to provide leadership in all areas of the enterprise, and to represent NSA's interests internally and externally.

Each of your statements will be made a part of the record in their entirety.   And I would ask you to summarize your testimony in 5 minutes or less.

And we will begin with the Honorable Kari Bingen.

STATEMENTS OF THE HONORABLE KARI BINGEN, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE; HARRY COKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY; AND RITA SAMPSON, CHIEF OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY, OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE KARI BINGEN

Ms. Bingen.   Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Schiff, Ranking Member Nunes, and distinguished members of the committee.   It is a privilege to testify today alongside with my DNI and my NSA colleagues on the current status of diversity in the Intelligence Community.

Mr. Chairman, if it is okay with you, I would propose that Ms. Sampson start with a broad Intelligence Community overview and then I will would follow up with some specific remarks on defense, if that is okay?

The Chairman.   Of course.

Ms. Bingen.   Okay.   Thank you.

STATEMENT OF RITA SAMPSON

Ms. Sampson.   Good morning, Chairman Schiff, Ranking Member Nunes, and members of the committee.   Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning to discuss diversity and inclusion within the United States Intelligence Community.   I am Rita Sampson, I am the U.S. Intelligence Community's Chief Diversity

Officer and Director of the Equal Employment Opportunity within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.   In my role, I lead the IC's enterprise approach to increasing diversity, creating a culture of inclusion and proactively preventing workplace discrimination.

As you have indicated, I am joined today by the Honorable Kari Bingen and Mr. Harry Coker.   DNI Coats and PDDNI Gordon want the committee to know that as the leaders of the U.S. Intelligence Community, they are personally committed to advancing a more diverse and inclusive workforce.   Within the IC, we define diversity broadly to encompass the full range of experiences, perspectives, and affiliations that individuals share.

Diversity includes characteristics, such as national origin, language, race, color, sex, mental or physical abilities, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, family structure, multiple dimensions that make individuals unique and make America whole.

Inclusion describes the culture that connects each employee to the organization. It encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness, and leverages diversity throughout the organization so that all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential.   The IC views diversity and inclusion as mission critical priorities.

Earlier this year, Director Coats released the 2019 National Intelligence Strategy. It lays out a number of national security priorities, including counterterrorism, combating cyber threats, and it also includes an imperative that the IC will forge and retain a diverse, inclusive, and expert workforce to address enduring and emerging requirements that enable mission success.

The mission case for diversity inclusion is clear in the Intelligence Community.   In order to solve the complex and difficult challenges we face, we must leverage diverse

perspectives.   For the fourth consecutive year, the ODNI publically shared the IC's workforce demographic data.   IC data reveals that the IC is making progress.   Overall diversity has steadily increased over the last several years.

While my range of diversity data and trends is being shared, I would like to point out that a few highlights exist regarding workforce representation.   The representation of minorities in the IC workforce increased to 26.2 percent, a trend that has been continuing over time.   The representation of women in the IC workforce increased to 38.8 percent, and women continue to see gains in promotion rates within the IC with the percentage of women being promoted, exceeding the representation in the overall workforce.

The representation of persons with disabilities increased to 10.7 percent.   Within the IC, leaders at all levels have implemented stronger accountability measures for creating and sustaining a culture that drives inclusion and connects all IC professionals to the mission.   Best practices include mandatory, unconscious bias training, along with performance objectives that measure support of diversity and inclusion activities.

Employees are empowered to advocate for and create organizational change through resource groups and affinity networks that educate the workforce, raise awareness of employee concerns, and create solutions that improve mission capabilities. Three IC-wide affinity network organizations have been established, the IC Pride, the IC Deaf and Hard of Hearing network, and the IC Latino network.   These employee-led efforts increase awareness about careers in the IC, help us champion career development opportunities, and enlist allies to increase mentoring, sponsorship, and shadowing opportunities.

Externally, the IC is making strategic investments in efforts to diversify the recruitment and hiring talent pool.   We are building more relationships with schools,

professional organizations, and nonprofit sectors.   We are increasing our visibility and promoting awareness of career opportunities within the IC, to include language, cultural expertise, cyber skills, and all fields within science, technology, engineering, and math.

Understanding that technology cannot substitute for critical relationship building, we are increasing outreach and working across the whole of government in efforts such as the White House Initiative for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and the Asian-American Pacific Islander Initiative.   We continue to invest in the Louis Stokes Educational Program, a highly competitive program for undergraduate and graduate students interested in public service.   In fiscal year 2018, minorities made up 73.2 percent, and women made up 39.3 percent of the Stokes students employed in the IC.

Within the agencies, departments, and organizations that comprise the U.S. Intelligence Community, much work has been done to meet our diversity inclusion mission critical imperatives.   As noted, we have more work to do.   Our near term priorities include, increasing the number of private and public sector partnerships to expand our outreach to a more diverse talent pool, including non-traditional schools and K through 12 education, expanding our geographic reach outside of the Washington D.C. area, and leveraging our grant authorities to invest in innovative programs that will enhance recruitment and retention of a more diverse workforce with the critical capabilities needed for the national security interests of the United States.

Chairman Schiff, Ranking Member Nunes, and members of the committee, thank you for your time.   Ms. Bingen will deliver remarks, and along with Mr. Coker, we look forward to the committee's questions.   Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Sampson follows:]

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STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE KARI BINGEN

Ms. <u>Bingen.</u>   Again, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the status of diversity across the defense intelligence enterprise.   This is an issue of importance to the Department of Defense, to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Joe Kernan, and an issue that I am personally passionate about.

In the simplest of terms, our defense intelligence mission demands a diverse workforce.   After all, our job is to understand others, other countries, cultures, capabilities, and ways of thinking.   Our human sources must understand and blend in a foreign environment.   Our linguists and analysts must appreciate nuances and foreign dialects and cultural norms to understand intent.   We have extensive intelligence relationships with a broad array of foreign partners, and we fight in coalition.

So diversity in backgrounds, ethnicity, genders, and in other areas across our ranks and in our thinking is vitally important to our mission's success.   The technical and military advantage that the United States has maintained for decades is eroding.   No one demographic has the market cornered on the brain power, critical thinking, and hard work necessary to address this challenge.   The department and the Intelligence Community need talent.

The National Defense Strategy states that we must have a motivated, diverse, and highly-skilled civilian workforce.   It emphasizes talent management, education and training, the need for new skills, and exploring non-traditional pathways and partners to bring critical skills into service.   Overall, IC and defense intel demographic diversity has steadily increased over time, particularly from 2010 to 2018, when the community has consistently collected general workforce data.

The representation of women in the IC workforce increased for the first time in

the last 4 years, and the percentage of women new hires has increased. Minority representation in the IC workforce has increased, and the representation of persons with disabilities or PWD has also increased with the military departments now roughly matching the Federal benchmark of 18 percent.

However, during the same period, there are still trends of concern, particularly when we compare ourselves to external benchmarks in the Federal workforce or private sector. Across the military departments, female representation in defense intelligence decreased between 2010 and 2018. In fiscal year 2018, the attrition of women, minorities, and PWD occurred at higher rates than our ability to recruit women, minorities, and PWD into the workforce, specifically in the military department.

Despite the increase in representation from fiscal year 2017 to 2018, minorities, women, and PWD continue to be less represented at the higher pay grades from the GS-13 to the senior pay levels. The defense intel components recognize these challenges, and are taking proactive steps to understand the key drivers behind them and to develop and implement strategies in targeted initiatives to address them.

In parallel, we are working collaboratively across the IC and the defense intelligence enterprise to collect more comprehensive workforce data, establish better reporting metrics, and develop assessment tools to measure the impact of specific initiatives.

A more diverse inclusive workforce starts with recruitment, specifically across our Nation's universities. We want to bring in and cultivate a large pool of diverse employees that become our mission experts, managers, and supervisors, and senior leaders. As noted in the NDS, the DOD also has a greater need for stem talent, including information experts, data scientists, computer programmers, basic science researchers, and engineers.

Defense intelligence components are leveraging long-standing student programs, expanding their internship programs, and also implementing more targeted and direct campus recruiting efforts to attract and hire diverse talent.   Within my office, we are collaborating with the military departments on pilot programs to attract diverse talent and to be more competitive in compensation.

Recruitment of diverse civilian professionals for the military intelligence components remains a challenge, particularly in the Army, despite increased outreach to universities and industry groups with diverse applicant pools.   Greater use of social media and other incentive tools.   A deeper examination of the data where it does exist, is underway so that we understand the key drivers and are developing the right solutions to the right problems.

But recruitment efforts alone are not sufficient to sustain a diverse workforce across the enterprise at all levels and in all mission areas that is truly reflective of of America.   We must actively support and build a pipeline of talent.   Training, education, and career broadening opportunities are necessary to keep our workforce challenged and engaged to set them up for promotion, and to keep us competitive with the private sector and other U.S. Government organizations.

Talent development is a consistent theme in our annual workforce climate surveys.   Our components of active career management processes and talent development programs.   Joint duty credit has been expanded across the defense intelligence enterprise to provide an incentive for employees to pursue career broadening opportunities.   Components continue to expand their offerings of higher education and tuition assistance programs, general professional development courses, intelligence specific discipline training, and intelligence certifications.

Several of the components have increased their diversity and inclusion training.

And diversity inclusion criteria are included in all DCIPS employees annual performance evaluations.   Promotion rates for minorities, women, and PWD remain a concern, particularly at the higher grade levels from GS-13 to seniors.   We do continue to analyze what barriers to promotion opportunity exist and to take action to remove those barriers.

For example, we have instituted measures to increase hiring panel diversity, provide unconscious bias training, and expand talent development programs.   This challenge has senior leader attention, and we will continue with proactive efforts to develop diverse applicant pools with the skills necessary for senior level positions.

Beyond the on boarding and talent development efforts, our survey data shows that retention of our minority, female, and PWD talent is bolstered by greater services and support including initiatives that promote greater work flexibility and a better work life balance.   All of the agencies have active affinity and employee resource groups to monitor the health of their represented groups, assist in providing mentoring and networking opportunities, focus on professional development, and represent their interest to leadership in the organization.

The DOD has expanded the abilities of employees to telework from home and designated telework centers.   We are also seeking ways to increase flexibility for working mothers and new parents.

The Chairman.   Ms. Bingen, if you could wrap up, we want to make sure we get to questions.

Ms. Bingen.   Absolutely, sir.   And there are also a number of enabling capabilities that will help evolve our workforce management practices to attract high caliber talent.   So clearance reform to get folks in faster.   Faster on-boarding, using technology, bringing individuals in with interim clearances, providing them work at lower classification levels to get them in the door and working.   We are also streamlining our

government application process, and working on getting better at data and metrics.

