

HEARING TO CONSIDER PENDING NOMINATIONS

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

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OCTOBER 6, 2021
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HEARING TO CONSIDER PENDING NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2021

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:01 p.m., via Webex and in Room SR-418, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Jon Tester, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Tester, Brown, Blumenthal, Hirono, Manchin, Sinema, Hassan, Moran, Boozman, Cassidy, Tillis, Sullivan, Blackburn, and Tuberville.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MORAN

Senator MORAN. [Presiding.] Good afternoon, everyone. I call to order this hearing of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to consider two nominations pending before our Committee.

Chairman Tester is in Indian Affairs this afternoon and will be here shortly. We also have a vote ongoing on the floor. But Senator Tester asked me to begin the meeting and we will see when he arrives and see how the vote, the next vote, goes when it is called.

Let me read—let me welcome you, the two witnesses. Let me thank you for your interest in service, and let me begin by welcoming you. Mr. Kiyokawa and Mr. Rodriguez, thank you both for your willingness to serve in the roles for which you have been nominated and for appearing before the Committee today. Service is not new to either of you. You have served your country in uniform and in Federal civilian positions, and I know you have a personal connection to the mission of supporting the nation's veterans.

You are both nominated to positions responsible for critical components of our national effort to support veterans, the VA, our second largest Federal department, and support it in its efforts to simultaneously modernize three major core IT systems. That must follow a disciplined approach to ensure the results, that those efforts work in concert rather than in competition. Mr. Kiyokawa, I am pleased to hear your focus on strengthening the governance of these efforts across the VA to better focus on delivering outcomes for veterans.

One of the best indicators of overall well-being is employment and economic security. Employment not only provides for the basic needs for our veterans. It also can be one way in which veterans find meaning and purpose after their military service. The work of the Department of Labor that it does through the Veterans' Employment and Training Service to help veterans find meaningful ca-

reers is one of the most impactful investments our country can make for the success of our veterans.

Our Committee is invested in seeing that our veterans achieve success after their military service, and that includes supporting the two positions to which you have been nominated. I hope that if you are both confirmed we can work together to articulate the positive outcomes we want to see for our veterans and to align our collective efforts across Congress, the VA, the Department of Labor, and others to achieve those results.

I again welcome both of you and thank you for your willingness to continue serving your country, and I look forward to your testimony.

Mr. Kiyokawa and Mr. Rodriguez, if you would please stand and raise your right hand for administration of the oath.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give before the United States Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. I do.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I do.

Senator MORAN. Thank you. Let me now call on Senator Hirono for an introduction.

INTRODUCTION BY THE HONORABLE MAZIE K. HIRONO

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I welcome both nominees, and I am very delighted to be able to introduce Mr. Kiyokawa who originally hailed from Hawaii. But you know what? When you are born in Hawaii, you always part of Ohana.

So I want to welcome Mr. Kiyokawa, and I thank you not only for your willingness to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration, but also for your 29 years of service to our country in the United States Army.

And I would also like to recognize Mr. Kiyokawa's family members in attendance: his wife and his youngest son, and of course in particular, his mother Fusae-san, Fusae Kiyokawa, who traveled all the way from Hawaii to attend today's hearing in support of her family.

Mr. Kiyokawa is currently the Deputy Director of the Defense Health Agency, a joint agency that supports the Army, Navy, and Air Force medical services, and administers the TRICARE health plan for more than 9.6 million service members, retirees, and their families. His background makes him an excellent candidate to serve as Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration.

Mr. Kiyokawa was born and raised in Honolulu, where he graduated from Iolani School, which is a really fantastic private school, but as a public school graduate I will not hold that against him. During our conversation earlier this week, I was pleased to learn he also has ties to my own public school alma mater, Kaimuki High School. In his youth, Mr. Kiyokawa served as Kaimuki High School football team's water boy. I really enjoyed that.

He is a graduate of the University of Southern California, the U.S. Army Baylor University program, and the U.S. Army War College. He served in the Army for 29 years, retiring at the rank of

Colonel in 2015, at which point he was selected to the Senior Executive Service.

After speaking with Mr. Kiyokawa about his nomination and his vision for the Office of Enterprise Integration, I am confident he would bring lessons from his experience as both an administrator and a beneficiary of the Military Health System to this new role. In particular, I appreciated his commitment to data-driven decision-making and understanding veterans' opinions on the services provided by VA. I know that he very much cares that the programs the VA supports and what he is working on actually benefits real-life veterans, and for that he will get input from them.

I certainly look forward to working with you, Mr. Kiyokawa, to better serve veterans and ask the Committee to move on his nomination and for the Senate to swiftly confirm him.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do apologize for not being able to stay for the rest of the hearing, but as we know, there are a lot of hearings going on at the same time, and I have to get to another one.

But it is really a pleasure, Mr. Kiyokawa. And to your whole family, mahalo nui loa.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. And, Senator Hirono, thank you so much for the gracious remarks and the introduction.

Senator MORAN. Senator Hirono, thank you very much.

Mr. Kiyokawa, welcome.

Mr. Rodriguez, let me introduce you before you give your opening remarks.

James Rodriguez is currently the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training. He has also been the Acting Assistant Secretary of VETS since January 2021. Prior to his role at the Department of Labor, he served as an executive at Deloitte's Government and Public Sector Practice and at BAE Systems Government Relations Department. He also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Office of Warrior Care Policy, from 2014 to 2017 and retired as a Marine Corps First Sergeant in 2009.

Mr. Rodriguez earned a bachelor of arts in political science from the University of Maryland University College in 2009 and a master of arts and international commerce and policy from the George Mason University School of Public Policy in 2013.

James, if you could please introduce your guests to the Committee and then begin with your statement.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Well, thank you, Senator, and thank you for the introduction. I would like to just introduce my wife, Vanessa, who is behind me, my wife of almost 30 years—in May of next year, it will be 30 years—and my daughter, Courtney, she is second, and then my youngest daughter, Casey.

Senator MORAN. We welcome your family. Thank you.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you.

Senator MORAN. Mr. Rodriguez, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF JAMES D. RODRIGUEZ

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you, Ranking Member Moran, and thank you to all the members of the Committee for inviting me to speak today and for our conversations in recent days.

I want to thank President Biden and Secretary Walsh for the honor of this nomination. I share their compassion and commitment to the employment of our transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses.

Since the age of 18, I have served our nation in some capacity that was directly related to supporting our men and women in uniform and their families. So this has truly been my life's work. And none of this could have been accomplished without my support system: my wife, Vanessa, who has been by my side and my best friend for more than 30 years; my two daughters, Courtney and Casey, who are my shining lights; my son-in-law, Justin; my mother-in-law and father-in-law, Mike and Alice; and the rest of my extended family and friends.

I grew up in a small town in Texas called Aransas Pass along the Gulf Coast. I was raised by my grandmother under very modest circumstances and spent most of my youth growing up in the projects. There were times when I went without food, electricity, and heat, and I was one of the many kids who were on the free breakfast and lunch program, which helped our family immensely.

I had every opportunity to find a lot of trouble to get into, but instead I started working various jobs and threw myself into high school sports. At 15 years old, I worked as a deck hand on a shrimp boat in the Gulf of Mexico and then as a deck hand on a smaller boat that went out on Matagorda Bay every morning at 5 a.m. I worked in fast food during the summers so I could save up money to buy my own school clothes and help pay utility bills for my grandmother. I graduated high school and waited for my ship date to boot camp, working in the local shipyard as a welder's assistant inside the steel hulls of shrimp boats in the infamous Texas summer heat.

Fortunately, I found my calling in the United States Marine Corps, where I was able to serve at duty stations across the country and with allies around the world. As a young enlisted Marine, I recognized the power of education. I enrolled in my first college course after returning from Desert Storm in 1992, and 17 years later, after many duty stations and deployments, I finally graduated. Fortunately, completing my graduate degree only took two years, and I continue to be a lifelong learner. But more importantly, we are thankful to have two daughters, a Red Raider and an Aggie, who graduated on time.

The truth is my story is no different than many other men and women who have overcome personal challenges and have dedicated their lives to something bigger than themselves.

For 21 years, I had the honor of serving alongside Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen who came from communities all across this great nation. I saw the dedication each one of them had to each other in and out of uniform. And throughout my entire career, I have always tried to lead by example, with compassion and dedication to the team and mission. And during my six years as a Marine Corps drill instructor, my philosophy was that we were not only training these men and women to be good Marines, but we were also training them to be good citizens.

This point was driven home to me when I served as the company First Sergeant of Wounded Warrior Battalion West at Balboa

Naval Medical Center in San Diego, from where I ultimately retired in 2009. These brave men and women sacrificed physical and mental health in defense of our nation, and most would have to transition out of the military before their enlistment was complete, which exacerbated their stress. This was my first real understanding of the military to civilian transition challenge. If I am fortunate to be confirmed as the Assistant Secretary, I will continue to work with Congress and the truly dedicated DOL VETS team to bring the best programmatic resources to these good citizens.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rodriguez appears on page 73 of the Appendix.]

