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THE SENATE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT
OF
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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
PERSONNEL POLICY AND PROGRAMS OVERVIEW
ON
MARCH 28, 2007

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Chairman Nelson, Senator Graham, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to provide an overview of your Marine Corps personnel.

Introduction

We remain a Corps of Marines at war with over 33,700 Marines deployed to dozens of countries around the globe. The young men and women who fill our ranks today recognize the global, protracted, and lethal nature of the challenges facing our Nation, and their dedicated service and sacrifice rivals that of any generation preceding them.

Thanks to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, your Marines know that the people of the United States and the Government are behind them. The continued commitment of Congress to increasing the warfighting and crisis response capabilities of our Nation's armed forces, and to improve the quality of life of Marines, is central to the strength that your Marine Corps enjoys today. The Nation is receiving a superb return on its investment in the world's finest expeditionary force.

This past year, you have seen evidence of this not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, but in Lebanon, where we were partners in the largest noncombatant evacuation since Vietnam; in the southern Pacific, as part of humanitarian assistance and relief efforts in the wake of multiple natural disasters; and throughout the world in our theater security cooperation engagements. We know the future will remain challenging—not only in the current conflicts, but in subsequent campaigns of the Long War on Terror. I am confident that with your continued support, your Corps will remain the Nation's force in readiness and will continue to fulfill its congressionally mandated mission of being *the most ready when the Nation is least ready*.

Right-size our Marine Corps

To meet the demands of the Long War and other crises that arise, our Corps must be sufficiently manned, trained, and equipped. Like the Cold War, the Long War is a continuing struggle that will not be measured by the number of near-term deployments or rotations. To meet our challenges, we must ensure that our personnel policies, organizational construct, and training are able to operate at a “sustained rate of fire.”

Strain on the Individual. Marines are resilient warriors and are willing and able to absorb increased deployment stress without outward symptoms. However, any deployment causes stress as members are away from their families and in dangerous environments. Families worry about their loved one’s safety and spouses have to care for their children alone. As members deploy multiple times, these stresses are multiplied. Nevertheless, despite the current unparalleled Personnel Tempo, the morale of our Marines and their families remains high.

To avoid an adverse toll on our Marines and their families, and to prevent a decrease in readiness, the Secretary of Defense established a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio goal for all active component forces. This ratio relates to how long our forces are deployed versus how long they are at home—the goal being for every six months a Marine is deployed, they will be back at their home station for one year. We need to relieve the strain on those superb Americans who have volunteered to fight the Nation’s battles.

Strain on the Institution. The current deployment cycle requires commanders to focus on those skill sets required to accomplish the mission in Iraq and Afghanistan. This emphasis, along with the added requirement for individual augments, training team requirements, and the need to deploy many units for missions outside of their normal functions has caused deterioration in other skill sets. The result of this strain is limitation in the Marine Corps' ability to provide

trained forces to project power in support of other contingencies. To fulfill our mandate to be “*most ready when the Nation is least ready,*” our deployment cycles must not only support training for irregular warfare, they must also provide sufficient time for recovery, maintenance, and training for other contingency missions.

Reducing the Stress. The proposed increase to our active component end strength to 202,000 Marines by Fiscal Year 2011 will go a long way to reducing the strain on the individual Marines and the institution. It will enable us to build capacity to fight the Long War and to better train and respond to other crises. It will also help us meet the Secretary of Defense’s goal 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio.

Our first task will be to build three new infantry battalions and their supporting structure – approximately 4,000 Marines. We will then systematically build the additional individuals and units on a schedule of approximately 5,000 per year. This plan will gradually increase the deployment-to-dwell ratio of some of our habitually high operational tempo units such as ground reconnaissance, light armored reconnaissance, assault amphibian, combat engineer, military police, signals intelligence, unmanned aerial vehicle, helicopter, air command and control, combat service support and explosive ordnance disposal units.

Increasing end strength to 202,000 will be achieved by through increased active component accessions and increased retention. These mission increases will be significant and will require additional compensation incentives. We have developed a number of Assignment Incentive Pay based initiatives that will be critical to our increased retention missions, and we ask for congressional support for these programs.