So, in conclusion, thank you for holding this hearing and bringing this issue to the forefront.   The success of our war fighters in the field and our policymakers here at home rests on the superior intelligence information and capabilities, which in turn depends on our most important asset, our people and the diversity of our people.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Bingen follows:]

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The <u>Chairman.</u>   Thank you.   And, Mr. Coker, did you have an opening statement you want to make or you want to submit for the record?

STATEMENT OF HARRY COKER

Mr. <u>Coker.</u>   I will just add, sir, that we are delighted to be here, grateful for the opportunity.   We appreciate your focus on diversity and inclusion, and especially the connection to missing outcomes.   When we tie diversion and inclusion to mission outcomes, the workforce gets it, and so that is what we are doing.

And when General Nakasone came onboard, he gave us three imperatives. Number one is talent, and that includes the recruitment and retention.   It includes development, which is not just the traditional tradecraft, but also leadership development, which includes aspects of diversity inclusion.

And then the last one is the environment, which really is the inclusiveness.   That is a priority for us, and he has developed six diversity inclusion focus areas for the agency, championed by seniors.

The first is to implement fair personnel practices across the NSA enterprise. Senior leadership accountability, of which I am the senior champion.   Accessibility of facilities, and that is not just the brick and mortar, that is our technological capabilities as well.   Recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce, onboarding and mentoring to ensure the foundation is set from day one.   And then lastly in terms of the big six, DNI focus for 2019 is developing a pipeline of diverse champions.

We know we made progress, we also know we have a ways to go.   And, again, sir, that is why we appreciate this hearing and the focus that you all are putting on this mission imperative.

[The statement of Mr. Coker follows:]

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The Chairman.   I thank you.   We will now proceed with questions, and I recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Can you share with us your thoughts on -- as a percentage of the U.S. population, which communities are most unrepresented in terms of the IC?   And also in terms of our needs around the world, which communities are most unrepresented, and which of the agencies, which agency has made the least progress in terms of diversity?

Ms. Sampson.   When we look at the demographic trends within the Intelligence Community, what we see is that we do not mirror the Federal workforce or the U.S. population side by side.   That is of obviously concern for us for a number of reasons. But when we also look at a deeper dive, we do not capture all demographics, so we capture the demographics relating to race, national origin, and disabilities.   Those are the captured official government metrics that we have.

So there are other efforts underway to identify to what degree can we discern what is the full population of the IC demographics.   When we look at minorities and we break that down, because as I mentioned, we are about 26.2 percent minority, the largest minority within the IC are African American IC professionals followed by Hispanic.   And African Americans are approximately 12.1 percent of the Intelligence Community's population.   Hispanic employees make up approximately 6.8 percent. Asian-Americans, 4.3.   Two or more races, which is a growing demographic, is at 2.3. We have a very small number of American Indian and Alaska Native professionals identified as .5, and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander at .2.

When we look at persons with disabilities, there are challenges with identifying the full range of employees with disabilities.   Many disabilities are acquired after entry on duty, and so it is very difficult to capture those metrics, which are initially captured when people enter on duty through personnel records.

So we have ongoing efforts to have people self-identify when in life they develop disabilities or hidden disabilities they are more comfortable with sharing so that we can then provide the resources and support for these individuals.

The Chairman.   If I could follow up.   And I know there are certain categories that we haven't gathered data like the LGBTQ community, and we are looking for remedies for that.

Ms. Sampson.   Yes.

The Chairman.   But among those communities that we do collect data, which are the most unrepresented in the IC as a percentage of their population?   And among the elements of the IC, which is the least diverse element to date?

Ms. Sampson.   Okay.   I would need to say that that would be the Hispanic population at 6.8 percent.   That trend is a concern across the whole of government, including the IC.   Because the Hispanic population is far more than 6.8 percent in the U.S.   And it is very difficult to answer the question of which IC element is the least diverse.   Just a number of factors that go into that.

What we like to do is look at the diversity by grade.   And across all IC elements, what we are finding is less diversity in the more senior pay grades, which is most concerning to us.

The Chairman.   And why is it difficult to assess each element compared to the other?   I would think that it would be possible to identify within the IC where the problem is the greatest, both as you have in terms of a lack of diversity in terms of those of Mexican American heritage, but why is it difficult to determine whether the CIA is doing a better job than the NAS, which may be doing the worse job than the NRO.   Why is that difficult?

Ms. Sampson.   In this setting at this level that would be FOUO, and

unfortunately, I can get that information to you and happy to do so.

The Chairman. Okay. We will follow up. I don't understand why that would be the case, but I am sure there is a rationale for that.

Ms. Sampson. Yes. I am happy to provide that to you afterwards.

The Chairman. Last question. What metric can we use to measure whether we are making progress? What is the appropriate metric?

Ms. Sampson. The challenge of diversity and inclusion cannot be reduced to a simple metric. There have been a number of people who have tried to come up with sort of a scorecard numeric 1 through 10 scale. I think that you begin by looking at the demographics, that is one measure. There are inclusion quotients that we have developed using the employee eClimate surveys. Consistently, the Intelligence Community ranks higher on the inclusion quotient than most other agencies.

So we do have metrics that we look at how are people are experiencing their time within the profession of intelligence? How strongly our supervisors and management connecting them to the mission. And those are based on self-reported scores through climate surveys.

There are also a number of diversity best practices benchmarks, and we are partnering with diversity best practices, a company that has a number of diversity best practices indices. So we do plan on entering into those external benchmarks to see how we fair in comparison to the private sector primarily.

The Chairman. Thank you. Mr. Nunes.

Mr. Nunes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Sampson, you heard Ms. Bingen talk about the challenges that we are having with the security clearance problem.

Ms. Sampson. Yes.

Mr. Nunes. Is there any indication that minorities are more at a disadvantage in

this security clearance, which is a debacle across the board, and I don't know if we can get into that also. But should we be aware of any challenges that any minority groups are having with the security clearance problem, worse than others, for example.

Ms. Sampson. I think it is the impact of the waiting period that it might not be financially feasible for many underrepresented groups, whether or not they are minority or nonminority, but those that are not financially able to wait the duration of time that it takes to have a security clearance.

Studies have shown, we have looked at this internally, that there are no inherent disadvantages that we have been able to pinpoint based on minority status. I think it is the waiting period. It does take awhile to get a security clearance. The IC is focused on that, trying to improve that very much so.

Mr. Nunes. It is a very slow process.

Ms. Sampson. It can be.

Mr. Nunes. Are you involved in the role, are you involved in the security process at all?

Ms. Sampson. I work with Human Capital, our chief Human Capital office, who is championing the right trusted agile workforce, and therefore, we are working closely in that regard because we do know that it will take a very diverse set of teams to fix that problem.

Mr. Nunes. Do you see anything on the horizon here, because this security clearance problem was part of the reason DNI was created in the first place to create a transparent process that everyone could use, but it seems like the wait times have gotten longer, not shorter.

Ms. Sampson. So I will highlight that at NGA they are piloting a program where once a conditional offer of employment is offered, that the candidate does not have to

wait for the full duration of the adjudication process to begin work.

That they are given work that is not at the Top Secret level, that way they can at least begin to be gainfully employed while they wait for the full adjudication of their clearance, and we think that has some promise in the community because it is that wait time that we tend to lose candidates who may not have prepared to be in the background process for so long.

Mr. Nunes.   Thank you.   Mr. Coker, I know we didn't get to your testimony, but where do you think the priorities lie in terms of adding diversity to the workforce, but also to the question that I asked Ms. Sampson, how the security clearance process is hampering the ability to recruit talented diverse workforce?

Mr. Coker.   Yes, sir.   In terms of the diversity of the workforce, yeah, we just are on board with you all's perspective that diversity and inclusion directly correlates to positive mission outcomes.   The more diversity we can have in terms of thoughts approaches creativity, the better off we will be.

On our recruiting goals at NSA for this year, we have a goal of 33 percent for minority hiring, and 40 percent for women hiring.   To date, we are at 31 percent and we are comfortable in terms of reaching that goal on the minority side.   And on the women's side, it is just under the 40 percent, likewise, we are comfortable there.   And that is good news --

Mr. Nunes.   Is the security clearance issue hampering you in that search at all?

Mr. Coker.   It is not hampering us with the exception of the delays, and some individuals, again, cannot afford the economic impact of the delay.   But we are applying more resources to certain skill sets that can improve the security processing, the timeliness.   We are also taking a look at some business processes that need to be updated.

And also we realize that folks need to be current on their status in the process, so we are making a focused effort at being more in touch with the candidates as they go through the background investigation process letting them know where we are.

It also has the attention of our senior leadership in that we are getting regular status checks from our workforce support activities, which include security and HR on how individuals are moving through the pipeline.   So by shining that light, we are able to get the attention of the right people to make progress.

Mr. Nunes.   Thank you.   Ms. Bingen, do you have any comment on that?

Ms. Bingen.   Sir, I would agree with you.   We do have pretty significant backlog and it has taken awhile for clearances to get through, which is affecting our ability to bring on talent who can get on brought also immediately in the private sector with very competitive salaries.

But what we are doing about that in the Department of Defense, working with OPM NBIB is they have reduced the backlog for -- and I will just talk DOD statistics.   They have reduced the backlog within the last year, over 200,000, and the timelines are starting to curve down.   They have been in the hundreds of days for Secret and Top Secret clearances.

Mr. Nunes.   What is it today?

Ms. Bingen.   The current backlog today for Department of Defense individuals is about 292,000, over a year ago it was over 500,000.   So it has gone down about 200,000 in a year.

Mr. Nunes.   What is the average time for a clearance?

Ms. Bingen.   I don't have that off the top of my head, but I would say several hundred days for Secret and Top Secret.   So that is the baseline.   There was an executive order recently signed that would transfer the background investigation mission

from OPM to DOD, and we are working through those transfer steps right now.

The opportunity we have in front of us is to modernize the process.   It is a very antiquated, industrial-aged process, and there is much more we can bring with technology, artifical intelligence.   The Federal benchmark on timelines is 40 days for Secret, 80 days for Top Secret.   So we are not meeting that today, but as we introduce more technology, access more data sources, we can do a lot more of this in real time.

Mr. Nunes.   Well, thank you all.   I appreciate you all being here.

With that, I yield back.

The Chairman.   Thank you.   Mr. Himes.

Mr. Himes.   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.   Thank you all for being here to help us with this challenging topic.   I have got two categories of questions.   The first, I want to focus on the retention and promotion piece of this.   Inasmuch as there is a challenge, the truth is probably out there in what that challenge is, it is probably in the heads and behaviors of people who leave, people who are promoted and not promoted, and of course, the people making those promotion decisions.

So I am not quite sure who to direct the question to, but I would like to hear specifically what sort of analysis is being done across that group of people to determine what the challenge is.

