

**Statement of the Honorable John Garamendi  
Chairman, Readiness Subcommittee  
“Mismanaged Military Family Housing Programs: What is the  
Recovery Plan”**

**April 4, 2019**

Good morning.

Ladies and gentlemen, I call to order this hearing of the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

In February this committee heard from a panel of courageous military spouses who told us of the unhealthy and unsanitary living conditions they had experienced in privatized military family housing and the continuing impacts these conditions have had on the health of their families. In addition to our panelists, this committee and many of our Members have received thousands of emails and letters with similar accounts of mold and lead contamination, shoddy maintenance workmanship, and unprofessional property management staff. These accounts paint an unsettling picture of many of our privatized family housing developments. Equally disturbing is the fact that when these families reached out to their chain of command for help, instead of getting the support they desperately needed, they received shrugs of indifference and were told that there was nothing the military services could do to help them. That is the wrong answer for our military families.

In recent weeks, the military services have finally become energized about getting to the root causes of this crisis. We have heard encouraging news in the form of senior leader engagement, health and safety inspections, inspector general investigations into work order processing, and housing hotlines to expedite getting families the help they need. However, the

efforts being performed at the headquarters level have not necessarily trickled down to the installations. We continue to receive large amounts of correspondence from families struggling today in privatized military family housing. We've heard that in some cases the very efforts headquarters put into place to try to improve the situation, have led to counterproductive practices like closing maintenance work orders too quickly and increased use of private partner non-disclosure agreements to keep services members and their families from speaking out about their housing concerns.

The Services must expeditiously move from assessment mode into implementation. The must use the best practices from the housing developments that are working well and quickly implement the fixes required to conduct effective oversight at the headquarters level and provide the necessary support to our military families at their installations. I expect that our witnesses will provide us with information on the steps they are taking today to make headway on these issues and a detailed roadmap of there mid and longer term plans to get the privatized military family housing program back on track. Our families deserve better and this Committee will demand that the Services do better.

With that, I would like to turn to our Ranking Member, Congressman Doug Lamborn of Colorado, for any remarks he may have.

Thank you. Mr. Lamborn. I would now like to welcome and thank our witnesses:

- Mr. Robert McMahon, The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment;
- Mr. Thomas Modly, The Under Secretary of the Navy;
- Mr. John Henderson, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Energy for the Air Force; and

- Mr. Alex Beehler, The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment for the Army.

Please note that Under Secretary Modly appears before us today due to turnover of personnel in the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment and his seniority should in no way reflect negatively on the Air Force, Army or Department of Defense.

Your formal testimony will be put into the hearing record., In the interest of time, I ask that you please briefly summarize your testimony and confine your openings to around three minutes. Please proceed with your remarks.