

RECORD VERSION

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BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FIRST SESSION, 118TH CONGRESS

ON ARMY ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROGRAMS

MARCH 29, 2023

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, distinguished members of this Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the men and women of the United States Army.

The Army's mission remains unchanged, to fight and win our Nation's wars. To meet our mission requirements, we are amid the most significant transformation in the past four decades. We are building the Army of 2030 and in doing so, taking care of our people because they are the foundation of the Army of 2030. There is no better investment to ensure the Army's readiness. The Army of 2030 requires a highly trained, disciplined and fit force across all active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian units and organizations. People perform their best when they are part of cohesive teams where everyone treats each other with dignity and respect. Therefore, the Army's number one priority is our people—our soldiers, Army civilians, families, and veteran soldiers for life. All of the Army's personnel programs and initiatives are focused on taking care of our people, because we lead with our values, and doing so is essential to the readiness required to accomplish our mission.

Building the Army of 2030

The Army of 2030 will provide the Joint Force trained and ready forces, capable of combined arms maneuver in a multi-domain operating environment. Building the Army of 2030 while maintaining readiness depends on a high-quality all volunteer force. The Army is taking active measures to overcome unprecedented recruiting challenges without compromising on our standards for high quality soldiers. We will continue to develop and implement innovative ideas to build high quality recruits as an investment in America's youth.

Accessions

Investing in the Army of 2030 requires investing in our youth and helping them realize their full potential. The Army enlisted 44,901 recruits in the AC, 24,829 recruits in the ARNG, and 9,095 recruits in the USAR in FY 2022. As of February 27, 2023, the AC achieved more than 25% of its FY 2023 recruiting mission of 65,500. The ARNG

achieved more than 38% of its FY 2023 recruiting mission of 30,880. The USAR achieved more than 23% of its recruiting mission of 14,650.

The recruiting challenges facing the Army are not new, and they are not from a single cause. Several of the trends we are observing, and now responding to, were years in the making. We are in an intense competition for talent. Some of the benefits that long set the Army apart from the private sector, are becoming more common there such as healthcare and tuition assistance. We have specific challenges connecting with America's youth, like Generation Z. Pandemic-specific challenges also changed the recruiting environment, as did young Americans' perception of work. The Army is addressing each of these challenges head-on, with all resources committed, to turn around recruiting.

The Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC) is an investment in America's youth. It has begun to help the Army expand our recruiting pool, while not sacrificing quality. FSPC is a holistic program to aid potential recruits to meet either the physical or academic aptitude standards to fully qualify for Army service. In FY 2023, as of 15 March, 4,603 trainees have enrolled in the academic component. Of those, 3,698 graduated and moved on to Basic Combat Training (BCT) with an average Armed Forces Qualification Test score improvement of 18.4 points from the average initial score in the program out of 99 points possible. Within the fitness component, 1,695 trainees have enrolled. Of those, 862 graduated and moved on to BCT, with an average weekly body fat loss of 1.39%. Across both the physical and academic programs, a total of 130 soldiers have graduated Advanced Individual Training as of the end of February.

Investments in the Army do not end with new recruits, investments are made throughout their service. We are investing in our recruiters by selecting recruiters differently, improving their training, increasing their resources, and educating their families on those resources available to them. Other initiatives to improve our recruiting efforts include the development of the Soldier Referral Program to provide an opportunity for soldiers in the AC, USAR, and ARNG to connect with youth where they are, share their Army story,

and be rewarded when the referred recruit joins the Army. In January 2023, the Army began the Recruiter Production Incentive – Assignment Incentive Pay to incentivize recruiters to exceed their quarterly recruiting mission. This new program earns the recruiter \$75 for each contract over the requirement in CAT IIIB, and \$150 for each contract over the requirement in CAT I-III A.

The Army is carefully monitoring and as needed, adjusting incentives to position itself as a highly desirable employer of choice. We are adjusting enlistment bonuses to help recruit into critical skills specialties. Recruits can combine multiple enlistment bonuses and can combine up to four different incentives. Training of choice and station of choice remain the most popular incentives.

Civilian Workforce Recruiting

Our civilian workforce is a force multiplier across the Total Army and our investments in their capabilities is crucial for meeting the needs of the Army of 2030. The Army appreciates the many civilian direct hire authorities that Congress has afforded the Department. These authorities allow us to reach top civilian talent and bring them on faster than through traditional hiring. The Army has implemented several initiatives as part of a broader strategy to reduce civilian time-to-hire. The Civilian Implementation Plan within the Army People Strategy places specific emphasis and focus on reducing time-to-hire to ensure that the Army is competitive for top talent with other employers. A multi-year strategy to execute tasks supporting the Civilian Implementation Plan is in progress. These efforts will assess hiring quality, leverage Office of Personnel Management resources, and optimize Civilian Human Resources Agency and Command civilian hiring operations. As our multi-year strategy to reduce time-to-hire matures, we expect to achieve consistent reductions in the time it takes to hire civilian personnel.