Ms. Sampson.   We did an analysis that took several years across the Intelligence Community to understand the perceptions of the workforce.   It required pulling together focus groups, looking at the empirical data, and also looking at external research industry best practices.   What we found was a perception that information was not transparent.   So that was at the core a question of transparency that --

Mr. Himes.   Forgive me, I don't understand what you mean information was not transparent?   What does that mean?

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u>   That the employees didn't understand the process.

Mr. <u>Himes.</u>   Of being promoted?

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u>   Of being promoted, yeah.

Mr. <u>Himes.</u>   Thank you.

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u>   So much more work has been done to help them understand what those processes are.   There has also been questions about perceptions of bias. So we have really taken a doubling-down effort to make sure that individuals who are working on recruitment efforts, who have the responsibility for hiring and promoting, that all of them undergo and participate in unconscious bias training, because we want to raise awareness that these biases have the perception that they are entering into the decisionmaking process, and so we are very proactive in that regard as well.   If that answers your question.

Mr. <u>Himes.</u>   It does.   I think I understand the bias piece of this.   And I imagine that is a hurdle, but I am intrigued by you saying, understanding the information required to get promoted, to my way of thinking, to get promoted you got to do your job really well, right?   So does that mean that perhaps there, in more diverse populations, there is a lack of understanding of job descriptions and what success looks like?

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u>   Not at all, sir.   We have a very competitive promotion process in the Intelligence Community, it is not based necessarily on tenure in job or -- it is based on a competitive process, one employee relative to his or her peers.   And, therefore, in that competitive review senior boards meet and they make decisions regarding particular candidates, competitiveness, and readiness for performance at the next level.   And certainly when each candidate is reviewed, there are only a limited number of people who will have those opportunities for promotion, and many, many excellent or outstanding officers, but not everyone can be promoted who is deserving of such

promotion.

And so as a person who may not have been promoted, you want to know why. And I think that is a fair question. Why? How can I improve?

Mr. <u>Himes.</u> And so people are indicating that when they are not promoted they are not given a plan to address whatever issues may -- if that a fair summary of what you are saying?

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u> Yes. In the sense that the process itself builds in a feedback loop so everyone who is considered and everyone is given feedback. But some feedback is more effective than other feedback, so what we want to do with that and what we have been doing is giving supervisors and managers training in how to give feedback.

It is not inherent, natural for all people. So feedback is a critical part of how you can apply corrections and changes and improvements to your own professional development. So we are really very focused on helping improve feedback and overall communication.

Mr. <u>Himes.</u> Thank you. I appreciate that. And I have one last question that I think touches the core of what we are doing. The President has announced transgender ban in the military. Obviously, a significant number of our employees are in that military environment. Could somebody just reflect for us on the effect that has had internally in terms of trying to expand LGBTQ recruitment and retention?

Ms. <u>Bingen.</u> Sir, I can address that. Our personnel and readiness folks handle the military uniform policy, so I would have a tough time talking about that. But on the civilian side, which is what we oversee, the civilian policies, transgender is considered a protected class, they are afforded protections.

We very much take a best candidate wide swath in terms of recruiting, hiring talent. We have anti-discrimination policies. In our general views, we need this talent

and brain power in whatever, you know, form it comes in.   And we also across the civilian side have increased our affinity and support groups.

So participation in IC Pride, Navy intelligence does activities in this area.   My office and my employees have participated in some of those events as well.

Mr. Himes.   Okay.   Thank you.   I am over time, so I yield back.   Thank you very much.

The Chairman.   Thank you.   Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. Wenstrup.   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.   Thank you all for being here.   You know, in VA health we have some of the same problems where we have physicians who want to be VA physicians and the wait is too long, and they go on to something else, right, they just can't wait.   So I have a full understanding of what you are talking about there. And I do like your idea as maybe we can get you sort of an apprenticeship where have a job and you are getting paid until everything can be cleared, or we speed up the process, or maybe a little bit of both.   So that would be nice.

You know, in my mind, you know, in the Intelligence Community especially, I see where diversity is a wonderful tool, a necessary tool really that can be a huge asset towards successful mission outcomes.   And so you mentioned that briefly, Mr. Coker, so I would like to ask you about that, because it makes complete sense to me with the job at hand that the more diverse we are the more capabilities we have.

Mr. Coker.   Yes, sir.   You know, a personal experience, I was working at a program against a hard target country a handful of years ago.   And we were doing some of the analysis.   And us westerners didn't have sufficient insight into the information that we had at hand.   It just so happened there was an officer available who had a cultural background that was similar to that hard target country.

And that individual was literally able to take that information and understand

some of the slang, if you will, and give us a better understanding of the meaning.   And that really was due to the cultural upbringing and insight that that individual officer had.

So that is just a personal experience that I have had on that front.

Dr. Wenstrup.   I agree with you, you know, bottom line for America, unless you are a Native American, we all came from somewhere else.   And then our intelligence gathering, it is usually somewhere else.   And so I would be favor, first and second generation Americans that can bring their cultural knowledge to the table as we go about our business.   But that is really my only question.   It caught my ear when you said that, and I agree with you 100 percent.   And my feeling is the more diverse we are, the more capabilities we have.   So I thank you.

I yield back.

The Chairman.   Thank you.   Ms. Sewell.

Ms. Sewell.   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.   I want to first thank you for hosting this hearing on diversity and inclusion in the workforce and the IC.   I think this is the first time we have had an open hearing in over a decade, and I want to commend your leadership in doing that.

While I am happy that the committee will discuss the issues at hand, I am disappointed that none of the Intelligence Community agency directors are here to testify today.

In 1995, in 2001, in 2003, the committee held similar hearings on the diversity in the IC topic, and at those hearings the directors of NRO, NGA, NSA, DIA, and Central Intelligence Agency participated as witnesses.   It is frustrating to me as a member of this committee who has dedicated a lot of her time to promoting what I consider to be the greatest asset that we have in the IC, the Intelligence Community, and that is its workforce, its people.

And I think all of us know that vision starts from the top, commitment starts from the top, and that starts with appearing before a committee that has oversight over that workforce.   I would like to submit for the record that we did give an invitation to the director of the NSA, Dr. -- I mean, the Honorable Paul Nakasone.   We also sent an invitation to Director Coats of ODNI.   CIA Director Gina Haspel, as well as to the Under Secretary of Defense of Intelligence, Mr. Kernan.

It is frustrating to me because I know that this is critically important, and that we as taxpayers deserve to understand how our taxpayer money is being spent.   This committee authorizes in both classified and unclassified budgets to all 17 committees in billions and billions of dollars.   That means that we should have direct oversight on how that money is being spent.

Diversity in this country is what makes us exceptional.   I don't have to tell you all who are sitting before me as witnesses, and I thank you for being here and representing your principals, I would also have liked to have had the principals sitting here.

Now, I also would like to indicate for the record several reports, I mean, nothing tells better what is the lack of diversity that is in the Intel Community than your own reports that are unclassified.   So I direct you to the CIA unclassified diversity and leadership study that was done in 2015 by commissioned by Director -- then Director Brennan and done and performed by Vernon Jordan and others.

In that particular study, it said unequivocally, that minorities make up a quarter of the intelligence workforce despite making up nearly 40 percent of the U.S. population. According to that report, diversity is much higher in other sectors.   Minority comprised 30 percent of the civilian labor force, and roughly 35 percent of all Federal employees.

So even within our own Federal workforce, we have much higher indices of participation in the workforce than we do in the IC.   African Americans make up 12

percent of the Intelligence Community.   Hispanics make up 6.6 percent of the

Intelligence Community.   Pacific Islanders, 4.4 percent.   Multiracial people,

1.8 percent.   American Indians -- American -- Native Americans, .6 percent.

I just want to say that in order for us to do better, we have to not only document

it, but we have to also be able to measure our progress.   So I guess my question to you,

Ms. Sampson, and I really -- over the years you have been nothing but gracious in your

time and excellent in your responsiveness to the many questions, the myriad of questions

that I have asked over the years.   But in the CIA-authored report, they came up with

diversity and inclusion strategies.   Can you provide me an assessment of the progress

that has been made on the three goals that they identified in that document?

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u>   Without looking at the document itself, what I can tell you about

the DLS study is that it was implemented with the support of the senior leadership of the

CIA.   That all of the recommendations in the DLS study as well as recommendations that

we have made as a community in our workforce concern study are being implemented.

Ms. <u>Sewell.</u>   Well, why is it that we are not seeing -- we are seeing incremental

progress, but really dismal progress when it comes to promotion.   I also would like to

submit for the record the NGA's report of their own, the state of Black promotion in the

National Geospatial Intelligence Agency.

That report came about because there was a year in which not one African

American was promoted in the NGA.   And while it is great to have self-examination, it is

better to have forward looking.   So I would like to have you submit for the record, if you

don't know the answer or can't give it to me in this timely fashion because we only have 5

minutes, I would really like for the record -- to be put in the record what has been done to

implement the strategies and the findings that all of these reports have consistently had.

And I guess my other question to you to, Ms. Bingen, is in terms of the military.

You know, we -- I understand that you are over the civilian force, but it is really mind-boggling to me that we could have such higher instances of racial minorities in the military and such low instances in the IC.

And I really want to understand what you are -- what you are doing within the Department of Defense -- and I chair the subcommittee on Defense Intelligence, to really implement matrix that are measurable year to year. It is great that you all give us a report that is often hard to decipher, but never goes back and gives us, you know, how you are implementing the strategies.

Ms. Bingen. And, Ms. Sewell, as I have looked at the data across the military departments for both women and minorities, they are lower numbers, and --

Ms. Sewell. Consistently.

Ms. Bingen. Consistently. And that was very eye-opening as I was going through all this data as we knew it. But to actually take a hard look at the data that we have, where we had it, because we have not done a good job collecting the data and bringing it together. It has been consistently low. So that is something that we have --

Ms. Sewell. I am going to reclaim my time because I have exceeded my time.

But I just want to just end by reading what the synopsis was in the report, the 2005 diversity, in the CIA leadership report. Vernon Jordan concluded that agency leaders, managers, and supervisors do not prioritize diversity in leadership.

Sadly, Mr. Chairman, by the fact that we don't have the heads of the agencies sitting before us, I can only conclude that diversity, while a priority, is not a top priority across the IC. Thank you, and I yield back my time.

The Chairman. Thank you. Mr. Hurd.

Mr. Hurd. Thank you, Chairman. I thank our panelist for being here today. And let me just start by saying, if I ask a question that you all have a concern with that the

answer may have an counterintelligence issue, please let us know.

I am a little hesitant to ask my questions because when it comes to hiring and our hiring practices, this is an area that our adversaries are keenly interested in and is a counterintelligence concern.

This is a pipeline problem, right?   And my first question for all three of you all, have we seen an increase in minority applicants year to year for the various positions that you all oversee?   Ms. Sampson, do you want to start?