Reserve Component End Strength. Our efforts in the Long War remain a Total Force effort. Recent policy changes within the Department of Defense will allow us to use the Reserve

forces as they were structured to be employed—to augment and reinforce our active component forces. To this end, our goal is to obtain a 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio within our Reserve Component. We believe our current authorized Reserve Component end strength of 39,600 Selected Reserve Marines is adequate. As with every organization within the Marine Corps, we continue to review the make-up and structure of the Marine Corps Reserve in order to ensure the right capabilities reside within the Marine Forces Reserve units and our Individual Mobilization Augmentee program across the force.

Funding. The Marine Corps greatly appreciates the increased end strength to 180,000 in the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act. As you know, our Program of Record requires that we internally fund any end strength in excess of 175,000 Marines. We are resourcing these additional costs through Supplemental funding.

Compensation. The vast majority of our personnel budget is spent on entitlements, including compensation. Compensation is a double-edged sword in that it is a principal factor for Marines both when they decide to reenlist and when they decide not to reenlist. Private sector competition will always seek to capitalize on the military training and education provided to our Marines – Marines are a highly desirable labor resource for private sector organizations. The targeted pay raise effective 1 April 2007 has allowed the Department to accomplish its efforts in bringing all pay grades up to the 70th percentile of comparably educated civilian pay levels. We look forward to the product of the thorough analysis being conducted by Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation review of the Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation recommendations.

The continued support of the Congress for appropriate increases in basic pay and a sound, comprehensive compensation and entitlements structure greatly assists efforts to recruit and retain the quality Americans you expect in your Corps

Recruiting

Active Component. In Fiscal Year 2006, the Marine Corps achieved 100.1 percent of the enlisted shipping (accession) objective. Over 95 percent of those shipped to recruit training were Tier 1 high school diploma graduates and 68 percent were in the I-III A upper mental group testing categories. In short, we accomplished our recruiting mission and exceeded DoD quality standards. To meet the Marine Corps' proposed end strength increase, annual total force accessions missions must steadily grow from 38,217 in FY06 to 45,000 in FY10. FY07 total force accessions mission is 39,927. As of 1 Mar 2007, we have shipped (accessed) 13,568 recruits to basic training which represents 102 percent of our mission Fiscal Year to Date. Although challenging, we anticipate meeting our annual recruiting mission. With regard to our self-imposed contracting mission, we are ahead of our current plan for the year and expect to meet our objectives. Our Officer Selection Teams were also successful accessing 1,494 Second Lieutenants in Fiscal Year 2006, 101 percent of mission, and we are on course to make our officer accession mission in Fiscal Year 2007.

Reserve Component. For the Reserve Component, the Marine Corps achieved its Fiscal Year 2006 reserve enlisted recruiting goals with the accession of 5,880 non-prior service Marines and 3,165 prior service Marines. As of 1 Mar 2007, we have accessed 1,874 non-prior service and 1,746 prior service Marines, which reflects 35 percent and 50 percent of our annual mission, respectively. Again, we expect to meet our reserve recruiting goals this year. Officer recruiting and retention for our Selected Marine Corps Reserve units is traditionally our greatest challenge,

and remains the same this year. To help address this issue, we have initiated a reserve officer commissioning program exclusively to address the company grade officer shortfall. Under this program, individuals will attend Officer Candidates School, The Basic School, a Military Occupational Specialty school, and return to a reserve unit to serve. When coupled with the continued selected reserve officer affiliation bonus provided in the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act, we believe we will have established a method to retain officers leaving active duty and attract qualified officer applicants into the reserve ranks.

Accomplishing the Mission. To assist in meeting our growing recruiting mission, the Marine Corps plans to increase the number of recruiters, retain experienced recruiters, increase enlistment incentives, and expand marketing and advertising efforts. The recruiting environment continues to be highly challenging. Private sector opportunities, low unemployment, declining propensity for military service, the Global War on Terror, and the higher costs in advertising require innovation in marketing the Marine Corps. We strive to emphasize intangible benefits by projecting the Marine Corps message of “Tough, Smart, Elite Warrior,” and the “transformation” that a young man or woman experiences in becoming a Marine. The Corps continues to explore the best means to communicate and appeal to the most qualified young men and women of the millennial generation. We endeavor to educate the parents of potential applicants. Parents continue to have the greatest influence on young men and women in their decision to serve their country, and it is important that we inform them of the benefits of serving in the Marine Corps.