Senator MORAN. Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Kiyokawa, your opening statement. You are now recognized.

STATEMENT OF GUY T. KIYOKAWA

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Thank you, Chairman Tester and Ranking Member Moran and distinguished Committee members for this great honor and opportunity to serve our veterans, their families, and caregivers. After meeting with you and your staff, I am even more appreciative of your dedication and commitment to improving our nation's support for those who have served. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your staff.

I am joined today by my wife, Catherine. We have been married for 27 years, and she understands the challenges of a military career, moving across the country and overseas, raising three children during my 29 years in the Army. I also have my youngest son, Ian, who is a high school senior at James Madison High School here in Vienna, Virginia, and as Senator Hirono mentioned, my 92-year-old young mother from Honolulu, Hawaii. She was born and raised in Hilo, Hawaii, which is a rural town, otherwise known on the Big Island. Her father was a World War I veteran who rests in the State of Hawaii Veterans Cemetery.

Another veteran in our family, Uncle Mits, ran a flight school with four planes in Honolulu. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, his planes were taken, and he immediately wanted to join the military as a pilot. But the Army would not allow him to serve as an officer, so he enlisted. In his wedding picture, he is wearing an army uniform with the officer's pants, as evidenced by the stripe along his trouser leg. It was his small way of saying that he should be an officer.

When he passed, he was interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, "Punchbowl," in Honolulu. I placed on his urn my aviation branch insignia I received when commissioned a Second Lieutenant. That insignia's design originated from the Army Air Corps which would have, and should have, been my Uncle Mits's.

In 1982, I was fortunate to receive a 4-year Army ROTC scholarship to the University of Southern California. Every cadre member in my ROTC unit was a Vietnam combat veteran. These men and their experiences in combat shaped me as an officer. Each had their unique story; yet, they all had something in common, unending commitment to the Army Corps values.

The values that continued to drive me throughout my Army career were selfless service, respect, duty, and integrity. As a MEDEVAC pilot, my flight crews developed the trust and selflessness that was critical to our ability to carry out our missions as a team to save lives.

Later, I found a niche in integrating functions within large matrix organizations, such as Walter Reed and Brooke Army Medical Centers. The Army values continued to help me integrate complex organizations and understand the challenges of the wounded, ill, and injured. At Walter Reed, I was introduced to what eventually became known as Gulf War Illness. My experiences planning the construction of the first Intrepid Spirit Center for TBI at Ft. Belvoir opened my eyes to a holistic, soldier-focused path to address TBI and PTSD. These experiences, grounded by the Army values, helped me understand the unique challenges veterans face.

If confirmed, the Office of Enterprise Integration would provide me the best opportunity to apply these experiences to support veterans and their families. My nomination to join the VA team is timely as Secretary McDonough addresses strategic priorities, including the delivery of care, ensuring benefits for toxic exposures, the electronic health record program, VA's infrastructure, and committed implementation of the bills passed into law by Congress.

The Veterans Health Administration is, by far, the largest organization within the VA, but it is reliant on seamless enterprise functions such as IT, acquisition, logistics, and construction. If confirmed, I would work to create that seamless enterprise using experiences from my work as the Deputy Director of the Defense Health Agency. During the past six years, I have had the honor and challenge of working to bring together functions in the Army, Navy, and Air Force that best serve the service member and their family as an enterprise instead of four separate entities. These experiences will help to gain and keep veterans' trust by helping them to build civilian lives of opportunity, keeping the faith with their families and caregivers. I will ensure that every person entering a VA facility feels safe and free of harassment and discrimination.

I am grateful for the opportunities in my 35 years of military and Federal service, supporting multiple generations of veterans, from the Vietnam War to the post-9/11 era. Thank you for the potential opportunity to continue supporting veterans, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kiyokawa appears on page 33 of the Appendix.]

Senator MORAN. Mr. Kiyokawa, thank you.

The Office of Legal Counsel at the Department of Justice issued an opinion letter in 2017. It stated that oversight requests from "individual Members of Congress, including Ranking Minority members," do not trigger any obligation to accommodate congressional needs. Despite the DOJ's opinion on this matter, will you commit to accommodating congressional oversight requests regardless of party affiliation or committee status of the member making the request, Mr. Kiyokawa?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Yes, Senator, I do.

Senator MORAN. Thank you.

Mr. Rodriguez?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Yes, Senator, I do as well.

Senator MORAN. Thank you very much.

Let me start with you, Mr. Kiyokawa. Please explain; you just used the phrase, "seamless enterprise." I think maybe in your testimony it was integrating the enterprise. Explain to me what those phrases mean in practice. If you are confirmed, you have the ability to approve or reject decisions, budgets, staffing, or plans, and you have the authority over the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, all program managers.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, great question. And I know people throw out the words, seamless and integrate, and in fact it gets overused. I think at the end of the day if we really are focused on veterans and their families and caregivers then the seamless definition should be to those who are consuming the services or need the support. So seamless means to the end user and what they are seeing.

In the Military Health System, with my experience, many times as a beneficiary, I feel like I am the one that is navigating the complex system. And I think ultimately it should be the system that has the complexity, but to those who are the beneficiaries it should be seamless.

Now that is easier said than done. And so if I am given the opportunity in the Office of Enterprise Integration, I think the real key is to ensure that we bring together the intent behind, whether it be systems or programs, and ensure that those things are linked together in such a way that we can align with the Secretary's priorities and direction.

Senator MORAN. I may come back if I have time and further explore that answer.

Mr. Rodriguez, if appointed and confirmed, you will lead an organization that oversees more than a half a dozen programs, with a budget over \$325 million. With all these responsibilities, you may not be able to address everything you would like during your tenure. If you could set a goal, one goal to accomplish by the end of your time as Assistant Secretary, how would you describe that?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Well, Senator, that is exactly right. There are a lot of priorities that we currently have, but I think the most important goal for us currently is to get the transition process correct. We know that the transition is a challenge, as I mentioned in my opening remarks. It is a challenge for all of our men and women in uniform, myself included when I was going through it. So we know that is an important process that we have to get correct. I am working closely with the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, to ensure that we give the best resources to our service members when they are preparing to transition.

Senator MORAN. I appreciate that answer very much.

And it is clear to me, and in our study of the issue of mental health and suicide issues, that transition time is hugely significant. You have experience in transition from military to civilian. What do you think the greatest challenge would be for improving TAP, and how would you address to accomplish that?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Senator, one of the greatest challenges we have first and foremost is getting the transitioning service members to

really understand what they want to do when they are making that transition from the active duty component to the veteran component. That is the first one.

The second one is ensuring that they have a good, solid understanding of what type of resources are available to them as they make that transition and getting them to that TAP course in a timely manner, first and foremost.

So we have been very committed to working with our partners over at DOD to ensure that our service members are getting to TAP on time so they can get the most amount of information to help them make a good, solid, and comprehensive decision on what their next step is going to be when they transition out.

Senator MORAN. How would you describe the nature of the engagement of the Department of Defense and its various branches in assisting in that transition for its members, for Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Well, I think the engagement is going well. We can always improve it, as we all know. There is always ways to improve it. And I think proof of that is during the pandemic we were able to pivot from an in-person to a virtual format, and so we have continued to use that combination of virtual and in-person where we are able to. We are working very closely with the Department of Defense again, as I mentioned, to assure that service members are able to attend in person so they are getting the full value of that transition program.

Senator MORAN. Thank you for your answer.

My time is expired. Senator Blumenthal.

SENATOR RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Senator Moran.

Thank you both for your service to our nation and your willingness to continue to serve in the VA.

Mr. Rodriguez, as you probably know, the GI Bill is not only one of the most vital programs that the VA provides to our veterans, but it is also in recent years a target of for-profit schools that have been allowed to aim at our veteran population with deceptive recruiting practices. They have taken veterans' money coming to them under the GI Bill, in effect, and failed to provide them with the educational benefits that they need and deserve. These predatory institutions leave our veterans with a substandard education, meanwhile taking those benefits which are, at the end of the day, taxpayer funds.

For a number of years, I have worked with veterans service organizations and advocates in pushing the VA to proactively address this issue. In my view, the VA must leverage all of its existing statutory processes to try to stop this deceptive recruiting and enticement of veterans to go to for-profit schools if they fail to provide the real value that veterans expect. This is an issue that hampers veterans from obtaining the skill training they need, the quality credentials, and other benefits to really thrive in their career fields. The veteran labor force is weaker as a whole, collectively, as a result of these kinds of predatory practices.