Ms. Sampson.   Sure.   Again, data analytics is a key priority for us moving forward.   The capturing of applicant information is now being enabled through the technology we are using called Applicant Gateway.

Mr. Hurd.   Sure.

Ms. Sampson.   There are many agencies that are --

Mr. Hurd.   When did we start?

Ms. Sampson.   I would say about 3 years now.   This is an estimate.

Mr. Hurd.   And do you have any indication over that 3-year period, are we seeing an increase, decrease, or static change within the number of applicants applying?

Ms. Sampson.   We are seeing a steady increase in the number of applicants that are applying.   I think that it is very -- this is voluntarily disclosed information, and so you have to look at both the effort behind it as well as who enters on duty at the end of the process.

Mr. Hurd.   Sure.

Ms. Sampson.   But to your point, we need to know who is applying within the IC. We need to know the demographics.   We need to be able to measure -- are we targeting the right recruitment process.

Mr. Hurd.   Of course.

Ms. Sampson.   So those are the priorities that we have as a community.   We are having a much stronger return on relationships that we are making with organizations that then funnel candidates.

But I will tell you that educating the public on what the Intelligence Community does is probably our number one cross-cutting priority because many underserved communities do not have an optic about the various careers and opportunities and talent that we need within the Intelligence Community, nor what we do.

Mr. Hurd.   Ms. Sampson, as a former Black case officer, I am aware.   All right.   And so, Ms. Sampson, may I ask a second question on this.   Are we keeping track of the number of minority candidates that get a conditionable offer that do not accept a conditionable offer or leave somewhere in the rest of the process?

Ms. Sampson.   I am not collecting as an IC community as a whole.   Individual elements are -- that have the capability of collecting applicant flow information --

Mr. Hurd.   Sure.

Ms. Sampson.   And right now, consistently, I think we have perhaps four elements that are consistently able to do that.   So that is something that we can drill down into a lot further.

Mr. Hurd.   Do we, as a Congress, need to do something to make sure that they are collecting that type of information?

Ms. Sampson.   I would not say it requires your partnership on that front.   I think that the technology is being enabled through the intelligencecareers.gov and our IC applicant gateway, which is our information technology gathering tool.

Mr. Hurd.   That is a good copy.

Mr. Coker, maybe we would jump over to you.   Same two questions.   Again, if you feel comfortable answering this.   Have we seen an increase in minority applicants

year over year?   Are you all keeping track of that information?

And then what is your understanding of the NSA's number of people that leave the pipeline because -- between the considerable offer and final offer.

Mr. Coker.   Well --

Mr. Hurd.   Microphone, please.

Mr. Coker.   I don't have the number of applicants year to year on me, I can tell you that the number of minority in terms of percentage of the overall workforce has been increasing steadily from 2010 to 2018.

And given our goal of 33 percent minority hiring for fiscal year 2019, and we are already at 31 percent, we expect that we will continue that trend in a positive direction. So that recruitment is vital.   What we do to retain is at least as important, and we are focusing on that as well.

Mr. Hurd.   And with the time that I do not have, my final question is, when does the hiring pipeline begin?

Ms. Sampson.   I argue that it is middle school and K through 12.

Mr. Hurd.   Right answer, Ms. Sampson.   Right answer.   I think that is something we need to get out of this mindset of need to know, right?   And get in the need to share.   Because if we don't tell the story about the awesome careers that are available to folks, and how we need a diverse population in order to keep this country safe, we are not going to be able to continue to keep this country safe.

So, Mr. Chairman, I apologize for going over my time, and I yield back.

The Chairman.   I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Carson.

Mr. Carson.   Thank you, Chairman.

Diversity initiatives that are explicitly branded as diversity initiatives often fail to

enact change on the culture of a workplace. This is because naming an executive to a chief of diversity or having a diversity program is really only a first step.

So organizational change and change to the culture is critical -- is a critical second step.

And, as you know, this is far more difficult and can be approached in many different ways. So experts have recommended things like rotating employees through different specialties and increasing employee contact with a diverse set of colleagues, giving more autonomy to team managers, especially in the environment of self-managed teams.

So my question is, are there restrictions or obstacles to that type of organizational change because of the sensitive nature of the IC's community work?

And, secondly, can you share any insights into how an agency in the IC might search for innovative ways to achieve that organizational change? Is that through more self-managed teams with autonomy and maybe provide a more diverse contact amongst employees.

Ms. Sampson. That is right at our immediate campaign.

Mr. Carson. Uh-huh.

Ms. Sampson. Following the recommendations of the workforce concerns report, we looked at key areas of research, what is actually going to move the needle. And so we are lunching a campaign that is a IC-wide education campaign called the Small Steps Approach. There is no single cause for the diversity challenges that we face, and there will be no single solution. So there is a multifaceted approach that we are taking.

The four steps are, awareness, you have to be aware that there is this challenge. You have to be aware that each individual harbors a way of thinking that needs to be raised, including the bias and take proactive measures to understand the need.

The second step is exposure.   We have to purposefully expose ourselves, whether or not through joint duty assignments, shadowing opportunities, having closer contact, developing structured teams with diversity in mind.   Third step being action. If we see that there is a challenge but no action is being done, then you will not have the ability to overcome to laws of physics, and so you have to put this into motion.   And then the final one, and I think probably most sticking point is accountability.

There has to be a level of accountability.   And what we found is that peer to peer accountability, that peer pressure, that raising the visibility and the progress and comparing one organization with another, one agency with another, so that your point about who is the -- which agency is not in the lead, which agency is at the bottom, these are valid considerations because research shows that people are influenced by social accountability.

And so once we combine all of these steps with the deliberate and continuous education and awareness campaign, we are hoping to shape the organizational culture in such a way that our outreach, that our recruitment, that are on-boarding and developmental efforts will really accelerate.

Mr. Carson.   Thank you, Madam Sampson.   Anyone else?

Ms. Bingen.   Sir, if I can add, I think your point is very well-taken, in that we are working right now on how we better integrate diversity EEO into our HR processes, we have tended to treat these separately and they must come together, so we are working on that.

Joint duty assignments.   We issued policy last year that gives joint duty credit to individuals that go outside their comfort zone to combatant commands or other areas that makes them more attractive as they go through the promotion process.

We are also doing more work on proactive talent development, not just signing off

on education that they request, but really having the seniors work down with them and pull them up and provide them broader exposure to different opportunities out there.

Performance objectives and evaluation include diversity and inclusion areas. NSA really I think is leading in that area. And then you are absolutely right, it is leadership and accountability. When we look at private sector programs that are successful, it starts with leadership and accountability.

Mr. Carson. Okay.

Mr. Coker. And I will follow on with the leadership accountability and exposure that my colleagues talked to. It is two-way. We need to have those underrepresented minorities exposed to the broader agency and the broader community, but also to the leadership team. And then our leadership needs to be exposed to the talent they may not have otherwise been exposed to.

Some things that we have done in that instance, bimonthly, we meet with our employee research group leadership teams to understand, you know, from the front what their concerns are with regard to diversity inclusion and mission.

And a point that was made, goes to leadership, the ERG leadership told me that they have no doubt about the commitment to diversity inclusion and mission outcomes of the senior leaders, but it is the culture that we need to continue to work on. And that point was well-taken.

We know that the leadership sets the values, and the values are going to impact behaviors, that flows to the culture, and then to the performance. So what we are focusing on now is to ensure that we take the vision and the leadership from the top ranks of NSA and inculcate that throughout the agency to exposure.

And Rita talked a bit earlier about knowing what it takes to get promoted. Sometimes there are key jobs that people need to be aware of and take then advantage

of.   We have implemented a job bank exchange that will allow some of our -- our entire workforce to apply for special assignments that we are seeking members of.   That gives people who may not have otherwise been considered the opportunity to compete for those high visibility, high impact positions.

Mr. Carson.   That means a lot.   Thank you all for your service.   Chairman Schiff.

[10:37 a.m.]

The Chairman.   Thank you, Mr. Carson.

Ms. Speier.

Ms. Speier.   Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for your leadership.

Ms. Sampson, I would like to start with you, and you may have to repeat these numbers again.   I actually just looked up what percentage of the population in the United States is African American.   So could you give us that figure again for those serving in the intelligence, African Americans?

Ms. Sampson.   Sure.   Right now, African Americans are 12.1 percent.

Ms. Speier.   Okay.   So that equals the population of 12 percent.   Latinos are 18 percent of the U.S. population, and I think you said they were 6 percent, correct?

Ms. Sampson.   6.8 percent, ma'am.

Ms. Speier.   So, as you pointed out, Latinos are exceedingly low in representation.   Asian Americans, they represent 5 percent of the population in the United States.

Ms. Sampson.   And 4.3 percent of IC professionals.

Ms. Speier.   Okay.   All right, great.   Thank you.

Ms. Bingen, this chart is really disturbing, because it shows that from 2010 to 2018, the number of women serving in the civilian personnel in the defense Intelligence Community has gone down.   So that would suggest that we have got a serious problem there.   How do you expect to fix it?

Ms. Bingen.   And I think that is largely attributed into the military departments,

the percentage of women in military intelligence is lower and, therefore, I think making the numbers lower.   So that is an area where I go back to the data, the analysis, the metrics.   We do not have good data.   We do not do a good job of doing exit interviews -- surveys and posting --

Ms. Speier.   Is that a responsibility for the Department of Defense?   Is that what you are suggesting?

Ms. Bingen.   I will say for the defense intelligence enterprise that oversees those military intelligence civilians, absolutely.

Ms. Speier.   Okay.   So, in terms of what you would be recommending, you want exit interviews, correct?   And what are you going to do to increase the number of women that have dropped?

Ms. Bingen.   So what we would like to do and work this with our Defense Intelligence Human Resources Board is to work directly with the services, and we have already begun those discussions on getting better data collection so we can pinpoint the why.   I cannot sit here and tell you right now what is really driving that.

One area that we have seen in some of the numbers -- and I will look at the Army, for example -- is the Army's recruitment model, they largely draw from the current force that is getting out.   When I look at the demographics of the current force, women, for example, represent about 15 percent of that population.   So, as that translates to then the intelligence field, there is a lot less to draw from.   So I think we also will have to look at --

Ms. Speier.   The numbers are going down, not up.

Ms. Bingen.   Exactly.

Ms. Speier.   In 2010, you had more women serving in the defense Intelligence Community than you do today.   So, I mean, the numbers of women serving in the

military is going up.   So that doesn't quite compute for me, but let me move on.

Ms. Sampson, do all the IC elements conduct employee climate surveys?

Ms. Sampson.   Yes, they do, ma'am.

Ms. Speier.   And in those surveys, do they ask questions about your satisfaction with your work, whether you have been harassed, whether you feel discriminated against, and are these anonymous?