Our message is reinforced through marketing and advertising programs - paid media, leads for recruiters, and effective recruiter support materials. Paid advertising remains the most effective means to communicate our message and, as a result, is the focus of our marketing efforts. As advertising costs increase, it is imperative that our advertising budgets remain

competitive to ensure that our recruiting message reaches the right audience. Marine Corps recruiting success in the past is a direct reflection of a quality recruiting force and an effective and efficient marketing and advertising program. We would like to thank congress for their continued support of the “No Child Left Behind Act” which provides recruiters access to high schools and student directory lists critical to recruiting quality applicants.

Finally, a very important factor in our success lies in ensuring clear and direct responsibility and oversight. The Commanding Generals of our two Marine Corps Recruit Training Depots also serve as the Commanding Generals of our Eastern and Western Recruiting Regions. Having the same individual responsible for quality recruiting and entry-level basic training is key to recruiting and making Marines. Consistent with this, our recruiters' commitment to recruiting a quality force is reinforced by the fact that they are held accountable for their recruits' performance as they earn the title Marine and complete “boot camp.”

Retention

Retention remains an important pillar of building and sustaining your Marine Corps. Our manpower system must match skills to sustain the operating forces. The Marine Corps endeavors to maintain stable, predictable retention patterns. However, civilian opportunities abound for Marines as employers actively seek our young Marine leaders for private sector employment. Leadership opportunities, our core values, and esprit de corps are the reasons dedicated young men and women reenlist after their initial commitments to defend our nation.

Enlisted Retention. The Marine Corps is a young service by design and retaining the highest quality Marines to lead our force remains of paramount importance. I am pleased to report that in Fiscal Year 2006, the Marine Corps achieved 101.9% of its First Term retention

goal and an impressive 115.8% for the Career Force. Both goals were accomplished in June 2006, which was 3 months before the end of the fiscal year.

The mid-year course correction to achieve a 184,000 end strength by the end of Fiscal Year 07 will be challenging. On 4 March 2007, the FTAP retention goal increased from 6,096 to 8,298 causing the FTAP rate to readjust from 91.9% to 67.5%. The Marine Corps has historically reenlisted approximately 25 percent of its first term force and the new target will require 33 percent this fiscal year. The STAP retention goal also increased from 6,461 to 7,800 causing the STAP rate to readjust from 57.2% to 47.4%. Our continuing retention success will be largely attributed to two important enduring themes: Marines want to stay Marines because of the superb leadership in our officer and staff noncommissioned officer ranks, and Marines desire to remain part of a 'band of brothers.'

The Marine Corps makes wise use of Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) funding provided by Congress. Your Marine Corps' baseline SRB budget last year was \$53M and the Marine Corps spent an additional \$32M in supplemental funding to achieve its retention goals. This fiscal year we have \$55M for SRB in the baseline. However, because of our increased retention goals, we will need significant additional supplemental funding; we are thankful for your support for this funding. To support our FY07 growing end strength, we are supplementing the SRB Program by offering \$10,000 Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) for FY07 reenlistments. For FY08, the President's budget provides the Marine Corps a baseline SRB funding of \$214M; we will again need additional supplemental funding for our end strength retention incentives.

As we continue the Long War and grow the Marine Corps to an end strength of 202,000, the challenge to keep the most qualified Marines must be met with increased SRB funding. Your continued Congressional SRB support with added supplemental funding will ensure the Marine

Corps has the necessary combat trained Marines for the Long War and the other contingencies that may arise in support of our great nation.

Officer Retention. I am happy to report that the Marine Corps continues to achieve our goals for officer retention. We are retaining experienced and high quality officers. Our aggregate officer retention rate was 91.0 percent for Fiscal Year 2006, which is above our historical average. Current officer retention forecasts indicate healthy continuation rates for the officer force as a whole.