So my question, my first question is: Are you familiar with these issues, and what role do you think DOL has during the Transition

Assistance Program to try to improve veterans' awareness and knowledge so they can avoid this problem?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Well, Senator, one of the things we do at DOL is we collaborate closely with our counterparts at the VA. So that is one of the most important things we do—our strategic partnerships in the entire TAP program execution. We want to ensure that the veterans, as you mentioned, are getting the most amount of resources and the value of those resources when they are making their decision to transition out.

We also want to make sure that if we continue to support, or as we continue to support, rather, the apprenticeship program, that they can use the GI Bill in the apprenticeship program. So we know that is a very valuable resource for our veterans when they are making that transition out.

But with respect to how they are using the GI Bill, we want to ensure that they can use those benefits to educate themselves as well as prepare themselves for that eventual transition out of the military.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. But how do you prevent them from becoming victims of these predatory practices by the for-profit schools?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Well, unfortunately, since the GI Bill is not under my direct purview, I would have to defer to my counterparts at the VA.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So you do not think the DOL has a role?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Well, I think every American has a role in preventing our veterans from being victims of anything with respect to the GI Bill, but I do not have purview over the GI Bill, the responsibility of that.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Don't you play a role in enforcing the statute that is already in our law that bans deceptive recruiting? You do not feel you have any role in enforcing that statute?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Well, I think our role is ensuring that the service members can utilize the GI Bill to help educate themselves, as I mentioned, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Okay. I guess I am not following. If you get complaints from veterans about deceptive pitches to them: I went to a school. They did not give me a valid course. The course was worthless. They did not have the course that I signed up to do. Any number of evidence of deception. And you get that complaint. What do you do?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. So I would definitely work with our Department of Veterans Affairs colleagues. But we also have, as you are well aware, compliance responsibilities within the Department of Labor. So we work with the Department of Justice; we work with other agencies, to ensure that the laws that we are responsible for adhering to, that we work with our colleagues all across the entire Federal Government to ensure that they are being abided by.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Do you have any investigative role?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. We have investigative roles but not necessarily for GI Bill-specific roles. That is Department of Veterans Affairs's responsibility.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. So you would just refer it to them?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Yes.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MORAN. Senator Blumenthal, thank you.
Senator Tuberville.

SENATOR TOMMY TUBERVILLE

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thanks for being here today. It is great to see your families here. And, Mr. Rodriguez, I do not know what one daughter thinks as an Aggie and you have got Texas Tech colors on with the other one. There could be a fight at home when you get home. But thanks for both of you being here and thanks for your service.

In Alabama, we have over 400,000 veterans that we are proud of. I was talking to our Veterans Affairs group yesterday, and we have a Veterans Affairs office in every county, in all 67 counties of the state. I think we have got a pretty good model there, and we would love for you to come down and see sometime about what we have got going on. And obviously, our veterans are growing; the numbers are growing.

Mr. Rodriguez, you know our current gap in cybersecurity in this country. We need more and more. We need more and more people trained. I think our service members coming out transitioning to possibly cybersecurity in the workforce would be phenomenal. What do you think about that?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I agree, Senator. I think one of the most important things we could do, obviously, is ensure that our transitioning service members understand what types of skills that they could use while they are in the military, and how they could transfer those skills into the civilian workforce as well as get the type of training that is going to set them up for success.

We are currently doing this, actually, with our Employment Navigator Partnership pilot. We have various companies, 13 sites around the country, that we are piloting this program. And it is actually identifying and targeting specific industries where we can use our skill sets from our service members, to transition them into those specific industries. So we are doing this very closely right now at those 13 sites, and our employment navigators are working with each individual who wants to get into those types of fields.

Additionally, on October 15th, we are actually going to open up our Employment Navigator Partnership pilot to additional organizations that have requirements of cybersecurity, for example. We are going to allow them to come in and be participants in our Employment Navigator Partnership program so that way they can train our service members and set them up for success in cybersecurity and IT.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Both of you obviously have been through the TAP program.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Yes.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Yes, sir.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Give me your expert thoughts about TAP. Are we getting enough out of it? Are we doing what is right? Do some just go through it and then go through the motions? I was a coach for 40 years, and we had kind of our TAP program at the

end of when kids come out, and a lot of times they kind of go through the motions. Can we make it better?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, I think you can always make it better, and your example as a coach and the football players is exactly the same with service members. Many people, if they feel like they already have a job, they might just be going through it because, quite frankly, we make them go through it. Others see the value of it.

I think one of the things that when I went through it was really good is that you knew there was a resource and as long as you knew how to access it easily that was the key. You know, you end up with a stack of paper, and you put it on your shelf, and if you have to go search through that you will never find it.

With the younger generation, obviously, it is through the internet or through social media. So somehow, as we keep moving through how to connect with veterans, how do we understand what the young kids, like my son here, do to process information? The old farts like me, who want to touch pieces of paper, and we want to call people and talk to them. And I guess the whole point is you have to be able to support the entire spectrum, right, because you have people who still want to touch paper and talk on the phone, but then you have younger kids that have new ways of doing it.

So I think making that connection with a veteran who is leaving the service so that they have a way to access that information easily is really a key.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Yes, I would echo what Mr. Kiyokawa said. I think one of the challenges is getting the active duty service member, especially our younger active duty service members, to understand the value of TAP and what resources that are aligned there that can actually support them when they are transitioning out.

It could always be improved, to his point. I think there are a lot of ways that we are looking at improving it currently. We have some new resources that are going into improving that program, again working with the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve the overall experience.

My experience was a little bit unique in the sense that I fortunately had a job when I was getting ready to transition out. Most of our young men and women do not have that when they are transitioning out. So the resources that we do provide them, especially as I mentioned earlier, now with our Employment Navigator Partnership, is going to give them more information to help them make a more informed decision.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MORAN. You are welcome, Senator.

Senator Boozman.

SENATOR JOHN BOOZMAN

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you, Senator Moran.

And again, thank you, Mr. Kiyokawa and Mr. Rodriguez, for being here today. We had a good visit not too long ago and really enjoyed discussing your priorities, you know, as you move into this phase. I think your service backgrounds, having such strong service backgrounds will play a big role and help you immensely as we

face these problems. I appreciate your willingness to serve. These are very time-consuming jobs. You all are very talented.

And again, then a shout-out to your families. Being in the service, being in the military is certainly a family affair. My dad did 20-some odd years, so I understand that. And likewise, I think being in the situations that you all will find yourself are certainly family affairs also. So thank you.

Mr. Kiyokawa, in your testimony, you highlighted your work as the Deputy Director of the Defense Health Agency and how you worked to integrate the services' health functions and data into a unified DOD agency. If confirmed, how will you use your experiences from DHA to integrate data across DHA, VBA, and NCA?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, thank you for that question. When I first started within the Defense Health Agency, we were charged to do something called "shared services," which included IT. So to answer your question about data, I think one of the key parts to it is to ensure that the IT infrastructure is solid; it is a solid foundation in order to lay these systems that will integrate across not just VA but with DOD.

I think the other key part to the data strategy that the VA has right now is to ensure that the functional pieces behind it so in other words, we tend to talk about data management and data strategy, but many times it is the operations and the functions behind it that really have to be mapped to one another. So for example, we talk about the electronic health record or the logistics system or the financial management system. Quite frankly, the power of the data that comes out of those systems is really whether or not those functions behind those systems are actually integrated. Well, how do those operations come together?

And I think that was the key for us within DOD as we brought together the shared services. It was not about the systems. It was about the functions behind those systems and how they tied together.

So I think those are two main points with data strategy and management.

Senator BOOZMAN. No, we appreciate it. It is so important, especially considering the size of the investment that we are making and have made in the past.

Mr. Rodriguez, DOL VETS is currently conducting the Employment Navigator Partnership pilot across 13 select military installations to interested transitioning members and their spouses. If confirmed, how will you work to share best practices across the different installations and services? What is your assessment of the pilot? What data or metrics are you using to measure success?

And finally, in your observation, where do you see duplication of efforts between VA and DOL VETS? Where can improvements be made going forward?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Well, thank you, Senator, for that question because of the fact that we know how important it is to ensure, as I have been speaking about already, getting the transition correct. And one of those, as I spoke about earlier, was the Employment Navigator Partnership and the amount of work that is going into that pilot currently. There is some really good data that is coming out of there. And again, it is a pilot. So we have not compiled all

of the data, but there is some good data there that is showing that what we are doing there is working well.

And one of the other things that data is informing, is that—of our service members who go through TAP—we have 96 percent survey satisfaction or satisfaction through our survey process.

But using the Employment Navigator, we are finding good results for our service members and their spouses. They are getting connected with American Job Centers, where they are looking to go back to whatever locales that they are transitioning to. We are making the warm handoff.

And one of the other most important things we are working closely with our counterparts at Department of Veterans Affairs. One thing that we have committed to at the Department of Labor is working closely with the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that any data we have in reference to transition assistance that can be utilized to best improve that program we are sharing that immensely.