Ms. Sampson.   The surveys are, for the large part, confidential surveys.

Ms. Speier.   What does that mean?

Ms. Sampson.   That means that, with a great degree of effort, you could discern at the granular level what organization that person comes from, and to some degree if you needed to, which it has never been done, you can identify the person.   But the confidential surveys then allow you to go into the HR system and cross-tabulate the race, the gender, so that you can then do a better trend analysis on the responses.

Ms. Speier.   Could you make available to us the examples of the climate surveys for each of the 17 different agencies?

Ms. Sampson.   Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Speier.   Because I think what we have found in the Department of Defense is that that is a key measurement of success or failure as it relates particularly to sexual assault in the military.   And I think as we look at the fact that the National Security Letter that was sent by, in November 2017, 223 women in the national security field, current and former, diplomat, civil service, development workers signed this letter on the #MeToo problem within the national security arena, I don't know that we have even tapped how serious the problem is or what we can do about it.

And I am hoping that in the next year or so, we will be able to do that.   So giving us these surveys will give us an opportunity to then share with you what we think some of

the questions should be so we can evaluate that.   Thank you.

I yield back.

Ms. Sampson.   If I may, there were a number of pilots to discern just that, the question of harassment, including the ODNIs.   We put in additional questions so that we could try to get a better pulse on the workforce in response to the letter that was raised. And we also had the --

Ms. Speier.   Could you share that with us then as well?

Ms. Sampson.   Certainly.   And then there was a pledge signed by all of the leaders of the U.S. Intelligence Community that went out to the entire workforce, pledging to do more to detect, prevent, and respond to allegations of harassment across all sectors.   So we do, as we move out, have the absolute endorsement of our IC leaders.

The Chairman.   I am going to recognize Mr. Swalwell for his questions.   On the conclusion of his questions, we will recess during votes and we will resume as soon as votes have concluded.

Mr. Swalwell.

Mr. Swalwell.   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.   And, Chairman, thank you so much for convening this very important meeting.   And I also want to thank Terri Sewell for caring so deeply about this issue as long as I have been on the committee and even before.

Ms. Sampson, would you agree that when it comes to diversity in our Intelligence Community, leadership has to start at the top, that if the workforce does not see the leaders of the community prioritizing it, that it won't make its way down?

Ms. Sampson.   I do believe that leadership plays a critical role in setting the tone of organizations.   I also believe that midlevel managers play a critical role in setting the organizational tone that most impacts most employees.   So we are really very focused

on midlevel management competencies.

Mr. Swalwell.   And, Ms. Sampson, you know, we often hear about the 17 intelligence, you know, community agencies across the board from different departments, agencies, and within the military.

And when I look today at who leads those departments or agencies or branches of the military that oversee intelligence, by my count -- and there are some actings in here -- we have 12 White males, 2 White females, 1 African American male, 1 Indian-American male and one Asian-American male, accounting for, essentially, 70 percent of the Intelligence Community is overseen by white men, 12 percent by white women, 5 percent by African American men, 5 percent by an Indian-American man, and 5 percent by an Asian-American man.

Would you agree that that is out of balance with the workforce that we -- just out of balance with the diversity we have in America and also your workforce?

Ms. Sampson.   I would say it certainly doesn't mirror the demographics.

Mr. Swalwell.   How does student loan debt play into someone's ability to come into the Intelligence Community?   And I ask that because an African American graduate will have, on average, $7,000 or more student debt than a White peer.   And we have right now a public loan forgiveness program that was created in 2007.   The first eligible class able to receive aid or relief under that program was 2017.   The idea was that if you worked 10 years in public service, at your 10th year, any Federal loans that you had would be forgiven.   Seventy-thousand-plus applications were sent to the Department of Education in 2017, the first class that was eligible.   Only 864 have been processed.   So is that something you have seen an issue with in the Intelligence Community?

Ms. Sampson.   I think that it is difficult to have an entry level position in government and carry student loans at the same time.   I think that there are some

promising loan forgiveness programs that exist in many of the agencies, but if you are asking the question, are student loans a factor, yes, they are economic factors. We are competing with the private sector.

Mr. Swalwell. Do you agree, though, that student loan debt disproportionately affects communities of color more than it affects, you know, Caucasian applicants?

Ms. Sampson. I don't have the actual statistics on that. So it would just be conjecture, my gut.

Mr. Swalwell. And can I ask, Ms. Sampson, and actually the whole panel, if there are any concrete pieces of legislation or legislation that is already out there, recommendations that you can make to improve access to the Intelligence Community, employment and career advancement for the future of the workforce, is there anything that you would recommend that we could do?

And Mr. Hurd and I have pledged to work together. I am the chair of the Intelligence Modernization Subcommittee; Mr. Hurd is the ranking member. So this would be a good opportunity if you have any concrete ideas on access for us.

Ms. Sampson. I think, as Mr. Hurd pointed out, that K-12 pipeline is a critical pipeline because we need to make sure we have the right skills both now and in the future to sustain the Intelligence Community. And I think that having very clear authorities and ability to invest and partner across public and private sectors would be very useful.

Mr. Swalwell. Thank you. I see my time is about to expire, and I will yield back, and I believe that will be our recess.

[Recess.]

The Chairman. We will come back into session.

Ms. Demings, you are recognized.

Mrs. Demings.   Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of our witnesses for joining us today as we discuss this very important issue and determine where we need to go in terms of diversity and inclusion.

This is a question that I have for all witnesses.   Please discuss the grade profile for persons of diverse backgrounds within your organization.   And then just for the record, the committee requests the addition of grade, years of service, and career category be added to the annual demographic report.

So, Mr. Coker, why don't you begin?

Mr. Coker.   We took a look at our grade profile in the GG-12 to 13 here recently, as required by our Management Directive 715.   And we noticed there was a gap there between minority and nonminority, and that triggered further analysis.

So we are in the midst of a study that we began in March of this year and expect to complete this fall, September 2019, to take a look at why that gap in the promotion rate exists.   It is not likely to be one particular item, but nonetheless, we will have data to support some understanding of that gap.

In terms of specifics, I can tell you that our current senior profile, our senior officers, 32 percent female, which is quite good, and our minority representation at the senior ranks at NSA is 15 percent, and for our people with disabilities, it is 7 percent at the senior ranks.

We recently elevated 61 NSA employees to the senior ranks, and it was relatively consistent there, at least for this most recent elevation cycle: 28 percent women, 6 percent people with disabilities, and 15 percent minorities.

Mrs. Demings.   Do you have an opportunity to brief, and if so, how often, persons at the top on the numbers, the gaps, why you believe those gaps are there? How often do you have an opportunity to discuss those numbers with persons at the top?

Mr. Coker.   I share a suite with General Nakasone and our Deputy Director, and we talk regularly about these numbers and the importance of this reflecting America.

Back to the big six on diversity and inclusion, two of those big six focus items for the National Security Agency are ensuring the pipeline is in place for seniors and then senior leadership accountability for diversity and inclusion, and the latter one I am actually the senior champion for.

So I speak with the Director and the Deputy Director on a regular basis, but just as importantly, our board of directors, which is another very senior level at the National Security Agency.   We have a monthly report from our workforce support activity that talks about the metrics and the demographics at the various grades at the NSA.

Mrs. Demings.   Thank you.

Ms. Bingen.

Ms. Bingen.   Yes, ma'am.   If I can make three general trends here is, so although the progress for percentage of the workforce that are women has been stagnating or declining in the last 8 years, we are seeing a promotion of women to the GS-13 and above levels generally at a higher percentage than we are seeing with men. However, minority promotions from the GS-13 level through senior level still remain a challenge and a work in progress.

So I am one of the seniors that would receive this information, and although I knew we had several initiatives in multiple dimensions of this challenge, it was not until recently that the data had been presented to me.   And, frankly, part of the reason why we wanted to provide you with this place mat today is we wanted to be transparent and candid about where we have challenges.

And I would say on the military department side with women and minorities, whether it is recruiting, promotion, retention, we have some significant challenges that

we have to work at getting better at, and we would like to work in partnership with you to get after it.

Mrs. <u>Demings.</u>   Ms. Sampson.

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u>   Yes, thank you.   I look at the minority women and persons with disabilities across the community, and we are seeing the same trends that Ms. Bingen and Mr. Coker referenced, both individually within IC elements and collectively across the enterprise.

Minorities are about 60 percent -- or 60 percent of minorities are between the GG-11 and 13 pay grades.   And those numbers, as you would guess, steadily decrease over the higher pay grades.   Women are promoted at a rate that is higher than their overall representation, so we are seeing some promising areas there.   And persons with disabilities are also less than represented in comparison to their overall representation in the populations as you go to the senior ranks.

Some of the things that we are doing to address that include mentoring, sponsorship programs, and what we call summits, where we get the workplace together around these issues.   This year, we had over 500 women attend the IC summit, and we focused on networking, those core leadership skills, expanding our networks to include personal branding, the effect of sponsorship and the full range of skills that women can acquire internal to be more competitive.

And then I think the more important thing is to enlist the visibility of our allies. So not just being within a problem set that looks exactly the same, but really exposing the entire workforce and providing opportunities to assist one another.

Mrs. <u>Demings.</u>   Mr. Chairman, may I continue or --

The <u>Chairman.</u>   Of course.

Mrs. <u>Demings.</u>   Ms. Sampson, you spoke earlier about the impact of having to

wait for applicants who might be qualified and ready to go to work, with the exception of passing, you know, the background check, the security check, and you talked about the possibility of bringing them in in jobs that don't necessarily require that level of security but to just hold onto them.

Is that something you have actually implemented, or is that something you are working on doing?

Ms. Sampson.   It is a pilot program that NGA has begun.   As you imagine, the buildings in which we work are highly secure, so finding the appropriate assignments that can keep a person fully employed at that level will be one of the challenges, and being able to give them access to space will be another challenge.   But these are the type of things that we can try to address.

On the front end, we are attempting to be far more transparent with communities, to help them understand what the security clearance process is to begin with and what is entailed in that process and why is it this long, and to also encourage them that don't eliminate yourself from the process, because it really is just that, and it is surmountable.   You can get a security clearance.

Mrs. Demings.   Do you believe that minority communities are even aware of the opportunities within the IC community?   You know, I have certainly been a part of college fairs and job fairs at all levels, and there are a lot of organizations and different careers and professions represented, but never do I remember the Intelligence Community opportunities really being even introduced at the community level.

Would you say that is a challenge, though, that minority communities just don't necessarily understand the opportunities that exist?   And if you agree with that, how can we work to improve and educate and increase our awareness within the community?

Ms. Sampson.   There has been a cultural shift within the Intelligence Community

itself in recent years. Our culture has been very secretive, and over recent years, we have become far more transparent. And with that degree of transparency, we have been able to have a far -- a high touch in terms of community access and involvement. So I think that is what we have to continue to trend to do.

