

**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

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**BEFORE THE**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MILITARY PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE**

**ON**

**RECRUITING, RETENTION AND END STRENGTH OF THE U.S. ARMY RESERVE**

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Chairwoman Davis, Congressman Wilson, distinguished members of the subcommittee; thank you for the invitation to appear before you today to discuss recruiting, retention and personnel strength of your Army Reserve. It is an honor to testify before you on behalf of more than 202,000 Army Reserve Soldiers.

After more than eight years into this persistent conflict, the most compelling evidence of the success of the Army Reserve is the confidence deployed commanders have in the values, qualities and abilities of our Soldiers. The men and women of the Army Reserve – our Warrior-Citizens, are full-time patriots who put their civilian careers on hold to protect American interests at home and abroad.

Owing to the contribution of Warrior-Citizens, their Families, and prudent investments over the course of this decade, the Army Reserve has evolved from a strategic reserve to an indispensable operational force. In an environment of persistent conflict, turbulent markets, and tight competition for scarce resources, we must continue to invest wisely in our force because it is indeed our greatest resource and a national treasure. As an operational force, the Army Reserve is an exceptional return on investment for American taxpayers.

The Army Reserve leverages your investment to attract and develop talent. The expertise we nurture is employed on the battlefield and in the boardroom. Army Reserve Soldiers bring cutting-edge ideas from the marketplace to the military enabling the Army to accomplish missions with maximum impact and minimum risk. In turn, Army Reserve Soldiers bring the attributes they acquire in uniform – leadership and decision making skills, confidence, high ethics and morals, and discipline – back to American industry to build solid businesses and stronger communities.

The Army Reserve is a community-based, federal operational force of skill-rich, Warrior-Citizens, who provide integral capabilities for full spectrum operations. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Army Reserve mobilizes continuously; demand for Army Reserve Warrior-Citizens is such that approximately 12 percent of our force is consistently mobilized in support of the current contingency - 16,000 of the 28,000 soldiers currently mobilized are deployed to the Central Command area of responsibility. The Army Reserve has

supported nine major operations and several lesser contingencies since 1990. Our legacy of service and our most recent contributions set the conditions necessary to embrace the future.

This past fiscal year (FY08), despite operational demands, the Army Reserve increased assigned strength by 7,142 Soldiers. This reflects a steady growth path; our current Selected Reserve strength is over 202,000 Soldiers. A successful community-based recruiting effort; targeted programs and incentives; and personnel policies to control unanticipated losses resulted in this substantial net gain.

The Army Reserve exceeded its recruiting goal in 2008 by assessing 44,455 new recruits (106 percent of our overall FY08 mission) and retaining 16,523 Soldiers (110 percent of our 2008 goal). In addition we continue to see attrition decline. The Army Reserve had an 11 percent decrease of losses from FY07 to FY08.

Now in the second quarter of FY09, we continue to experience a positive recruiting trend; although recruiting an all-volunteer force in today's political environment remains challenging. The Army and the Nation face significant recruiting hurdles including a low propensity of young people to serve, a shrinking pool of fully qualified prospects, and an increasing trend of mid-grade ranks to leave the service. The outlook for the Army Reserve remains promising however, because we recruit beyond the Active Army's pool of candidates from the millennial generation. The Army Reserve appeals to men and women who have skills that can translate from a civilian to a military profession. Our Soldiers are usually older, many already have at least one degree from an institution of higher learning, they are probably making more money in their civilian job and they more than likely have already started a family. They are established in their profession, and their community but they still hear the call to serve their Nation. And that's where there's no distinguishing between the Active force, the Reserve force and the National Guard – today's recruits have a strong desire to serve their Nation.

To achieve our recruiting and retention success over these past 18 months, the Army Reserve implemented three critical initiatives; command emphasis and guidance, the Army Reserve Recruiting Assistance Program (AR-RAP) and the Critical Skills

Retention Bonus-Army Reserve (CSRB-AR). Command emphasis and guidance provided the greatest impact focusing energy and effort on filling the ranks. AR-RAP brought a tangible reward to Soldiers for finding other patriots to serve. This innovative recruiting assistance program resulted in 3,751 accessions in fiscal year 2008 and continues to produce new recruits today. And finally, CSRB-AR allowed us to address specific skill-set and grade shortfalls with targeted financial incentives to retain much needed talent and expertise in our ranks. Our incentives for continued service in critical specialties ensured 809 captains and 128 experienced staff sergeants and sergeants first class stayed in uniform.

As we continue to gain momentum to achieve our end strength of 206,000 Soldiers we recognize a significant gap in capability. Although we are within the congressionally mandated end-strength window, overall, the Army Reserve is short approximately 10,000 mid-level officers in the ranks of captain and major. Throughout 2009, the Year of the NCO, we are recognizing the contributions of our enlisted Soldiers, yet in the enlisted ranks, we are challenged to develop and retain senior mid-grade non-commissioned officers (staff sergeants and sergeants first class). These shortages are particularly troubling because junior and mid-career officers and noncommissioned officers have the tactical knowledge and operational skills and combat experience that are essential to our current success and long term health and vitality. We continue to work aggressively to grow and shape the force to overcome these challenges.