As you probably are aware, we are part of the Joint Executive Committee, which composes both the DOD and VA and other senior members of the Federal Government, responsible, and part of that is the TAP Executive Committee. So we work closely again through the TAP Executive Committee and through other committees. Women's Veterans Committee, we partner with them. Native American Committee, we partner with them on that as well.

So we have a history of sharing information and will continue to do so going forward.

Senator BOOZMAN. Good. My time is up, but in our visit I appreciated the fact that as we talked that I think we agreed how important the spouses' mission is in TAP. You know, they are the ones that keep service members together so often and, again, the importance of that.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MORAN. Senator Boozman, thank you.

Now, Senator Tillis.

SENATOR THOM TILLIS

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, Senator Moran.

Thank you both for being here.

Mr. Kiyokawa, thank you for your service to the U.S. Army. Did you ever spend any quality time in North Carolina?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Yes, Senator. I was not stationed at Fort Bragg, but supporting all of the Army installations in my role as the Chief of Facilities I spent a lot of time down at Fort Bragg, particularly when we built the new Womack Army Medical Center.

Senator TILLIS. Mr. Rodriguez, any time down in Camp Lejeune?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. That was my very first four years.

Senator TILLIS. Very good. I would guess you all would know about that one. I hear people talk about how many veterans they have in their state. We actually have as many veterans in our state as some states have people, with over a million, and the third fastest growing in the nation, soon to be one of the top three military states in the country. And as a result, we spend a lot of time—I did when I was Speaker of the House—on what more can we do

to make North Carolina more hospitable, more likely for people who retire to come back there, and I think we are doing a good job.

Mr. Kiyokawa, you and I have common interests and common backgrounds. I was a partner at Pricewaterhouse and spent most of my career with enterprise integration in the private sector.

I was happy to see the experience that you have with the DOD electronic health system implementation. You know, with some of the reviews, we have stubbed our toe a bit with the electronic health record in Veterans Affairs, but you know, quite frankly, it is not surprising. It is a large, complex organization with a lot of systems that are aligned within the VISN and even within subunits of the VISN. So you naturally are going to stub your toe, and I am glad to see that they did the strategic pause to take a look at change management.

Rather than spend because—and we will spend a lot of time together. Senator Tester and I met with a number of people, with veterans, over three Veterans Affairs secretaries, to go through the change management. I would just like to get your commitment to continue to be as successful as three administrations have been, or two administrations, in working with my office so that instead of an oversight hearing we can have regular checkups with a designate from Chairman Tester's, to go through the change management. I want to understand the implementation, some of the changing of priorities. Can I get that commitment from you?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Yes, Senator.

Senator TILLIS. I should let you know I am going to support your nomination.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Thank you, Senator.

Senator TILLIS. But the other thing I want you to look at is in data analytics.

And, Mr. Rodriguez, you and I have some common background, too, I am going to get to if I can have just a little bit of extra time.

But to me, the use of data analytics needs to transcend the life of the warrior. It needs to start the day they enlist. It needs to seamlessly transfer once they achieve veteran status. The needs—and, Mr. Rodriguez, I am going to get to TAP program, my vision for the TAP program. But it just needs to be continually instructed, continually used, dynamically allocated, to understand what more we can do for the veterans.

And this is not a hard task, particularly if we get the electronic health record right. And we have two common platforms to where now you are just taking a look at the data architecture that can enable so many things that we can do.

You know, in your prior role, I have said that we need to update the information about the warrior to even understand in VETS to where we may be able to predict a need before the service member or the veteran ever needs it. It reminds me of a General Electric commercial from years ago, where the service technician knocks on the door and says, "I am here to repair your refrigerator." She said, the lady who answered the door said, "it is not broke." He said, "it is about to be."

We should have that aspiration for serving active duty and veterans members, and I look forward to working on that future architecture. I know that we are going to go a little bit further. Does

that fit roughly within your view of what we can do with data analytics and the underlying enterprise systems that we will have in place in the VA?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, I think you are hitting the nail on the head on where we head into the future. Just my experiences in the Military Health System, we had more agencies and contractors come to us because we are sitting on this treasure trove of data.

The challenge is that we have many legacy systems that when they were created were never thought to be integrated, and I think you have experienced some of that in your business. And so what we have done is have to go through a standard process to say, which of these legacy systems do we need to sunset and then, more importantly, which ones do we continue to develop to have that interoperability. That gets to your point. The goal is to have that longitudinal data.

And to your other point, really it gets into a little bit of the predictive analytics. Right? How can you predict what those requirements will be of our veterans? Because, quite frankly, it does take us one or two years at least to set up brand new programs and effectively apply them across such a broad spectrum of veterans. So if we can get a little bit more predictive in what the demand signal might be, then I think we will be a little bit more successful in responding ahead of time to the veterans' needs.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you for that. I look forward to working with you.

Mr. Rodriguez, I understand that you ultimately graduated from University of Maryland University College?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I did, 17 years after my first class.

Senator TILLIS. When you initially enrolled in 1993, was it at UMUC?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. It was not. It was actually at Coastal Carolina Community College.

Senator TILLIS. How many different schools did you go to before you ultimately graduated?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Probably about six, I believe.

Senator TILLIS. I was at five. I got my 4-year degree when I was a couple months shy of 37 years old, fully a year after I had been admitted to the partnership of Pricewaterhouse.

You also worked at Deloitte; right?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I did. That was my previous employer.

Senator TILLIS. And what kind of role did you have there?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I was a specialist executive there, supporting their business lines of Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Defense Health Agency.

Senator TILLIS. We always considered Deloitte a very worthy second-tier competitor at Pricewaterhouse. But in all seriousness, that is great experience for the role that you are going to go into.

And Senator Blumenthal touched on education and some of these for-profit institutions. What I always get concerned with when we bring that up is we are casting all in the same lot. And when I was pursuing my 17-year journey to get my 4-year degree, there were clearly examples of where some of the private institutions, if you did your homework, could provide the kind of work-life balance options that you needed to continue your degree.

So I think as we talk about bad actors, take them out. Absolutely, take them out. But let's not take out every opportunity for work skills training and a number of other things that we can do to help these service members and veterans get to a point to where they can be upward mobile with job opportunities. And I know I think you rightfully answered who is responsible for that, but I think it is important when we hear those statements to put them in the right context.

The last thing I will leave you with, one thing, in North Carolina in particular we have a great network of schools that are working together on job skills training. I was just in August down in Fayetteville Tech, a consortium of 11 different universities and community colleges and a private university that have come together on cyber education and technology infrastructure. So when you get in the role, that is something I would like to bring you down and see what a great job they are doing graduating veterans and getting them jobs in North Carolina and the region.

And then I will just leave you with this. I am sorry, Ranking Member. But just on the Transition Assistance Program, I think that we ultimately have to get to an audience of one. I think the problem that we see there—we do so much case work. This is the first year because of COVID we have actually surpassed veterans case work. But we do tens of thousands of cases a year in North Carolina for veterans.

And I think the problem that we see is that, you know, if you are a young—we have this Transition Assistance Program that is kind of a one-size-fits-all getting a little bit more tailored, but there are vastly different things that you need to communicate about the benefits, the support network, VSOs and other organizations that could be helpful to these veterans when they transition. And we really have to think the same way, using analytics, using a better understanding of what the needs are, to tune these Transition Assistance Programs to an audience of one and to also have continuous contact with the ones.

I am worried most about the at-risk veterans who transition. Invariably, if you look at veterans' suicide, you look at veterans' homelessness, you look at veterans' unemployment, there are very clearly instances along the way to where we probably, if we had had that stickier relationship—[telephone interruption.] Is that how you are trying to get me to stop talking?

So in conclusion, I want to get you down there to look at the education opportunities. I want to get you down to the Veterans Life Center, which is a transformational opportunity that I think could be implemented across the country. I look forward to supporting your confirmation. But it is a short trip down to North Carolina. I hope I have both of your commitments to come down and visit.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Yes, Senator.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. You have my commitment, Senator.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you.

Ranking Member, I yield back the remainder of my time.

Senator MORAN. [Off microphone].

Senator Manchin is recognized.

SENATOR JOE MANCHIN

Senator MANCHIN. Am I up?

Senator MORAN. Senator Manchin, you are recognized, yes.

Senator MANCHIN. Oh, thank you. I think he broke all the records. I have never been in one like that.

Senator TILLIS. Joe, I am sorry. I forgot we had people online. I thought I was the last one.

Senator MANCHIN. You know what? I knew you were killing time, and I appreciate it because you were so informative. I learned so much, Mr. Speaker. No problem.

Mr. Rodriguez, if I could, really I want to touch on a couple things that Senator Tillis did touch on that is very important, mostly to electronic records, the health records. Secretary McDonough came before us and everything and told me that he was on top of this and he planned to fix the programs, the challenges we had there, and the Mann-Grandstaff rollout has not gone the way it was supposed to.