This year, we were involved in a number of very large STEM conferences, and we presented at those conferences. We weren't just in the recruitment booth, but we were a part of the substantive panels.

Mrs. Demings. That is great.

Ms. Sampson. And we brought officers of very diverse backgrounds to talk about their experiences in the community and the range of careers that are offered within our community. But it is a barrier, if you will, to access to information or underserved communities. And I had also no clue that there was such a thing called the Intelligence Community, but inside --

Mrs. Demings. Or that there was a place for me or you or --

Ms. Sampson. Oh, absolutely. And there really is. And I think that these are the kind of things that we have to be able to tell our stories. The power of storytelling is that I am a member of the Intelligence Community, have been for 10 years, and the people who I see and the people who I meet and the opportunities all around the world in every career field that you can think of exist within this community. And it is global. It is 365 days of the year, 24/7. And so there is something in the community for everyone, and if they know about it, then they can do that. They can be a part of it.

We have been realizing that we can't be everywhere, so there are opportunities through virtual career fairs. We have one next week, the Intelligence Community Virtual Career Fair. And that can reach -- anybody who has a computer or a cell phone can plug in and chat with people in the Intelligence Community. That is a big plus.

But technology alone is not going to do it. We have to have stronger and better relationships with every academic institution, professional organization, et cetera.

Mrs. <u>Demings.</u> Okay. Thank you.

Did you want to add something, Mr. Coker?

Mr. <u>Coker.</u> If I may, ma'am. It really is important for us to get out to the communities. And one reason we want to get out beyond the beltway is because we need to get to those parts of the Nation that are not sufficiently exposed to the opportunities that are here.

And I can tell you personally, I was able to go out to the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers a year and a half ago. We had a recruiting booth there. But more importantly, they acknowledged NSA's efforts and outreach to that community. Our Hispanic and Latino Employee Research Group is very active and realizes that not just they but the Nation has a stake in what we do there.

I also had the opportunity recently to go to a Martin Luther King Elementary School in Baltimore City to teach Cryptography 101 to a school that is often overlooked, and I was delighted that I got to go there because it was energizing. Those young fourth- and fifth-graders picked that information up, and it excited them and demonstrated to myself and some of the colleagues that were with me that we have a talent pool that we are not optimizing.

To follow on with that -- I just looked at my schedule -- later today, I have got a prep session to get down to Baltimore City and meet the superintendent of schools there to talk about how we can foster a strong relationship between NSA and Baltimore City.

Mrs. <u>Demings.</u> That is great.

Mr. <u>Coker.</u> It is not just Baltimore.

Mrs. <u>Demings.</u> I was going to say, now, don't leave out the rest of the country.

Mr. Coker.   We will not.

Mrs. Demings.   Thank you all so much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The Chairman.   Thank you.   Mr. Welch.

Mr. Welch.   I just want to say that story of yours going to the school is so wonderful.   I mean, we may get some genius cryptographer, but we will have, no matter what, some inspired kids.   So thank you.

I am going to yield my time to the person who has been our leader on this, and that is, of course, Representative Sewell.   So thank you very much for all that you have done.

Ms. Sewell.   Thank you for yielding.

And thank you all for being here.   I kind of want to follow on the same lines of questioning that my colleague Ms. Demings did.   I think that your outreach is definitely critically important, not only in creating a pipeline of diverse talent to come into the workforce, but also dispelling what has been tenuous feelings in the minority community with government generally and with the CIA and FBI in particular, NSA in particular.   I think we would be remiss if we don't think that what happened in the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s, in terms of targeting civil rights organizations by the FBI and the CIA and civil rights leaders and, frankly, all of the COINTELPRO, all of that is a storied history that we have to overcome.   And so I would encourage all of us to do our part to have more fulsome outreach in that regard.

I wanted to ask a question about how the IC deals with managers who, at a minimum, do not get promoted.   Managers who do not promote an inclusive workforce, what happens to those managers within the IC?   I don't know if, Ms. Sampson, if you could talk to us about, you know, creating a more inclusive environment.

Ms. Sampson.   Recently, we have incorporated performance objectives into the senior executives, and many agencies in all management objectives include a dimension where it is clear that it is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to promote a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

Ms. Sewell.   Have you seen cases in which managers have engaged in unacceptable conduct, but have not been adversely affected in any way?   Does that happen, and if so, what are we doing to mitigate that in today's culture?

Ms. Sampson.   Part of my role is also equal employment opportunity, so compliance and investigation fall within our umbrella for the ODNI workforce.   And we take those matters very seriously.   Some are not reported.   There is a challenge of underreporting, but those things that we are made aware of we redress, we address immediately.   And sometimes it is not the most popular thing for a person to be disciplined, but it is what has to happen for the workforce to have confidence in the system.

Ms. Sewell.   In 2018, how many CEO investigations, EEOC investigations took place writ wide, do you know that?

Ms. Sampson.   I don't have that number.

Ms. Sewell.   Can you get that for us and then break it down in terms of protected class?

Ms. Sampson.   Yes, yes.

Ms. Sewell.   Can you assure an underrepresented minority or physically challenged applicant to the IC that they will work on a level playing field and will not face harassment and discrimination?   Ms. Bingen, can we make those kinds of assurances and, if so, what are we doing -- what is the agency doing on the ground to make that right?

Ms. <u>Bingen.</u>   So I would like to give my personal commitment to it.   I can't say that, across the board, that we are as strong as we need to be and we are seeing some positive trends.   For example, persons with disabilities in the defense intelligence, we are seeing recruitment and retention of those folks at rates that are tracking pretty well to what we are seeing across the Federal workforce.   But I can't say that in all areas -- and this goes back to having the data -- is I don't have a lot of good data on some of these other protected classes to be able to even present that to you.

So it is an area that I am committed to, but I would need to have more fulsome data to be able to provide you that picture and then let you know what we are doing about it.

Ms. <u>Sewell.</u>   So, Ms. Sampson, I mean, the adjudication of these EEOC claims, what proportion of them go to the complainant versus to the agency?   Do you know that?

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u>   I did have that figure because we were looking at some.   I don't have it off the top of my head, but the majority of cases are not in favor of the complainant because the burden of proof in our legal system resides with the complainant.   That is not to say that we have not had cases that clearly the complainants have prevailed in those matters.

But my philosophy is: Let's not wait until we get all the way to trial.   Let's focus in on early conflict resolution and intervention because trials do take years to come to, and we don't want those issues within the workplace to permeate that long.

So my focus is more on the proactive prevention of discrimination and then being prompt to remedy it even without a finding from any kind of adjudicative body.   If we can, if it is within our power to make change at the early stage, then that is what we need to do.

Ms. Sewell.   Well, you know, I had a briefing recently about the CIA and with their EEOC manager, and, you know, they had 18 cases that were -- they had more cases, but they had 18 that were being investigated.   And previous years, if it is any indication, almost all of them go to the Agency not being at fault.

And I just want to make sure, because I think a lot of underreporting goes on, and I think a lot of -- that when you have results that show that the complainant is not heard -- well, is heard but never at fault -- I mean always at fault and not the agency, that that detracts from people actually wanting to bring EEOC claims.

So I think that we have to create an environment that you are right, that on the front end we are more receptive, but we also need to really drill down on some of those numbers to see if we are really getting to the heart of the problem, which is discrimination.

Ms. Sampson.   Correct.

Ms. Sewell.   Thanks.

The Chairman.   Thank you.   Mr. Heck.

Mr. Heck.   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to go back to one of this committee's favorite topics: security clearances. And I want to make sure I understood what I heard this morning correctly.   I think it was the exchange with the ranking member.   We all know and we can stipulate here to the fact that security clearances are taking way too long to complete.   But what I think I heard is that our efforts to recruit diverse candidates are disproportionately negatively impacted by that protracted process.   Would that be your perspective?

Ms. Sampson.   I wouldn't pull the string that far.   What I did say is, in relation to having to wait financially for a security clearance for anyone, whether or not you fall within a minority or other group --

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   So you do not believe that is true?   We have a general problem, not an additional specific problem with respect to attempting to recruit diverse candidates?

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u>   Before I could make that conclusion, I would need to look at the specific --

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   Ms. Bingen.

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u>   But what I did say is that there are specific --

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   I have it, Ms. Sampson.   Thank you.

Ms. <u>Bingen.</u>   I would have to say, sir, there is a general problem.

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   Right.

Ms. <u>Bingen.</u>   I don't have the data as well to give you the specific --

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   Okay.   Mr. Coker.

Mr. <u>Coker.</u>   So I think it is more socioeconomic, whether the individual can afford to wait.

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   So you think we have a disproportionate problem with respect to people that have been socioeconomically more challenged?   Would it not stand to reason against general population data that that would more apply to diverse candidates?

Mr. <u>Coker.</u>   I am not able to make that connection, sir, but I think if you just can't afford to wait --

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   Well, it is a problem we need to fix, period.

Mr. <u>Coker.</u>   Agreed.

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   I don't believe we can achieve the kind of demographic diversity that we all seek if we don't also take into account geographic diversity.   Now, my perspective is strongly held, but based only on anecdotal evidence, that there seems to be a bit of a bias to east of the Mississippi or east of the Rockies, and that our efforts to have people

within the IC reflect the geographic diversity of this country are falling short as well.

And why I think that relates to today's topic is, you know what, we have a lot of pretty incredible outstanding diverse candidates in the West as well.   And I don't think we can afford to turn a blind eye to geographic region in this country in furtherance of our shared goal of increased diversity.

Mr. Coker, you are giving me a lot of affirming head nods.   Weigh in, sir.

Mr. <u>Coker.</u>   I absolutely agree, sir.   And a couple of initiatives that we are participating in to get outside of the beltway, if you will, include our GenCyber, these weeklong cyber camps that we have targeted early to our middle school and high schoolers in more than 40 States plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.   So that gets to geographic --

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   Go West, young man, go West.

Mr. <u>Coker.</u>   Yes, sir.   It is 40 States.   So we are out there past the Mississippi. But in addition to the geographic diversity, it also helps with our recruitment of women. And that is not the intent of the program, but when we are exposing the capabilities and the mission, that does excite the folks.

I think it is roughly 18 percent of computer science students today are women. In the GenCyber camps, more than 40 percent of the participants are girls.   And, likewise, more than 40 percent of the participants are minorities.   We have partnered with the Girl Scouts of America on GenCyber, and the feedback there from their parents has been that their daughters are more excited about technology and more excited about college.   So we are pressing on that as well.