The demand of multiple deployments has caused a number of captains to leave active service. The Army Reserve recognized an opportunity and is diligently recruiting these officers into our force. We instituted stabilization policies to retain their expertise. We continue to leverage other sources for commissioning officers. One of our most lucrative sources of new officers is through direct commissioning. Many of our direct commissions, however, are coming from our noncommissioned officer ranks – further exacerbating the NCO shortage. Junior officer and mid-career noncommissioned officer retention is critical to ensure our force of Warrior-Citizens can continue to meet current and future combatant commander requirements now and into the future.

Much of our accomplishments have been aided by incentives. **We must continue to provide our professional Warrior-Citizen Soldiers incentives to keep them on the Army Reserve team. Continued resourcing of recruiting and retention incentives will maintain our manning momentum.**

As you may know, one of the recommendations from the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves (CNGR) report is to create a “continuum of service” for a fully integrated force. One of our biggest challenges is to avoid whip sawing our Soldiers from their civilian and military careers. As CNGR suggests, a seamless transition for Soldiers who move back and forth among components as their personal lives and civilian careers dictate is vital. In the Army Reserve we have taken this notion a step further with our Employer Partnership program to develop a human capital strategy model for the 21st Century that combines the creativity and responsiveness of the civilian sector with the organizational skills, discipline, and leadership talent of the military. Partnering with employers helps strengthen the community; support Army Reserve Soldiers and their Families; and supply employers with valuable and talented employees. Additionally, employers benefit from the employment of men and women with Army values such as the unique brand of mental, physical and emotional strength, experience and proven leadership skills – certainly a positive return on investment for America.

The bottom line is that we are recruiting not only Soldiers for America’s Army Reserve, but employees for America’s industry at the same time. Conversely, those who come to us from the civilian sector, having acquired a set of skills they can transfer to a military specialty, are able to employ those civilian acquired skill sets on the battlefield. The Employer Partnership Initiative facilitates, reinforces and creates a win-win situation between Soldiers and their Employers.

The Army Reserve has already signed more than 190 Employer Partnership Agreements with state agencies, associations, large and small corporations, and law enforcement agencies. For example in California we have signed with many statewide firms including the California Department of Veterans Affairs and large national defense firms. But we are in line to sign agreements with the San Diego Police Department and

the San Diego Sheriffs Department. In South Carolina we have signed agreements with the Central Baptist Hospital, the City of Columbia, the Chester County Sheriff's Department, the Columbia Police Department and several other law enforcement agencies and businesses. From an individual's perspective, let me share with you one partnership example. INOVA Health System, a not-for-profit healthcare provider in Northern Virginia has struggled to find quality, skilled personnel to fill technical positions. Through a partnership with the Army Reserve, we recruit an individual interested in a career as a radiology technician. We train that individual as a Soldier and we certify them as a radiology technician. After finishing advanced training, that Soldier walks into a civilian job with INOVA Health System where he or she continues to develop and refine his or her skills. Through our cooperative efforts, the hospital and the Army gain a more competent, more experienced, and more capable Soldier-employee.

Our continued outreach to industry is necessary to facilitate meaningful and enduring employer partnerships as we sustain the ARFORGEN process and build our assigned end strength. Employer Relations is a critical program for the future of the Army Reserve. Developing and maintaining strong partnerships will allow the Army Reserve and employers to capitalize on respective strengths while minimizing weaknesses. Failure to achieve this goal will place an undue hardship on employers and adversely impact recruiting and retention.

As President Obama recently said about America's current economic crisis, "we have a once in a generation chance to act boldly, to turn adversity into opportunity." The Army Reserve has recognized this opportunity and has experienced recruiting and retention success as we strive to fill our end strength. We are trained, ready and capable of helping the Nation during and after this economic crisis with our boots on the ground and our civilian skills in your communities.

**Over time, our Employer Partnership initiative will become more than a key human capital strategy. It could well serve as the foundation of our identity. Two entities share and enhance the skills of one individual who contributes both to the defense of our nation and to the business community.**

As we continue to build our end strength to 206,000, we take our commitments to our Nation, to our Army, and to our Soldiers and Families, and Civilian workforce seriously. We are effective stewards of our nation's resources. We serve with an unwavering pride that the Nation's sons and daughters willingly answer the call to duty in a time of war or national emergency. As we position ourselves as an essential provider of combat support and stability enablers to the United States Army, we look to Congress and our fellow citizens to sustain and strengthen our force in these challenging times.

Since September 11, 2001, one hundred and seventy Army Reserve Soldiers have sacrificed their lives in the fight against tyranny. Today thousands stand in harm's way, thousands more stand ready to step into the breach, yet still thousands of Americans continue to answer the call to the Colors by joining us. America can make no better investment.

Thank you for your continued support for the men and women who serve in your Army Reserve and for the opportunity to brief the subcommittee on the state of recruiting and retention in the U.S. Army Reserve. I have attached several charts to my written testimony to further highlight the state of Army Reserve recruiting and retention.

This concludes my statement and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.