And I keep thinking about what happened in Clarksburg, West Virginia. We lost—just basically, we had veterans that were murdered in the VA center there. Just unbelievable. If we could have had those records, we could have been able to be on top of what was happening quicker, in real time. It would have been very, very productive for us and maybe save some lives.

The other thing I wanted to talk to you about—and I think you knew and you answered that for Senator Tillis about the high priority you have on this, and I confirm. And I just hope you stay on it, sir, because we are definitely going to hold you accountable to that.

Mr. Rodriguez, on the drug abuse and PTSD and all the different things that we have challenges with in our military, what are your views on how the Department can play a role in relieving this crisis? Because I understand that—and I do not mean this derogatory at all, but I am understanding that when our VA members return from service they get a concoction and almost get anything they want without any evaluation. And I hope that has changed, but it is still very much of a crisis.

And that will lead into another question concerning jobs placing, and sometimes the stereotype our veterans have with PTSD and addiction they may have is preventing a lot of them from getting the jobs that they are fighting for.

So both of you all can answer those questions in that dialog, if you would.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, this is Guy Kiyokawa. I think I can address your questions. And I agree with you that the challenges of veterans and PTSD and, quite frankly, TBI, having spent a lot of time in the Military Health System addressing these issues, these are very complex issues. I think the one thing that we have learned over the years is while we all point toward the evidence base and the research in order to ensure we are doing the right thing, at the end of the day, we have to make sure that we are addressing the veterans' challenges and problems. So addressing the veterans' challenges and problems in parallel with that research and that evidence base is very, very important.

You referred to electronic health records, and I think you were referring about patient safety and quality. Completely agree. I know in DOD it is—and the reason I hesitate is because we already have good patient safety and quality systems in place. To your point, even in West Virginia, where there are lapses, there is a management challenge, and we have to make sure we cover down on that.

But back to the electronic health record, it will provide that longitudinal record that is almost the backstop for patient safety and quality. I looked at the report that came out of the incident in West Virginia, and as you inferred, there were many lapses, not only from the management side but also in the recordkeeping side. And I think that is where the electronic health record can help.

Senator MANCHIN. That is what I was talking about, absolutely.

Mr. Rodriguez, if you want to speak to the crisis that we have with drug abuse.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Senator, I think as Mr. Kiyokawa said, we know that the Department of Veterans Affairs is actually addressing this, and they are utilizing their resources to best support our fellow veterans. One of the things we do at the Department of Labor is focus on employment because we understand how employment is critical to the health and well-being of our service members and our transitioning veterans. So we want to make sure that they have good quality employment opportunities when they are making that transition out. So that way, they can have a sustainable living, they can have generational wealth, and that can be supportive of their treatment at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Senator MANCHIN. Let me ask you a question on this, and I do not know if you all still have the rating system you had. Let's say that I, as a veteran, come in, and I want certain things that they do not want to give me or do not recognize that I need, but I demand it. I had this while I was deployed, and I definitely need these types of prescriptions for me to be able to function. And you all basically say, no, you do not. And I say, well, I am going to call my Congressperson or my Senator.

And there is a rating system, and the rating system basically penalizes the person who did not disburse what I demanded. I have heard that from the nurses who told me, if you would just quit complaining when they come, and you all come and call and complain to us about not getting what they demand, we would be a lot better off. Has that changed any at all?

And are you all evaluating the medication you have our returning veterans on and those that have still been on long-term on these prescriptions, to make sure they are not addicted? Are you evaluating that?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. So, Senator, I think if confirmed, definitely something to look at more closely. To your comments—

Senator MANCHIN. Does it make sense what I am saying on how this has happened? The nurses brought it to my attention. That is all.

And I am not going to go over five minutes. I am just about finished. I am sorry. I see Bill, and I see Marsha there. So I will be right off.

But just, sir, real quickly let me just bring it to you attention. It is real. It has happened. And rather than fighting the system, they give them what they demand. I am praying to the good Lord that you all would evaluate them and make sure you are treating with what they need, not what they want.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Yes, Senator, I have that commitment.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry to go over.

Senator MORAN. It has become a habit.

Senator Cassidy.

Senator MANCHIN. I will cut it down.

SENATOR BILL CASSIDY

Senator CASSIDY. Hey, Mr. Kiyokawa and Mr. Rodriguez. Thank you very much for offering yourselves to the service of our veterans and our country. I thank you.

Mr. Kiyokawa, I enjoyed our conversation and want to follow up on some of the things that we spoke of. One thing I have been told, do not know if it is true, what I have been told is that when veterans are going to outside facilities that they are getting too many tests. Now I am a physician. I know that too many tests inevitably means too many complications. You may earn a little bit extra, but there is also the potential for harm. You do a procedure, you get complications, is a rule in medicine.

How do you envision—and it has been frustrating because I have asked this before, but I have never been given an answer. How do you envision using the data at your command, if you will, to do some sort of utilization review to see if this is true, or define those institutions where it appears to be true and therefore maybe not broad-brush for all, but kind of a surgical strike on those places, number one?

Number two, let us assume you do find that there is an outlier group of facilities that are over-prescribing procedures and tests. What tools do you need to do a prior authorization program or to otherwise disbar them from participating with the VA?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, you bring up a common problem that usually, as you already referred to, a utilization review is one of the mitigating steps. I can only speak to the experience I have had in DOD with the Military Health System, but if confirmed, it is something that I would take a look at within the VA.

With my experiences, depending upon how you set up those agreements or contracts with those health systems on the outside is critical. If you have utilization management built into your contracts, and to your point, if you find over-utilization, over-prescription, then there are consequences to not following those clinical practice guidelines, which are based on the evidence. And so I would say that that is probably the best way for us to try to manage that potential harm going on.

Senator CASSIDY. And you spoke of earlier the redundant and legacy systems the VA has, which tells me that you have familiarity with their capability. So therefore, to what degree do the systems we have now have the ability to look for over-utilization and/or complications resulting from that over-utilization?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Yes, Senator, when I referred to the legacy systems and redundancies, I was making a general comment of most Federal organizations. Clearly, we have that within DOD. I am not familiar with the details within the VA.

But to answer your question about data, there should be ways within the data, within the electronic health record. I do know with MHS GENESIS, which is the DOD's new electronic health record, there are many more checks and balances that are not reliant on the individual to have that check and balance. In other words, the system itself throws the flag up, and I think becomes the key to catching those things.

Senator CASSIDY. Oh, you are breaking up. You broke up just as you said that there are systems which do not rely upon the individual to do a check and balance. Could you repeat that? Because you were muffled and you gargled at that point.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Sorry, Senator. What I was saying is that within the Military Health System MHS GENESIS has provided that system that provides flags when the untoward events occur, and so we are not solely reliant on the individual provider to flag it themselves. It is still the individual provider's responsibility—

Senator CASSIDY. That is for a complication. Excuse me. That is for a complication. What about for over-utilization? Knowing that the VA is going to be using a system similar to that used in the DOD, is there a way to easily look at practice patterns to determine over-utilization?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, I am not aware of that level of detail, and it is something that I commit to looking into more closely.

Senator CASSIDY. Well, then if I may in advance tell you, although I have requested this in the past, I am not sure I have ever gotten an answer. It would be nice to know the degree to which we have over-utilization, nice to know the kind of preauthorization procedure and provision review that currently exists in the VA. It has been very difficult to determine, but I think it is something which would protect the taxpayer and protect the veteran, but protect the wallet of the taxpayer.

With that, Mr. Chair, I yield back, and I again once more thank the two men for volunteering to serve our country. Thank you all.

Senator MORAN. Senator Cassidy, thank you very much.
Now, Senator Blackburn.

SENATOR MARSHA BLACKBURN

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to each of you for being with us today.

Mr. Kiyokawa, I want to come to you first. The enterprise program, that integration office, we have talked a little about that. And as we look at the integration that needs to happen between the financial management business transformation program, the electronic health records, and the supply chain transformation efforts, how do you best bring all of that together so there is transparency and access across the entire VA system? How do you accomplish that?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, thank you for your question. And I think the discussion that Senator Tillis started with the data becomes critical to that.

So to answer your question, I think it is not just about the systems. And I know the VA is moving forward more than just the electronic health record, as you mentioned, the logistics system and the financial management system. So I think, if confirmed, the Office of Enterprise Integration has the opportunity to look at those workflows or processes that go on, on the functional side, within the finance or within logistics or within the electronic health record and start to map where some of those things naturally fit together and then leverage those systems in order to make that happen more automatically.

And as Senator Tillis inferred, having that data flow across those different systems cleanly—

Senator BLACKBURN. Yes.

Mr. KIYOKAWA [continuing]. And then specifically with the electronic health record, then all the way back to DOD where we have the same instance.

Senator BLACKBURN. Well, I think that is important. And when we look at the VA and look at the way they function in stovepipes instead of in a flat organization, without access to that data, what we find repeatedly in doing the oversight is that poor decisions get made because one area has the data but another area—and it is relevant in their area—does not have the access to that data in a timely manner or they get on the back end. So getting this right I think is going to be important.