And then I will add, sir, that on the Centers for Academic Excellence - Cyber Defense that National Security Agency partners with the DHS on, we are in every State with the exception of two plus D.C. and Puerto Rico.   So those 270-plus colleges and

universities have the opportunity to be exposed to our mission and then to develop the expertise.   And we are very --

Mr. Heck.   So I think the data suggests that with respect to your diversity recruitment efforts, you have had some notable success in the STEM field in particular. Are there any efforts, one or two efforts that contribute to that above and beyond what you mentioned to Congresswoman Demings or to me just now in terms of some of the outreach?   What accounts for your success?   Let's also acknowledge best practices here.

Mr. Coker.   Sir, we have great student intern programs.   So, when those students get their clearances and are able to work side by side with NSA professionals, that does motivate them to not only adjust their studies if they see another area of interest, but also to get their degrees and come back and work in the field as intelligence professionals.

Mr. Heck.   Thank you, sir.

I yield back, Mr. Chair.

The Chairman.   Thank you.   I want to ask a few questions, and then we will go to a second round if other members have additional questions they want to ask.

And you may have covered some of this a bit earlier, but I would love it if you could drill down further.   How would you compare the problem of recruitment to the problem of retention?   Do we see a greater attrition of people of color from the agencies than we do the general population at the agencies?   And do you conduct exit interviews to find out why?   What can you share with us about that?

Ms. Bingen.   So, Mr. Chairman, on the Department of Defense intelligence areas, one of the things that was eye-opening to me as I dug into this data is for women in particular, although they are showing up -- although the hiring numbers are increasing,

they are also leaving at higher rates as well.   And so we have a problem there that we need to dig into.

We are seeing across the combat support agencies a better trend, where we are starting to recruit more women into the workforce and promote them and then retaining them better, but we do I think have an issue on the military department side.

The Chairman.   And what do you attribute the increase I guess in the rate of attrition among women in the IC?

Ms. Bingen.   And so we don't -- I don't have exit surveys.   So that is one area that I have gone back to our team to say, how do we work with the services to start implementing that and getting better data?   We do see some of the IC climate surveys that those individuals participate in every year.   And we are seeing everything from challenges in workplace flexibility to the promotions.   So that is why there are things that we have undertaken across the board there.   Some Air Force pilots, to provide greater flexibility for, you know, expectant mothers, working parents, more flexible schedules, which is challenging in the Intel Community, but we make it work, telework options.   So things like that.

And then, also, I mentioned earlier on areas like the Army is, you know, when you are drawing from a talent pool where only 10 to 15 percent are women to begin with and 75 percent of your intake is Army that represents that, that is challenging.   You don't have a big pool to draw from.   So I see that challenge showing up in some of our retention numbers.

At the same point in time, you know, veterans coming out of service have immense skills and knowledge of the service and the mission area.   So we have got to balance, you know, seeing value in those veterans, but also knowing the things like Army Futures Command and where we are going in AI that, you know, we need to change that

model.   So it may not necessarily be 75 percent coming out of the service and directly into the civilian workforce.

Ms. Sampson.   I would just broadly say that, with the offsets, you know, there is an offset between hiring and attrition that gets you to a point of overall representation. The overall representation is steadily increasing for minorities and women and persons with disabilities.

We are always concerned about the reason behind the departures of employees. We don't have consistent exit survey data.   There are some entities that offer more opportunities for exit surveys.   But we also look at the climate surveys, and we are beginning to have discussions with industry best practices of pulse surveying people to really find out, what is your current experience right now?

So the concern is that we don't want to lose our best talent, but we realize that when we are in a competitive environment with the many job opportunities that are out there, that we have to make sure that our experiences internal, that people have opportunities for growth and that attrition is not because they couldn't grow.   So it is all related to how we shape our culture, and we hope that it is not related to things such as negative workplace environments.

So how we focus on it is at the culture level, making sure that people know if you come into the Intelligence Community, you don't necessarily have to leave to go back to school to get a graduate degree, because we offer certified degree programs internal to the IC.   So you can stay.   Or if you need to move geographically, we have locations all around the country, so we can support you.   We can make sure that you know opportunities are out there.

But we have a very mobile workforce in the younger hires that we have, and you will see trends that usually within about a 3- to 4-year window, these employees are

looking for different opportunities, and some may or may not be within the IC.   So we really want to have the flexibility so that when those individuals do leave, that they know they can come back, perhaps with better skills, having worked in a different environment, in a different sector, and come in and out of the Federal Government over the course of their careers.   So, hopefully, it is just not a door that you go out of and you can't ever come back.   We want people to have diverse experiences in their careers as well.

The Chairman.   And the improvement you mentioned in the overall composition of the workforce, is that a function of increased hiring, better retention, a combination of both, as between increased hiring and better retention?   Which is the area that you think needs more work?

Ms. Sampson.   I think we can't put our eggs in any one basket.   We have to do better hiring.   There have been years where --

The Chairman.   But let me put it this way then: Is the attrition rate going up or down?

Ms. Sampson.   Over the course of years, we see different trends.   So this past year, from 2017 to 2018, minority attrition increased from 23.8 percent to 24.5 percent. The question is, were these reflective of retirements, of resignations, of decisions to choose other career paths, et cetera.

For women, between 2017 and 2018, in 2017, women were 37.3 percent attrition and 37.4 in 2018.   Again, some elements experienced more attrition than others, but for women we are looking at a 0.1 difference for attrition from last year to this year.

The Chairman.   And what would that look like for the overall workforce?

Ms. Sampson.   I mean, the actual numbers?

The Chairman.   Well, I am just trying to compare whether attrition rates for women and for people of color are higher than for the general population at the agencies.

It sounds like the attrition rates are going in the wrong direction vis-à-vis people of color, at least over the last year, and they have remained fairly flat for women.

But if you look at the broader workforce, is that reflective of attrition rates of the broader workforce, or does that stand out as high among other elements of the workforce?

Ms. Sampson.   I think it is actually on par.   In the Intelligence Community, attrition is fairly low compared to other sectors.   I think we are -- and I would have to give you the exact number -- somewhere around 4 percent.   So, once our workforce gets in, they generally are here.

The Chairman.   Yes.   Can you explain then, if the overall rate is 4 percent, what you are referring to when you say 27 percent attrition rate?

Ms. Sampson.   So you asked me the overall number?   I am kind of asking you the difference between --

The Chairman.   You mentioned attrition rates for women and for people of color. Those are markedly different attrition rates than the overall rate you just gave of 4 percent.   So are we comparing apples to apples, or are we referring to two different kinds of attrition rates?

Ms. Sampson.   No.   This is the share of minorities, women, and persons with disability employed, hired, and departed from the IC, so of the people who departed from the IC.   If you will, I will provide that information to you in a more fulsome presentation.

The Chairman.   Let me ask it this way: Is the rate of attrition for people of color within the IC higher than the rate of attrition for people not of color?

Ms. Sampson.   Without that information in front of me, I can't answer, but I do believe that it is slightly higher, but I do not -- I can't give you any degree of certainty.

The Chairman.   Well, if you could follow up with us on that.

And, finally, is there also a delta in offers made to people of color and offers accepted, and I guess of those offers accepted, people who actually show up for the first day of work. And that implicates something. You know, it is part of what Mr. Heck asked about and the ranking member, in terms of who gets through the clearance process, but also, you know, how long people can afford to wait.

I have a colleague who has applied and been accepted into the IC and has been waiting endlessly to be cleared. Not everyone has the luxury of waiting that long to be cleared. So can you break it down a little for us in terms of what is the acceptance rate of offers and what is the success rate of people actually showing up when the process is complete?

Ms. <u>Sampson.</u> Unfortunately, I don't have that data in front of me.

The <u>Chairman.</u> It would be helpful for us to know if the data exists and what it tells us about the disproportionate impact. I mean, if, for example, it is the case that it is more difficult because of economic circumstances for people of color to wait during the clearance process then maybe that means we need to speed up the clearance process as a means of increasing diversity within the agencies.

Ms. Sewell.

Ms. <u>Sewell.</u> Thanks. Along those same lines, I would like to know if we have the numbers for minorities that are in the core missions versus support. The experience writ large for the diversity has been that if there is a pipeline, it is entry level. And then, as people advance, we lose folks as they get midlevel. And then those that actually advance are promoted to the very top levels, where the numbers are really, really slim.

So I was wondering if you could speak to the data with respect to numbers of minorities, racial minorities, the disabled -- you can break it down to whatever granular level you have it -- with those groups in the core mission versus support.

Ms. Sampson.   I can tell you overall that there are fewer minorities in core mission areas, what we call core mission, and that overall minorities make up the greater share of what is termed to be support positions.   But by support, it can be any number of still highly technical skills, but just not collection and analysis.

Ms. Sewell.   Are there special efforts to really try to get at promotionability and mobility within the IC once you actually get them in the door?

Ms. Sampson.   There are some really good on-boarding programs.   I know that within the Counterterrorism Center, the NCTC, there is a 2-year on-boarding program where people are given experiential learning through different parts of the directorate and through the organization.   So I think that is a promising practice in that way.

We are really promoting more mentorship and more involvement in employee resource groups, because those are the peer-to-peer type of mentoring that can occur, and also ensure that people are supported and connected to the mission through those groups.

Ms. Bingen.   Ms. Sewell, if I can add one example, we are working through the Air Force and NASIC this summer on a pilot where we are testing a more centralized promotion process.   So, for example, rather than someone coming in with one specific, you know, say collection management skill set and you only compete and are promoted within that stovepipe, we are working with NASIC to look at a much broader -- look across all the pool of, say, GS-13 candidates and then, regardless of that stovepipe, is then to be able to promote writ large.   So that you are not inhibited or limited by a particular skill set and you can look more broadly.

Ms. Sewell.   Can you talk a little bit about your experience, Mr. Coker?   I know you have moved up to being the number three.   So your personal experience of both coming in and your ability to be promoted within the IC.

Mr. Coker.   Yes, ma'am.   The key for me is we all need to be competent, and we all need to be of high character.   Exposure, me being exposed to other opportunities and senior leaders being exposed to my capabilities.   That is why, you know, we do focus on having our folks move around to various directorates, meet different leaders. But what I tell our folks is we are all expected to be competent.

Ms. Sewell.   And we all want you -- you know, I am starting as a baseline that the folks that are coming through the door and they get to midlevel are competent, capable. But we are still seeing not as many get promoted to upper levels.

Mr. Coker.   It is right there at that point where it is not simply what I will call a tradecraft expertise.

Ms. Sewell.   Right.

Mr. Coker.   It becomes what I referred to earlier as leadership expertise and interpersonal skills and being aware of opportunities and needs.

Ms. Sewell.   And wouldn't you say unconscious bias also sometimes plays a role in that?   I mean, at the end of the day, we are not devoid -- the IC lives in the larger population and world that we live in, and I would assume that unconscious bias is a part of the toolkit of exposing your midlevel and senior leadership to make them aware of their unconscious bias.

Mr. Coker.   That is a required training segment for our managers, unconscious bias, to be aware, actually to be self-aware.   So we do require that of our managers and supervisors.