Reserve Retention. Concerning our reserve force, we satisfied our manpower requirements by retaining 80 percent in Fiscal Year 2006; the fifth consecutive year above our pre-9/11 historic norm of 70.7 percent. For the current year, reserve officer retention has thus far remained above historical norms. Enlisted reserve retention is currently lower than has been seen in the last 2 years, and is being monitored very closely. It is important to note that higher planned retention in the active component will reduce the number of personnel transitioning into the Selected Marine Corps Reserve. To address the potential impact of our increased retention and increased active component end strength, the Marine Corps Reserve is aggressively pursuing options to increase retention within the Reserve Component, to include increasing the number and dollar amount of reenlistment incentives with a focus on units identified for future deployment in our Long War Force Generation Model.

Marine Corps Reserve

This year marks the sixth year that our reserve component has augmented and reinforced our active component in support of the Global War on Terror. Thanks to strong Congressional support, the Marine Corps has staffed, trained and equipped its Reserve to respond to crises around the world. Our Reserve Component possesses capabilities to fight across the full

spectrum of conflicts to support our Marine Air Ground Task Forces. As of 28 February 2007, 41,560 Reserve Marines have been mobilized since 9/11. The Marine Corps Reserve continues to recruit and retain quality men and women willing to serve in our military and help our nation fight the Global War on Terror. These men and women do so while maintaining their commitments to their families, their communities and their civilian careers.

More than 4,700 Reserve Marines are currently on active duty with nearly 3,500 serving in reserve ground, aviation and combat support units, while over 1,200 serve as individual augments in both Marine Corps and Joint commands. Seventy-four percent of all mobilized Reservists have deployed to the CENTCOM area of operations. To support ongoing mission requirements for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the Marine Corps Reserve provides approximately 10 percent of our Total Force commitment.

We are currently working closely with the Department of the Navy and OSD on the development of the new activation policy. This policy, in conjunction with our Long War Force Generation Model will greatly improve our ability to provide our Reserve Marines with advance notification of activation.

As previously mentioned, recruiting and retention remain a significant interest as the Marine Corps Reserve continues its support for the GWOT. The funding increases and flexibility inherent in the Reserve incentives you provided in the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act are invaluable assets to assist in our continued recruitment and retention mission. The increased bonus amounts not only generate greater interest in reserve affiliation, but also provide financial assistance during the critical period of transition from active duty to reserve service.

Healthcare remains an essential part of mobilization readiness for our reserve component. The new streamlined healthcare benefit that Congress authorized this fiscal year will help ensure that our Selected Marine Corps Reserve members, and their families, have access to affordable healthcare as they do their part to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism. Increased access and flexibility to healthcare for these families assists in alleviating one of the most burdensome challenges facing families of deploying reserve Marines.

The long-term success and sustainability of our Reserve Forces is directly related to our ability to prepare and employ our forces in ways that best manage limited assets while meeting the expectations and needs of individual Marines and their families. In an effort to ensure a well-balanced total force and address any potential challenges that may arise, we are constantly monitoring current processes and policies, as well as implementing adjustments to the structure and support of our reserve forces.

Civilian Marines

Civilian Marines continue to provide an invaluable service to the Corps as an integral component of our Total Force. Working in true partnership with Marines, Civilian Marines will continue to play an important role in supporting the mission of the Marine Corps and the Global War on Terror. Our vision for the future not only defines what the Marine Corps will offer its Civilian Marines, but what the Corps expects from them.

Marine Corps Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan. Marines, more than ever before, recognize the importance of our civilian teammates and the invaluable service they provide to our Corps as an integral component of the Total Force. To that end we continue to mature and execute our Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan, a strategic road map to achieve a civilian workforce capable of meeting the challenges of the future. We are committed to building

leadership skills at all levels, providing interesting and challenging training and career opportunities, and improving the quality of work life for all appropriated and non-appropriated Civilian Marines.

National Security Personnel System (NSPS). The Marine Corps is committed to the successful implementation of the National Security Personnel System. The NSPS will enable the Marine Corps to better support the warfighter by providing a civilian workforce that is flexible, accountable, and better aligned to the Marine Corps mission. The Marine Corps is actively participating with the Department of Defense in the development and implementation of this new personnel system and is cooperating with the sister Services to ensure Civilian Marines and other civilian employees are afforded the training opportunities and support necessary for a successful transition. The Marine Corps is dedicated to providing all available resources to the NSPS implementation effort while maintaining high operational performance. Marine Corps implementation of NSPS began with Headquarters, Marine Corps (HQMC) converting approximately 900 non-bargaining civilian employees on 21 January 2007.