And related to this, I want to ask you, Leidos has the DOD contract to all the electronic health records but Cerner on the VA. And to me, from what I have seen, it seems that the Leidos platform is much more interactive and flexible than is the Cerner. Do you have a comment on that?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Yes, Senator. To clarify, within DOD we contracted with Leidos that then subcontracted with Cerner for the actual medical record. Leidos was to bring in the integration of the different things that involve the electronic health record. What I have seen from the outside with VA, it appears that VA is providing that level of integration, which is totally appropriate as long as you have the right paths laid out and the right integration and management. And I think, if confirmed, that is something I could help contribute towards.

Senator BLACKBURN. Okay. We just need to get this transition from active duty to veteran status. We need to get that to operate in a—it needs to be more fluid. It is frustrating to our veterans, and in our offices, we deal with this so regularly. We have a lot of veterans who choose to retire in Tennessee because they have had service at Fort Campbell or they have worked with Arnold Engineering over in Tullahoma, so they continue to make Tennessee their home. So we are really quite concerned about that.

Mr. Rodriguez, I have listened to your answers about DOL VETS and the programs that you would oversee there. At Fort Campbell, we have had a very active and successful transition program and partnerships that have been quite successful. We have been very fortunate to get these partnerships in place in Tennessee. But as we move forward and if you are confirmed, what I would like to hear from you is a tool box where we can have a little bit more transparency into this, look at the resources, where they are being

utilized, look at how you quantify success, what those measurements are, and how our men and women who are transitioning out, how they view the program and view that success.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

Senator MORAN. Thank you, Senator Blackburn.

We have been joined by the Chairman, Senator Tester, and I turn over the reins of leadership, as well demonstrated by Senator Tillis and his six-minute extra time, over to the Chairman.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN TESTER

Chairman TESTER. [Presiding.] Well, first of all, Senator, I appreciate you taking the hearing today. This has been an interesting afternoon for me because I know these are two very important nominees, and I really appreciate you filling in very aptly, I might add, in the Chair role.

I am going to start with Kiyokawa. It is no secret that the VA is in the midst of deploying a new electronic health record system. This program has not rolled out as smoothly as I think anybody would have wanted, and we dumped a bunch of money into it. You have got some past history with the DOD in electronic health records. Tell us what lessons you would bring to the VA that you learned from your time at the Defense Health Agency and, quite frankly, in your Army career when it comes to EHR work.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, thank you for that question. As I mentioned earlier, one of the key things is to have that true IT infrastructure backbone. One thing we learned early on, when we were bringing the services together to have that single backbone, it had to be reliable. If you put the system on top of unreliable IT infrastructure, then everybody points at the system when it is actually your infrastructure that is unreliable. So that would be the first thing that we learned right off the bat.

The bigger thing, though, and it has already been alluded to in change management, is everybody points at the system and the record. And one of the challenges we had in DOD as we had basically systems that we developed on our own, which was appropriate because industry had not been at the point that it is today, but we kept modifying the system to meet the workflows and the way we practice medicine with wide variation across our enterprise.

And the big difference is that we are buying an off the shelf medical record from Cerner, where we have to commit to a standardized way of doing business, standardized workflow. And so that change management in every location, for every workflow becomes critical.

Now the trick there becomes creating that standard workflow but then ensuring that those on the ground have some say and input into that workflow, and that is where we had a challenge when it first kicked off. It was not smooth when it first kicked off, and part of it was because we did not invest enough training with those who actually were using it from a functions perspective. Cerner came up with the training from what is called buttonology, how to use the system. But really, where was the training for the change management?

And then, more importantly, how were the guys that were actually implemented having feedback into those workflows so we could

continue to improve the workflows? And instead of customizing the system, how do you modify the system? And the product that we are deploying today is not the same product when we first started.

And lastly, I would say, once we got it going, we developed something called the Pay It Forward Program, where we had actual providers who had deployed it at their site actually physically go to the next site and sit down with their peers. And it is that peer-to-peer relationship that started to get the buy-in that is so important with change management.

Chairman TESTER. So we have had people testify in front of this Committee before that say, on electronic health records, most of them have been train wrecks because the people who are running them do not like them. I would assume that getting buy-in and getting inputs is pretty critical to getting these folks to like these systems when they go live. Can you tell me what you are going to do different than what has already been done to get input from those folks?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. So, Senator, I am not familiar on the details of what has already been done, but some of the things that I just described are some of the best practices that we found within the Department of Defense. Back to—

Chairman TESTER. I got you. Best practices are good. Now how are you going to implement those best practices? How are you going to get that feedback? How are you going to make sure those people feel like they are part of the team? How do you do that?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. So a big part of it, Senator, is as you implement some of those workflows is that they are part of the development of those workflows. And when I say that, you need a starting point. So you have the standardized workflow to walk in the door with, but then there are definitely unique opportunities within certain geographic areas, within certain health care organizations.

And it is back to understanding the difference between a customization, which we try to stay away from, versus just a modification or configuration that meets those requirements. So keeping the ears open and listening to those who are actually providing the care and understanding what their requirements are and seeing how the reconfiguration of the health record can meet those requirements versus wholesale modifications and customization.

Chairman TESTER. Thank you.

Mr. Rodriguez, very quickly. You are a retired Marine Corps First Sergeant. You have personally experienced the challenges that come with transitioning out of the military as well as guiding your own troops during their transitions. How do you use that experience to inform your leadership in this new position?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Well, Senator, you are exactly right. I think having personal experience really allows us a deeper insight into the entire transition process. And one of the things that I know for certain is getting as much information to that individual that he or she can make the most beneficial decision for them and their families when they are transitioning out is something that we are definitely trying to do here at Department of Labor VETS. We know that that is what they are taught while they are on active duty is receive information and make a decision that is beneficial to you and the organization.

Chairman TESTER. Thank you.
 Senator Moran, are you still there in person?
 Senator MORAN. I am.

Chairman TESTER. You are. Senator Moran, since I am not there, I will turn the gavel back to you because you know who is there to be called on; I do not.

Senator MORAN. [Presiding.] I can do that. I am told that Senator Sullivan may be on his way, but we are going to conclude the meeting.

Mr. Chairman, before I do, I want to take a moment to thank you. Last Wednesday, you conducted a roundtable with our VSO representatives, and I had asked you to do that. And you did, and then I was not here, but I wanted to thank you for your pursuit of that opportunity.

Last week, Wednesday, during that roundtable, I was in Kansas for the funeral services, the burial service of Father Emil Kapaun, a Medal of Honor winner who, as a Catholic priest and chaplain, died in 1951 in Korea. And he was a chaplain who remained behind as Americans were evacuating after somewhat of a massacre but stayed by to administer rites and to comfort those that were dying. In the process of his sacrifice, was captured and became a prisoner of war, where he continued to minister to those in captivity with him. He ultimately died of hunger and starvation and disease as a prisoner of war.

We had been encouraging the Department of Defense to find and identify his remains. They did, and they were returned home to Kansas last week. And he comes from a town, Pilsen, Kansas, where he was an altar boy before he obviously became a priest. And Pilsen is a town of 112 people who love, admire, and respect their native son. And Father Kapaun is on a set of stages to potential sainthood.

And I just wanted you to know and wanted my colleagues to know the reason for my absence, but more importantly, I wanted my colleagues to know the nature of this human being in service to his country and to his God, who put others well above his own life and in the process sacrificed his. And at a time in which we struggle to find, you know, comfort and feel secure that the world is all right, it was an opportunity to see goodness, the truth in someone's heart, and a reminder of those who continue to sacrifice today not just for the well-being of our nation but for the well-being of their fellow men and women serving our nation.

And so again I apologize for my absence but express my gratitude for you, to you for hosting that roundtable and, most importantly, bring to the attention of my colleagues and those present today the importance of one human being who decided to use his life for the betterment of others. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the moment to pay my respects in this setting to Father Emil Kapaun.

Chairman TESTER. So the only thing I would respond to that, Jerry, is that—or Senator Moran, is that we missed you. It was a very, very good roundtable. But there is no better reason to miss that roundtable than the reason you missed it for. And so I thank you for your commitment to veterans all around this country, both alive and deceased. So thank you.

Senator MORAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank both of our witnesses for appearing before the Committee today and for your willingness to continue serving in the roles for which you have been nominated.

Members will have an opportunity to submit to you, to the Committee, questions of record that we will submit to you, and we ask that those questions be submitted and answered as quickly as possible.

With that concluding—oh, let me say one thing before I gavel. In my time as chairman of committees in the Senate, I have always asked the witnesses if they have anything they want to add, subtract, try to correct, something they said they wish they had not have said or something they hoped they had said. Anything, Mr. Kiyokawa or Mr. Rodriguez that you would like to bring for us before I pound the gavel?