Marketing

The Army is about possibilities and investing in oneself for a better life. The Army offers 178 career fields as options for new recruits, and Army Marketing is laser-focused on

re-introducing this Army to America's youth. Serving in the Army is not a detour; it can put you on an accelerated path to fulfill your dreams and realize your full potential. We must meet young people where they are and address their concerns that are barriers to entry. Our research informs us that the prospect has gaps in knowledge about what Army service can offer, trouble identifying with service culture and lifestyle, and has diminished trust that they will be treated fairly. However, the top concerns amongst the prospect audience continue to be that serving in the Army will either delay or put them off-track from their life goals and that they will be separated from friends and family.

Over the last 12 months the Army put three distinct advertising campaigns in market to communicate from multiple angles to the prospect audience. "Know Your Army" communicated tangible employment benefits that the Army provides. The third Chapter of the "What's Your Warrior" series informed prospects on the breadth of career fields available. Finally, "Decide to Lead" communicated how service as an officer provides unparalleled leadership training and experience. This was the first officer-focused campaign for the Army since 2009. As a result of this campaign, we exceeded our Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps' National Scholarship Board application goals. We have seen a positive cumulative effect on prospective lead generation by using multiple campaigns simultaneously in the market to address the interests of multiple audiences.

The Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army just announced the Army's first new brand refresh effort since "Army Strong" nearly twenty years ago. This effort was the culmination of two years of research and preparation to bring the Army back to relevancy in the minds of Generation Z and others. The Army conducted extensive research amongst prospects and our important stakeholder audiences and influencers before deciding on the elements of this brand refresh, which include a modernized logo and the tagline "Be All You Can Be." While this tagline is very popular amongst our veterans, it was not chosen for the sake of nostalgia; it was chosen because testing amongst our target audience and others revealed it to be the most favored and best suited for communicating the possibilities available with service in the Army and the

purpose and passions of our prospect audience. Elements of this campaign are now in market and appearing in connection with events like the Men's and Women's NCAA Basketball tournaments, with more planned this fiscal year.

Taking Care of Our People

For the Army, "People First" means we develop and implement programs designed to keep our people safe and provide them and their families with the quality of life they deserve. It also means we foster positive command and organizational climates and culture which enables the formation of cohesive teams. Positive climate and culture, plus cohesive teams, reduces harmful behaviors, and allows our servicemembers to focus on training to achieve their assigned missions. This is the equation that achieves readiness.

Quality of Life

Investments in our people are directly correlated to the quality of life that we provide for them. Quality of life remains a cornerstone of the Army's People Strategy. These programs support and enhance readiness, recruitment, and retention by providing a positive experience for all of our soldiers and families, including safe, well-maintained barracks and housing; high-quality, affordable childcare, and youth services programs; and meaningful employment and educational opportunities for spouses.

Improving barracks and housing for our soldiers and families is a top priority for all Army senior leaders. The Tenant Bill of Rights enacted by the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is helping the Army to rebuild trust and ensure a positive living experience for military members and their families and increase their negotiating power with the Military Housing Privatization Initiative companies. We have fully implemented all 18 tenant rights at our 44 Army installations with privatized housing. We are committed to continuing to improve through the annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys, which have enhanced our communication with residents, as well as helped us create and prioritize action plans and correct deficiencies. We are improving other systems and processes including completing third-party inspections of privatized family homes,

implementing a Housing Environmental Hazard Response Registry for those living in privatized or government-owned/leased housing, hiring engineer/technicians to provide quality assurance and implementing a Housing Certificate Program to build a skilled workforce.

Childcare is a readiness issue. Our soldiers and their families must have peace of mind as they start and end the day in service to our Nation. We appreciate Congress funding two centers in FY 2022 (in Kansas and Kentucky). We are also making significant investment in facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization to ensure that child development centers are free of hazards and maintain continuity of service. To recruit and retain high-quality staff, we increased the salary of entry-level direct care staff, instituted recruitment bonuses, reduced childcare staff fees, and authorized commissary access for staff at 17 pilot locations. We also increased the provider rate cap for families who use community-based childcare when installation care is not available as well as applied the same concept to on-post family childcare (FCC) providers to increase the number of FCC homes.