Military-to-civilian conversions. Military-to-civilian conversions continue to provide a valuable source to send additional Marines back to the operating force in support of our warfighting initiatives and help reduce stress. We will continue to pursue sensible conversions and remove Marines from billets that could be capably filled by civilian Marines.

Information Technology

We continue to transform our manpower processes by exploiting the unique benefits of the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS), via our fully integrated personnel, pay, and manpower system. The Marine Corps Total Force System seamlessly serves our active, reserve and retired members, both officer and enlisted; provides total visibility of the mobilization and

demobilization process of our Marines; and ensures proper and timely payments are made throughout the process. This Fiscal Year, MCTFS continues to obtain a pay accuracy rate of 99.9% for our active component and 99.7% for our reserve component.

MCTFS is the backbone that has allowed the Marine Corps to develop the Total Force Administration System (TFAS), a virtual administration center that moves Marine Corps pay and personnel administration to a predominately self-service, virtually paperless, web based environment. This capability allows global access to pay, personnel tools, and personal information viewed electronically in a secure environment. During 2006, individual Marines and their leaders leveraged MCTFS' capabilities, using TFAS via Marine Online, a web based application, to automatically process more than 1.4 million transactions, including over 84% of our annual leave events.

MCTFS' integrated environment also directly feeds our Operational Data Store Enterprise and Total Force Data Warehouse, a shared data environment of current and historical individual and aggregate data. This unique capability allows analysts to quickly respond to a myriad of data analysis and requests. Our Manpower Performance Indicators present this data in a tailorable, easy to read, graphical format to operational commanders and headquarters planners, via the World Wide Web. We continue to program technology investments that build on these integrated capabilities, ultimately providing greater effectiveness and efficiencies with a goal of further decreasing Marine administrative support and redirecting this structure to warfighting capabilities. Proper management of our manpower requirements and processes requires continued investment in modern technologies; we remain committed to these prudent investments.

Taking Care of our own—the “New Normal”

Upon successful recruitment and retention of high quality Marines, the Marine Corps seeks opportunities to enhance the experience of being a U.S. Marine. It is widely recognized that lasting intangible benefits are gained through duty and commitment. These positive experiences are further intensified by the assurance that the Marine Corps “takes care of our own.”

Marines and their families have long been accustomed to rapid and frequent deployments. Over time, the Marine Corps has developed a flexible and evolutionary infrastructure to support our way of life and the “normal” operations of our expeditionary force. Marines and their families have been well served, but we must continuously assess our support programs and capabilities to ensure sufficiency and relevance.

Assessment & Improvement. Going forward, it is becoming more evident that what was once characterized as “surge” support requirements of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom should now more appropriately be viewed as “normal” operations of the Marine Corps--albeit a “new normal.” With this view, in January 2007, we conducted a Wounded Marine and Family Support Forum for the purpose of assessing the quality and consistency of our support programs. Over 100 major command representatives convened in Alexandria, Virginia, to examine seven program areas for wartime applicability and consistency of support across the Marine Corps. Areas reviewed included: wounded warrior support, post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, casualty notification and support, Marine and family pre-deployment training, Marine and Family Services Programs, special needs families, and the Key Volunteer Program. As may be expected, we found some program inconsistencies that will require greater analysis, further program development, and in some

cases increased resources. Recommendations subsequently approved for action will take advantage of ad hoc best practices and be directed for implementation Marine Corps-wide. Execution will remain the responsibility of our Commanders, but they will be supported with good guidance along with standard templates and tools that will ensure we continue the proud Marine Corps tradition of “taking care of our own.”

In addition to the efforts described above, the Quality of Life in the Marine Corps Survey and Study will be administered later this year. This same survey was previously conducted in 1992, 1998, and 2002. The purpose of the survey is to gain insights from Marines and their families on their perceptions of quality of life. Eleven “life domains” covering all aspects of quality of life; including pay and compensation, military life, family life, housing, health care, etc. will be surveyed for levels of satisfaction. We will use the results of the survey to support Marine Corps desired outcomes for recruitment, retention, and readiness.