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Nothing, sir, from me.

Senator MORAN. Thank you.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Nothing from me as well.

Senator MORAN. Thank you. The Committee—Senator Sullivan is outside. How close is outside?

STAFF. He is down the hallway, sir.

Senator MORAN. Well, having given Senator Tillis more than an hour extra—

Senator TILLIS. Can I go for a second round?

Senator MORAN [continuing]. I am reluctant to deny Senator Sullivan although I know he is not short in his remarks either.

[Pause.]

Senator MORAN. Senator Sullivan, you will be recognized for five minutes and no more.

SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the real Chairman did not want to hold out for his colleague, but let me just begin by thanking you, gentlemen, for your willingness to serve.

You know, we all kind of brag about our states a little bit. My colleagues have never heard this. My state has more veterans per capita than any state in the country. I say that every hearing. That is the State of Alaska.

So, Mr. Kiyokawa, sorry to butcher your name there, sir. I want to talk to you about an important issue to me, but I think it is an important issue for the country, this issue of DOD-VA integration. I know you have a lot of experience in this. We have no full-service VA hospital in Alaska, and yet we have a lot of active duty military forces.

So I am sure you have seen it in Chicago, where they have actually done this. I was able to get language, unanimous language by the way, in terms of being supported by Democrats and Republicans, in the NDAA this year that focuses on looking at ways for Federal healthcare agencies, particularly in DOD and the VA, to integrate joint planning, joint construction, joint leasing. Do you have a view on that?

It is something I am a strong supporter of. I think it is something most Senators are supportive of, and I think we are going to have an opportunity here with the NDAA likely passing and this

part of the NDAA having that legislation, which would give you and the Secretary and Secretary Austin power to do this kind of work.

And it saves money. It is better for our vets. It is better for our active duty forces. It is better for our docs. It really makes sense, but hopefully you agree with me on that.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Senator, it is interesting you bring up this point because my background is in health facilities planning and construction, in fact, at Fort Wainwright, actively involved in building that new hospital up there. I think the key is to ensure that we are focused on the veterans and the service members and if we can get to that outcome, as you say, in a more efficient and effective way, then that should drive whether it is a system, infrastructure, that sharing, that has to be behind it in a measurable way. So, agree with you if those pieces come together and it makes it a best way forward.

Another part to that is in my history I spent my Army War College fellowship at the VA and actually worked on the new, now currently opened, William Beaumont Army Medical Center. And if you are familiar, at Fort Bliss, the VA facility shares the wall with the old medical center. And I worked very hard during that one year to try to see if we could not bring that together, and it actually led to the continued push for that language so that we could actually do that planning together—

Senator SULLIVAN. Good.

Mr. KIYOKAWA [continuing]. Because we are not able to do that planning together. So I have experience in what you described.

Senator SULLIVAN. You have seen that the VA in Anchorage and at JBER, the military hospital, they actually share a wall, but it is not fully integrated as well. I am sure you have probably seen that.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. Actually, unfortunately, I have not been to JBER, but I would love to be able to see that. And having seen other situations like that, besides just the sharing of the wall and the infrastructure, if we can share the functions and so that it is more integrated, so that as veterans come through they should not really see: Am I seeing a military doctor, or am I seeing a VA doctor?

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes.

Mr. KIYOKAWA. It should really be seamless to the veterans themselves.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Thank you for that, and I might ask a couple additional questions.

Mr. Rodriguez, First Sergeant Rodriguez, I believe, thank you for your Marine Corps service. I wanted to ask, I chair the Congressional Veterans Job Caucus with Senator Manchin, who, as you know, is also on this Committee. And I am curious about two things: your views on opportunities as it relates to the Transition Assistance Program, the TAP program. You know, in my experience as a Marine, I have been through that a couple times. You know, it is always at the end. Guys are wanting to get out. It is not terribly effective, I do not think. Do you have any views on that given your Marine Corps experience but also in general?

And then I am a big fan of the building trades. The unions in Alaska and across the country, the Laborers, the Teamsters, the

Operating Engineers, IBEW, all of these unions have really good programs with our active duty forces across the country and in Alaska. How do we integrate their work?

We have a couple programs in Alaska where soldiers who are getting out can actually start doing apprentice work with some of these trades unions before they are even done with their active duty service. I actually think it is a great opportunity for our young men and women who are getting out and it is a much more effective way, in some ways, than a 2-day TAP program that, you know, the sergeant is like looking at his watch, like, hey, when the hell am I getting out of here?

So do you have any thoughts on both of those?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I do, Senator. And like you, I was part of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Senator SULLIVAN. Oh.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. And I actually went through TAP after I came back from the 31st deployment.

Senator SULLIVAN. Right.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. So—

Senator SULLIVAN. And were you looking at your watch? No, I am kidding.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I actually was because I was retiring in about 9 months.

Senator SULLIVAN. That is what I mean. That is what I mean.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. So time was on my side at that time.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Because it was my last deployment.

Senator SULLIVAN. Right.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. With that said, one of the things that I have not had the chance to speak about, which is actually really exciting for us, with respect to TAP, is our MOU that is being finalized with Health and Human Services, that is going to give us access to the national data base of new hires.

Senator SULLIVAN. Good.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. That information, which is the most up to date information about the employment of our veterans, is going to let us look at unemployment, new employment opportunities, gaps in employment opportunities for our veterans, new industries, where those veterans are at, what type of wages they are earning, those types of things. So we could take that information and make a more informative program with respect to TAP.

Senator SULLIVAN. Good.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. So that is some of the things we are currently working on now.

But to your question about the labor unions, we have a strong partnership with the labor unions.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. We work closely with them in specific trades across the entire country, on specific bases as well, and we want to continue to build that.

Senator SULLIVAN. I find that that works well on some bases, not so well on other bases. It is not terribly uniform. Right? Is that your experience?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. That is correct. And so we are working with the Department of Defense because they have the DOD SkillBridge program.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. And so we work closely with them to expand that program, to try to find more opportunities to enhance that DOD SkillBridge. And we support it by encouraging our active duty service members through TAP to get to those apprenticeship programs because we know there is tremendous value there. On average, they are earning about \$30,000 a year more than someone that has a 4-year degree when they complete that apprenticeship program. And so we want to get our men and women into those programs if they do not use college as their next stepping stone.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Good. Well, I look forward to working with both of you, gentlemen, and supporting your nominations.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman. Appreciate the time.

Senator MORAN. Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

We will now conclude the hearing. And again, I appreciate your testimony and your willingness to serve. I was impressed with what I heard today, and I am grateful for your willingness to help us make certain the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor, and others are making certain that our veterans are receiving the care and treatment that they are entitled to and that they are in a position in which their lives are made better as they have made ours. Again, I thank you.

And the Committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:27 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

**Nomination Material for
Guy T. Kiyokawa**

STATEMENT OF GUY T. KIYOKAWA, NOMINEE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE
HEARING TO CONSIDER PENDING NOMINATIONS
OCTOBER 6, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Tester, Ranking Member Moran, and distinguished Committee Members, for this great honor and opportunity to serve our Veterans and their families and caregivers. After meeting with you and your staff, I am even more appreciative of your dedication and commitment to improving our nation's support for those who have served. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your staff.

I'm joined today by my wife, Kathryn. We have been married for 27 years and she understands the challenges of being a military spouse -- including raising our three children while enduring multiple moves across this country and overseas during my 29 years in the Army. Also with me today is my youngest son, Ian, who is a senior in high school here in Vienna, VA. My mother, Fusae Kiyokawa, also joins us today. She is 92 years young and was born and raised in Hilo, Hawaii, which is a rural town on the Big Island. Her father was a World War I Veteran who rests in a State of Hawaii Veterans cemetery. Another Veteran in our family, Uncle Mits, ran a flight school with four planes in Honolulu. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, his planes were taken, and he immediately wanted to join the military as a pilot. But the Army wouldn't allow him to serve as an officer, so he enlisted. In his wedding picture, he is wearing an Army uniform with officer's pants as evidenced by the

stripe along his trouser leg. It was his small way of saying that he should be an officer. When he passed, he was interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific “Punchbowl” in Honolulu. I placed on his urn my Aviation Branch insignia I received when commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. That insignia’s design originated from the Army Air Corps which would have, and should have, been my uncle Mits’s.

In 1982, I was fortunate to receive a four-year Army ROTC scholarship to the University of Southern California. Every cadre member in my ROTC unit was a Vietnam combat Veteran. These men and their experiences in combat shaped me as an officer. Each had their unique story, yet they all had something in common...unending commitment to the Army Core Values.