With frequent relocations and soldier deployments, Army spouses face distinct challenges in gaining and retaining employment compared to civilian counterparts. We continue to reimburse up to \$1,000 for professional licensing and certification in a new state after a Permanent Change of Station move, and we appreciate Congress' action in the FY 2023 NDAA to expand the authority for reimbursement. More than 617 reimbursements have been paid since the inception of the program in May 2019, totaling more than \$272,000. We continually promote the Office of the Secretary of Defense Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program's My Career Advancement Account scholarship program. The program provides eligible spouses with up to \$4,000 for the pursuit of a license, certification or associate degree in any career field to attain the education, certifications or licenses they need to find employment. Finally, we are also investing in the Employment Readiness Program to help spouses find and maintain employment by hiring additional staff across Army installations. Finally, we are supporting the recently-launched Military Spouse Career

Accelerator Pilot program, which provides active, National Guard, and reserve spouses with a 12-week paid fellowship program to expand employment opportunities and connects employers with this diverse, highly skilled, and educated workforce.

Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and Soldier For Life (SFL)

The Army is fully committed to caring for its people, from the beginning of their tours in basic training until they leave the service. It is in the Army's and our Nation's best interest to ensure soldiers successfully transition back into our communities after their active-duty military service and become ambassadors for the Army within those communities. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is the overarching program that provides assistance, information, training, counseling, and services to eligible soldiers in transition to help them achieve career readiness upon separation, retirement, or release from active duty.

TAP offers soldiers the opportunity to participate in the Career Skills Program (CSP), also known as the DoD Skillbridge program. Soldiers have the option to participate in first-class apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, on-the-job training, employment skills training, and internships to obtain industry-recognized skills, and move into high-demand and highly skilled careers with little-to-no cost upon transition. During FY 2022, 6,821 soldiers successfully completed a CSP, 5,974 of them (91%) were placed into a career following the completion of their CSP. This is a highly successful program that is continuing to gain more traction as commanders at all levels are being educated on the benefits afforded to transitioning soldiers.

The Soldier for Life (SFL) program is reconnecting the Army with communities throughout the country. SFL's outreach and advocacy efforts focus on engaging local governments, non-government organizations, private organizations, and non-profit organizations in order to influence policy, programs, and services that support soldiers, veterans, and families, while also encouraging soldiers to remain Army ambassadors after their transition from service. In FY 2023, SFL is focused on building greater

awareness and knowledge of the Army within civilian communities across the country, especially where there are no Army bases.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts

The Army uses Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) to optimize talent, build cohesive teams and maintain a positive Army culture. The 21st-century strategic environment demands more from soldiers and Army civilians than ever before. As the world changes into an era of strategic competition, the benefits of the Army's DEIA Program allow the Army to promote an environment of adaptability, resiliency, and opportunity through strong, disciplined, and cohesive teams capable of completing the mission. A mature DEIA program leverages individuals' attributes, experiences, cultures, characteristics, and backgrounds to build a stronger team, enabling organizational agility and adaptability.

Reducing Harmful Behaviors

Our leaders are the first line of defense to combat harmful behaviors and care for our soldiers in our formations. Nothing corrodes team cohesion and reduces its effectiveness faster and more completely than the scourges of sexual harassment and sexual assault, prohibited discrimination, harassment, hazing, bullying or domestic violence. The Army is focused not only on responding to these harmful events and providing care and support to victims, but also preventing them. To do this, we rely on leaders at all levels to create and sustain healthy command climates.

Prevention

The Integrated Prevention Advisory Group (I-PAG) is a dedicated capability for Senior Commanders designed to implement and evaluate evidence-based primary prevention activities across the individual, relationship, organizational, community, and societal levels. The I-PAG consists of individuals with specialized training and experience focused on engaging the community; empowering leaders with data and research; implementing comprehensive, community-based integrated prevention activities; and sustaining progress over time. These individuals are responsible for assessing holistic

data sets, evaluating local policies, planning multiple reinforcing prevention activities, and evaluating outcomes. The I-PAG will provide the technical expertise necessary to connect the science of prevention and the art of command within an optimized prevention system.

Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program (SHARP)

The harmful behaviors of sex discrimination, including sexual assault and sexual harassment are a detriment to readiness and have no place in our Army. The Army continues to take action to reduce harmful behaviors within its ranks, with an emphasis on integrated prevention measures that produce demonstrated results.

Through the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program, the Army is committed to enhancing readiness by preventing sexual harassment, sexual assault, and associated retaliatory behaviors and providing comprehensive advocacy and response capabilities to survivors when such incidents occur.

All 70 of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee (FHIRC) recommendations have been addressed, and, of these, 56 recommendations have been implemented Army-wide. An additional 10 recommendations have been transferred in support of the Department of Defense's (DoD) deliberate and phased implementation of the recommendations of the DoD Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC) recommendations, as approved by the Secretary of Defense, and four have been superseded by the IRC. We have modified our policies, making it mandatory for commanders to initiate separation proceedings for any soldier with a substantiated complaint of sexual harassment. The Army is also adding 348 full-time SHARP professionals who are trained and experienced to effectively support survivors.