Ms. Sewell.   How important was mentoring to your elevation?

Mr. Coker.   Absolutely important.   Again, you know, folks were making decisions about me that I was not aware of in the rooms, the smoke-filled rooms, if you will.   Need to have, again, people that are aware of an individual's capabilities and have

a trusting relationship.   And the trust really is developed by getting to know people different than we are.

Ms. Sewell.   Right.

Mr. Coker.   And getting those folks comfortable to where they are comfortable advocating on our behalf.   So, without mentorship and sponsorship, I would not have been able to take advantage of the opportunities that existed.

Ms. Sewell.   Ms. Bingen, what have you in your career seen as the biggest barriers to minorities' promotion within the IC?

Ms. Bingen.   That is a tough one.   I have been in the job for about 2 years, spent time on the Hill and in the private sector before that.   But it is -- I think you have hit on a lot of it -- the awareness, it is the training, including the unbiased training.   It is making sure that when we do our boards and compete these positions that we have a diversity candidate on the board that brings a different perspective, so you are not just looking at like looking at like.

So I think there are several things that we are doing.   And then just leadership. We have a monthly HR board that I have started attending.   So just to let them know that leadership believes that this is absolutely important, and we have to do more in this area as well.

The Chairman.   Ms. Sampson?   I know you have had a broad career in this and as, really, the HR professional with us today, what would you say are the biggest barriers to promotionability?   Because, you know, you can get in entry level.   You may lose folks to attrition.   They may get to midlevel, and some feel that they are stuck in midlevel and can't seem to get elevated to -- even with like-minded skill sets and I am assuming excellence.   That is, obviously, the top criteria.

Ms. Sampson.   Oh, absolutely.   I think that it has to do with the diversity of an

individual's network and having mentors and sponsors that both look like you and that do not look like you.   Having a multicultural network is critical, because it gives you greater access to information.   And oftentimes people fall into patterns of comfort where they --

Ms. Sewell.   So do we have formal networking opportunities, formal mentoring opportunities within the IC?   I know that there are definitely affinity groups, and I have spoken at several of those, and that is more informal, but formalized mentoring.

Ms. Sampson.   Yes.   And we are really exploring the idea of formalized cross-cultural mentoring.   FBI has really started out very strong in that area and establishing matching programs where, you know, you are making sure that you are not putting people in a room with someone who looks exactly like you or has the same life experience as you, because from that it is less likely that you will grow from different perspectives.   And so taking mentoring and taking it up several notches and also focusing on making sure that when we talk about people that we are sponsoring people that might not look like you and that we --

Ms. Sewell.   And that sponsorship -- I guess I want to get to Mr. Heck.   But I think that that sponsorship, that being in the room, being given opportunities to show one's skill set, one's tradecraft, when it comes to the core mission for moving from, you know, entry level to senior level, you have to be given an opportunity to develop those skill sets and then be given missions that will give you a chance to show your ability to do that.   Are there efforts like that that are documented, you know, that are part of the review process for senior management?

Ms. Sampson.   I think that, from a formalized sponsorship program, I have not seen that in any large scale across the community.

Ms. Sewell.   But are senior managers judged in their evaluations on their ability to promote diversity within their units?

Ms. Sampson.   Yes.   Yes, they are.   They are held to the standard of creating the culture where diversity and inclusion can thrive, and some of them have taken this on in different ways.   So shadowing opportunities, very formalized shadowing opportunities.

Certain seniors have taken the responsibility for making sure that when they are going to meetings, that they are bringing people along with them so that these people can not only see what is actually happening at the meeting so they understand the corporate culture, but that the people who are at the table can then say, who is this person that you have brought along with you, and give that opportunity for -- once again, it goes to that second prong, exposure, and really teaching seniors that you have to create purposefully cross-cultural teams or look at your diversity of your teams.

Ms. Sewell.   [Presiding.]   I think you couldn't be right more.   It needs to be intentional.   Thank you.

Mr. Heck.

Mr. Heck.   Thank you, Madam Chair.

What I didn't hear here today was any notion of a strategic plan of action.   What I heard was a strong commitment, pretty explicit recognition of the overall problem.

I guess what I want to ask is, moving beyond the acknowledgement that we have an overall challenge here and I would argue an opportunity, not all the elements of the problem are equally egregious and often in, frankly, dialogue like this between members of the legislative branch and the executive branch, it is kind of like we are for everything.

You know what, that never works.   So what I want to ask you is, what are the components of this that you think are the priorities for attacking?   And I don't want to bias you, but, for example, here is what I heard, and I could be wrong.   I heard, for example, women had modestly declined as a percentage over the last many years, pretty

egregious.   I heard Hispanics were vastly underrepresented.   And I heard that all diverse categories were significantly underrepresented among senior leadership.

What I would get up and walk out of here taking away if you don't correct me is, boy, if I were in charge, I would be focusing on them, those elements of the problem. Am I missing any, or do you disagree with what I said?   And in any event, what are your priorities?   Why don't we start --

Ms. Sampson.   Thank you for that question.   We actually do have an Intelligence Community enterprise strategy on diversity and inclusion.   And in very large goal areas, we look at leadership and accountability, which I think we all agree is critical, leadership at the very top, leadership at the midlevel, and those who are acting as leaders and shaping organizational culture.

The second prong is workforce development and succession planning.   We have to develop our workforce so that everyone is on an equal playing field, because we are only hiring highly qualified candidates.   So we have to make sure that we are giving everyone the opportunity to succeed equally.

We have to focus on the recruitment, hiring, and retention.   That is the third prong of our 5-year strategy.   Career development and advancement is also critical and then removing the barriers to equal employment opportunity that Ms. Sewell spoke of.

So you cannot address an enterprise change initiative by only hyperfocusing on one area.   All of these areas are critical in order to shape organizational culture and to effect change.

Mr. Heck.   And with all due respect, without disagreeing with you, I would also argue that you can't make meaningful progress if you focus on everything at the same time.

Ms. Sampson.   And that is why you decide who is going to champion what aspect

of the strategy. So one person -- you are absolutely correct -- cannot focus on all five of these areas. It takes strategic partnerships. You have the strategic framework, and then you have to have your strategic partners. You have to have your mission partners.

I will give an example of increasing technology access for persons with disabilities. It would not make sense for us to take that on as a heavy lift when we have our IC CIO John Sherman, who has stepped up into this space, to create more accessible information technology for all persons.

And so I see him as a champion and the goal owner to execute on parts of this strategy. And with each of these areas, for example, our human capital offices, it is critical that we work in tandem with them. And we are doing a lot more merging of our diversity outreach and our recruitment efforts so that --

Mr. Heck. When did you adopt the 5-year plan?

Ms. Sampson. 2015.

Mr. Heck. It doesn't seem to be working that well.

Ms. Sampson. One could argue that it is an effective framework. I don't know that I would --

Mr. Heck. I am looking at the numbers, ma'am.

Ms. Sampson. The numbers can't tell the whole story, with all due respect. And I would argue that every enterprise --

Mr. Heck. They better tell an important part of the story, because if we are not measuring progress then I would suggest to you, you need to take a second look at your framework.

Mr. Coker, I want to get back to the priorities issue, because I am, frankly, completely dissatisfied with that approach. It is not how I, frankly, would have managed my business, and we had challenges like this as well.

Mr. <u>Coker.</u>   Yes, sir.   Literally just yesterday afternoon at our board of directors, we were working on our strategy, and the top tier component of our strategy is talent. And the three bullets for now, if you will, under there: retention, hiring -- retention and hiring is one; development is two; and the environment is three.   So that is going to be part of our emerging strategy.   And that strategy is going to be used to prioritize the NSA, to include our resources.

I also would like to go back, sir, to the Director's big six diversity and inclusion focus areas that we implemented.   And for calendar year 2019, the first one is to implement better personnel practices across NSA.   And our senior champion -- and that is one of the most senior colleagues at the NSA -- is the Director of Our Workforce Support Activity.   So that is number one.   There are only six.

Number two is senior leader accountability, and I am the senior champion on that one.   Not just making words, but turning that into action and holding our most senior leaders accountable.

The third of the big six focus areas are accessibility of facilities, usability of services, and the champions for that focus area is our capabilities lead, who is responsible for developing the systems that we use in our mission, but also our facilities lead, who is responsible for the brick and mortar, making sure that access is there.

The fourth of the six is recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce, and the senior champion for that is our chief of HR.

The fifth is on-boarding and mentoring, and the senior champion for that focus area is our Deputy Director of Workforce Development.

And the last of the big six -- and this is NSA's focus area -- is developing a pipeline of diverse senior candidates.

So, sir, we are confident that we have got the right priorities and focus areas and

the senior leaders that we expect to deliver on each of those six focus areas.

Mr. <u>Heck.</u>   My time is up, obviously, Madam Chair, but I just want to reinforce something that the chair did say earlier and expressing disappointment that the most senior leadership isn't here because it strikes me, as we look at the elements of the problem and underrepresentation among senior leadership being one, for all of the good work that the three of you do within your respective agencies, the issue of senior leadership in particular is one that, unless we have the Directors here, it would be difficult to get as, I don't know, indepth conversation.   We needed to have them here, especially for that.   And so I want to add my voice of disappointment to that of the chair.

I am way over my time.   You are very indulgent.   Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. <u>Sewell.</u>   Thanks.

And I want to thank you all for being here.   I think that the -- I hope that your takeaway is twofold: that we really do want our top leadership to be accountable for the priorities and strategic planning efforts and, most importantly, the results, getting to the results that we all want to see.

And I want to thank you all for your time.   I know that it has been broken up during this day.   I also want to thank the three of you for your expertise and your leadership in your various areas.   Do know that this committee stands as a partner in that area.   This is not simply an oversight.   We truly believe that the strength of the IC is its diversity and exceptionalism.   And if we are to continue to be as exceptional as we are, especially given our global threats, we have to make sure that we are not leaving talent on the sideline.   And that talent comes in lots of different shades, colors, abilities, thought.   And so the spectrum of diversity is what we are interested in making sure that we get geographical thought, racial, disability.   We want it all, and I know that you do too.

The second thing that I think is a takeaway is that we have got to figure out ways to see that the best practices that you guys have identified as a part of your strategies are actually working and figuring out matrices that will actually be able to help us determine are women, how are we getting more women to stay if attrition is low?   How are we getting more minorities to get to promotion levels?   And those are very specific goals, you know, that your matrix, you know, that your data is indicating that we should be focused on.

And so I look forward to working with you on that issue.   And I want to thank all of our able men and women in the IC who every day take care of our national security.   I know it is a tough job, and I know that we are better for it when we have the diversity, the beautiful tapestry of diversity that is in this Nation represented in our workforce.   So I want to thank you all.   Thanks.

This hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:41 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]