Importance and Role of Marine Leaders. Marine leaders, at all levels, have the greatest opportunity to directly engage Marines and their families through active listening and appropriate referral to an array of support agencies and services. In this capacity, Marine leaders set an environment where it is “okay to ask for help.” As described previously, we must provide good guidance, tools, and templates our leaders can use for immediate and lasting care of Marines and families. Our “Leaders Guide for Managing Marines in Distress” is an example of an innovative tool for leaders engaged in the “new normal” operation. The Guide, which is updated regularly, is an online and pocket version resource for Marine leaders in the effective management of stress-related problems (i.e. suicide, substance abuse, financial problems, and domestic abuse), including combat/operational stress.

Marines and Marine families have demonstrated great strength and resiliency. In fact, for the past five years, our rates of domestic abuse and child maltreatment; incidents of drug use, divorce, and suicide have remained comparatively low. We remain vigilant in monitoring trends and will continue to provide appropriate support mechanisms to help Marines and their families prevent and, when necessary, overcome problems that may arise.

Casualty Assistance. The Marine Corps ethos of “taking care of our own” is never more relevant than when we care for our fallen Marines and their survivors. Whether the death is combat-related or comes after a long and well-lived life, each Marine death is a tragic or significant loss to the survivors, the Corps, and our Nation. We steadfastly endeavor to honor their sacrifices with sincerity and continued remembrance. Our Casualty Assistance Calls Officers are trained to treat next of kin and other family members as they would their own family. Providing casualty assistance always begins with the basic tenet that there is no standard casualty call; each case is distinct and families grieve in their own way and time. Assistance to families is carefully measured to facilitate their transition through the stages of grief and the completion of the casualty assistance process.

In the past few years, we have been careful to incorporate best practices or adapt our casualty assistance process to better meet the needs of our surviving families. In fact, over 150 key personnel involved in the Marine Corps casualty process from Commands around the Marine Corps met in December 2006 to receive professional development and discuss casualty assistance issues. We have also instituted a long-term case management system for surviving families. Finally, as part of the Wounded Marine and Family Support Forum, we also identified some additional CACO training requirements that we will soon resolve.

We will continue to lean forward and aggressively assess our quality of life and support services. As necessary, our programs will evolve to an appropriate wartime footing.

Marine for Life--Injured Support. The Marine For Life Injured Support program continues to assist seriously and very seriously injured Marines, Sailors who served with the Marines, and their families pending the upcoming implementation of the Wounded Warrior Regiment, whose mission will be to track and assist wounded Marines and Sailors to add additional discipline and continuity to taking care of the injured. The Marine for Life program provides support from the time of injury through transition from military service, or re-integration to duty. Marine For Life provides support tailored to an individual's needs, including pre- and post-service separation case tracking, assistance with the physical evaluation boards' process, and an interactive website that acts as a clearinghouse for all disability and benefit information. The program also provides employment assistance through a pre-existing Marine For Life network, which establishes local coordination with veterans, public, private, and charitable organizations that provide support to our injured warriors. Marine For Life integrated Marine Corps and Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to seamlessly transition handling of Marine cases into the Veterans Administration by assigning a Marine field grade officer to the Department of Veterans Affairs Headquarters' Seamless Transition Office. This integrates Marines into the Department of Veterans Affairs system and provides service oversight of Veterans Health Administration care and Veterans Benefits Administration benefits delivery. The Marine For Life program provides the direct point of contact for problem resolution for Marines within the Veterans Affairs system. The scope of services and capabilities that the Marine For Life program currently delivers is expected to continue and expand in a more robust manner when the Wounded Warrior Regiment stands-up.

Conclusion

As we continue to fight the Long War, our Services will be required to meet many commitments, both at home and abroad. We must remember that Marines, sailors, airmen, and soldiers are the heart of our Services – they are our most precious assets – and we must continue to attract and retain the best and brightest into our ranks. Personnel costs are a major portion of the Department of Defense and Service budgets, and our challenge is to effectively and properly balance personnel, readiness, and modernization costs to provide mission capable forces.

Marines are proud of what they do! They are proud of the “Eagle, Globe, and Anchor” and what it represents to our country. It is our job to provide for them the leadership, resources, quality of life, and moral guidance to carry our proud Corps forward. With your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our nation’s call as we have for the past 231 years!

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.