Suicide Prevention Program

Taking care of our people is about building soldiers whose commitment to duty is underpinned by strong family relationships, strong peer support and strong leadership teams. Suicide affects unit cohesion and ultimately readiness and has no place in our

Army. We must find ways to support the mental health and well-being of our soldiers instead of responding to suicide after it occurs. Individual soldiers, units and installations are all unique, with their own challenges. Suicide prevention programs are, therefore, not one-size-fits-all. We are working to pair the right resources for the right issue to best support our soldiers and their families.

Army efforts in 2022 have shown positive results with significant decreases in suicides across all components, resulting in the lowest number of suicides since 2014. We resolutely continue our efforts to: enhance leader engagement, strengthen individual, unit, and community resilience and connectedness and expand mental health services to mitigate stressors that may lead someone to suicide. This comprehensive approach focuses on the integration of a variety of primary prevention and intervention strategies and activities.

Personnel Modernization

The foundation of Army Readiness is personnel readiness. Programs, policies, innovations, and management models are transforming the Army's personnel systems to meet future needs. These changes will provide our soldiers and civilians with more opportunities to excel; give our Army the enduring advantage of a transparent, data rich personnel environment; and improve our ability to compete for and retain talent.

Talent Management

The Army must continue to prioritize human capital investment and talent management by acquiring and leveraging the critical talent data (Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviors) of its soldiers, balanced with the needs of the Army, which is at risk of losing its overmatch capabilities to potential adversaries.

The Command Assessment Program (CAP) improves the Army's ability to select the best leaders at the battalion and brigade levels. In November 2022, the Army completed the fourth iteration of CAP. Over 5,000 leaders at lieutenant colonel, colonel, GS-14, GS-15, and E-9 levels have been assessed through CAP over the past three years. To

date, CAP has identified 168 leaders as counterproductive or ineffective who would have been selected using only the pre-2020 system, positively impacting the lives of over 200,000 soldiers. CAP has continually improved its feedback mechanism to contribute to individual and organizational growth. When compared to the legacy Centralized Selection List system, CAP assesses and identifies leaders who are more cognitively capable, better written and verbal communicators, more physically fit, more self-aware, more emotionally resilient and less likely to exhibit counterproductive or ineffective leader traits.

The Army Talent Alignment Process (ATAP) is a decentralized, regulated market-style hiring system that aligns officers with jobs based on their preferences shaped by the unique knowledge, skills, and behaviors of each officer, as well as the talents desired by commanders for their available positions. To date, 60,000 officers and warrant officers have been assigned using the Talent Marketplace. During the most recent marketplace cycle (FY 2023) with reportable data, 69% of officers participating in the market obtained a Top 3 preference while 80% of officers obtained a Top 10 preference. Talent markets also enable the Army to experiment with monetary and non-monetary incentives to fill critical positions and retain talent.

Similar to ATAP, we have begun to implement the Assignment Satisfaction Key-Enlisted Module (ASK-EM) to support Active-Duty Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) being considered for Staff Sergeant through Master Sergeant (MSG) assignments. On average, 7,000 to 9,000 NCOs participate in the market each cycle with approximately 30,000 NCOs receiving their assignments through this process each year. Unlike Assignment Incentive Marketplace 2.0, ASK-EM does not provide the unit the ability to preference NCOs. In conjunction with Human Resources Command, we are working to implement a two-sided market for the MSG population through the Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A) platform. A pilot of this capability is expected by the end of FY 2023.

The Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A)

IPPS-A is the critical enabler for The Army People Strategy. IPPS-A is embracing emerging technologies, integrating modern personnel management and data analytics capabilities, and aligning with the Army's efforts to build a more effective and efficient force. It delivers a secure, comprehensive, and data-rich human resource (HR) talent management system to the Total Force.

IPPS-A automates HR processes and interfaces with 200+ legacy HR and Pay systems. With the deployment of Release 3, 12 of these systems are sunsetting while an additional 11 are partially subsumed. Upon full implementation, IPPS-A will fully subsume 32 legacy systems. What began nearly three years ago when the ARNG became the first component to implement IPPS-A is complete with the deployment of Release 3. All three components are executing personnel, limited pay, and basic talent management functions in IPPS-A seamlessly across the Total Force.

Conclusion

The people of the United States Army—these servicemembers who serve our Nation, both in and out of uniform, along with their families—are our strength and our legacy. Their talents, courage, and commitment make our Army the greatest in the world. To keep our Army strong, we must build our force with individuals who embody the best of America, and we must offer them opportunities to allow both their careers and Families to flourish. A diverse, talented, strong, healthy, and resilient, force is the most important indicator of our readiness.

Thank you for your generous and unwavering support of our outstanding soldiers, civilian professionals, and their families.