The values that continued to drive me throughout my Army career were selfless service, respect, duty, and integrity. As a MEDEVAC pilot, my flight crews developed the trust and selflessness that was critical to our ability to carry out our missions, as a team, to save lives. Later, I found a niche in integrating functions within large matrixed organizations such as Walter Reed and Brooke Army Medical Centers. The Army Values continued to help me integrate complex organizations and understand the challenges of the wounded, ill, and injured. At Walter Reed, I was introduced to what eventually became known as Gulf War Illness. My experiences planning the construction of the first Intrepid Spirit Center for TBI at Fort Belvoir opened my eyes to a holistic, Soldier-focused path to address TBI and PTSD.

These experiences, grounded by the Army Values, help me understand the unique challenges Veterans face.

If confirmed, the Office of Enterprise Integration would provide me the best opportunity to apply these experiences to support Veterans and their families. My nomination to join the VA team is timely as Secretary McDonough addresses strategic priorities including delivery of care, ensuring benefits for toxic exposures, the electronic health record program, VA's infrastructure, and continued implementation of the bills passed into law by Congress. The Veterans Health Administration is by far the largest organization within the VA, but it is reliant on seamless enterprise functions such as IT, acquisition, logistics, and construction. If confirmed, I would work to create that seamless enterprise using experiences from my work as the Deputy Director of the Defense Health Agency. During these past 6 years, I have had the honor, and challenge, of working to bring together functions in the Army, Navy, and Air Force that best served the service member and their family as an enterprise instead of four separate entities. These experiences will help to gain and keep Veterans' trust by helping them to build civilian lives of opportunity keeping the faith with their families and caregivers. I will ensure that every person entering a VA facility feels safe and free of harassment and discrimination.

I am grateful for the opportunities in my 35 years of military and federal service supporting multiple generations of Veterans from the Vietnam War, to the post-911 era. Thank you for

the potential opportunity to continue supporting Veterans and I look forward to answering your questions.

Pre-Hearing Questions for
Guy Kiyokawa, Nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration,
Department of Veterans Affairs
From Chairman Jon Tester

1. What is your understanding of the role of Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration and the primary duties of that role?

The Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration (OEI) is the principal executive and advisor to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and VA senior leaders in strategic planning; risk management; performance management; policy management and analysis; enterprise program management; data governance, and data analytics. If confirmed, I would ensure the work conducted under these areas are carried out in an integrated way to provide VA with the management capabilities for effective governance, decision making, and transparency to achieve the Secretary's priorities of providing access to quality health care and timely delivery of VA services and benefits to Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

2. What is your leadership style?

My leadership style is collaborative leadership focused on the mission and those we support. I provide clear direction and intent, then support subordinates as they develop solutions that they must implement. I believe leaders are most effective when they engage subordinates and clearly identify common goals that are aligned with the agency's mission and demonstrate how their work contributes to mission success.

3. How would your prior subordinates describe your management style?

Prior subordinates would describe my management style as one of coalition building, bringing different groups together to move the greater enterprise forward. They would say that I always ask questions to better understand the issue and seeks input from subordinates, while challenging the status quo.

4. What is your understanding of VA's mission and how do you think the Office of Enterprise Integration (OEI) should contribute to that mission?

VA's mission is to provide Veterans with world-class health care and ensure that Veterans, their families, and survivors have timely access to services and benefits to include honoring our Veterans with their final resting place and lasting tributes to their service. VA's fourth mission is on display today as VA supports the nation's response to national emergencies such as the pandemic. OEI contributes to that mission by building and improving the management foundation for the department to align the three administrations' enterprise functions to ensure they are working toward clearly defined objectives, and corresponding resources, that align to the Secretary's priorities. Performance management would measure the progress in reaching these objectives.

5. What are your top five goals for this position and for OEI over the next several years?

If confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration, I would focus on the five following areas.

1. Solidifying the foundation for managing VA through a governance process that ensures agile and evidence-based decision-making.
2. Moving strategy into actions that are measurable and drive the resources to ensure that the Secretary's initiatives reach objectives. This includes standardizing program management and its relevant processes.
3. Improving enterprise data management – building a common system architecture to ensure the interoperability of systems that collect and manage data. This in turn will help all three Administrations target specific areas with well managed and disciplined programs.
4. Effectively implementing and drafting policy that is focused not only on improving the lives of our current Veterans, but looks to meet their future needs.
5. Aligning functions across the department to better leverage resources to maximize service and benefit delivery to veterans and their families.

6. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing VA at this time — as to the Department as a whole, and specifically in VBA, VHA, and NCA? On which of these challenges would you focus and how would you intend to address them through your role as Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration? How would you measure your success?

My nomination to join the VA team is timely as Secretary McDonough addresses strategic priorities, including timely access to health care and benefits for veterans, the electronic health record program, VA's existing infrastructure, toxic exposure and burn pits, and continued implementation of the bills passed into law by Congress.

Which would you focus and how you intend to address them in my role?

If confirmed, the position of Assistant Secretary of Enterprise Integration would allow me the opportunity to focus and support each of the Secretary's priorities by setting the foundation for effective oversight and management through a disciplined governance process. This would assist the Department in setting and attaining measurable milestones and objectives in each of these challenge areas and will also allow for the right timing and distribution of resources.

How would you measure your success?

My success is measured by reaching the objectives in each of the challenge areas I mentioned previously. OEI must find different ways to help the administrations reach their intended outcomes. Ultimately, everything I do will be grounded in what is best for Veterans and their

families, caregivers, and survivors.

7. VA is in the midst of deploying a new electronic health record (EHR) system. Given the Department of Defense started this transition a few years prior to VA, what lessons learned would you bring from your time at the Defense Health Agency and your Army career to VA's EHR work?

Veterans deserve access to quality health care, including a modern electronic health record (EHR) that enables the sharing of health information within VA, with the Department of Defense and with community care providers. In my time at the Defense Health Agency, I gained important experiences that could help me in this role at the VA, if confirmed.

For example, early in DoD's EHR journey I learned from the medical community that the functional leads must represent the single voice of the customer (functional champion) to the acquisition lead (program manager). I also learned very quickly that we needed to update and standardize our IT infrastructure. Any latency in the infrastructure performance was blamed on the EHR. The medical community did not try to run the acquisition or the IT infrastructure improvement, instead we focused on standardizing workflows and change management improving healthcare outcomes. It was also important that the frontline medical staff were the heart of the change management process and could see the value of standardizing the way we did business. A huge lesson learned was the power of our Pay it Forward program which brought staff from hospitals that had implemented the EHR to hospitals who were training to implement the EHR. This was crucial to the hospital staff owning the process.

8. What do you see as the biggest challenges for VA's EHR modernization program and what role do you see for OEI in addressing them?

Prior to confirmation, I have not been briefed on the details behind the current situation or future plans of VA's EHR. However, if confirmed, I believe focusing on the change management to standard workflows is the biggest challenge and key for the medical community. OEI could bring together the EHR Program Office, the Functional Champion, the IT community, and the financial community to keep the balance in responsibilities and accountability for actions.

9. GAO has consistently found various Veterans Benefits Administration programs lack sound planning practices, e.g., GAO-21-444T (finding VA has not applied sound planning practices to determine the most effective balance between medical disability exams conducted by Veterans Health Administration employees or VBA contractors). If confirmed, what is your plan to improve the coordination between VHA and VBA for an effective Department-wide strategy for medical disability examinations?

I agree with Secretary McDonough that delivering benefits to the Veterans who have earned them in a timely manner is a sacred obligation. If confirmed, I would work to gain a better

understanding of the issue you have raised concerning planning and coordination between VHA and VBA. Specifically, I would want to ensure that this issue does not have a negative impact on a Veterans' ability to get a timely, accurate decision on their disability claim. COVID-19 catch-up aside, if the timeliness and accuracy of these medical disability exams are affecting Veteran claims then I would seek to identify the core problems and solutions that result in improved outcomes. This may help to inform current or new planning practices for these examinations.

10. Providing earned health care and benefits for toxic exposure veterans is a top priority for me. If confirmed, how will you help the Department make the process to provide such health care and benefits more veteran-focused, science-based, and consistent?

I share your goal and the goal of the Secretary to prioritize and ensure Veterans exposed to environmental toxins receive the care and benefits they have earned. I believe that decisive action by the VA grounded in science is the best way forward. If confirmed, I believe the best way that OEI could help drive this effort is through our governance process and ensuring that the Secretary has the data necessary to make evidence-based policy decisions.

11. VA has several large initiatives it is rolling out or plans to roll out across its vast enterprise. Examples include the Financial Management Business Transformation, modernization of the procurement and logistics systems, and Electronic Health Record Modernization. These efforts often have significant interdependencies and if not properly coordinated can create system failures impacting veterans, VA staff, budgets, and more. Please describe your views for how to coordinate initiatives across the Department.

Coordination of multiple complex initiatives with significant dependencies is a major challenge for any organization. One key factor to managing these interdependencies is to properly capture the requirements for each initiative to enable proper integrated planning across these initiatives. Another critical factor to success is proactive application of risk management in the planning and management of each initiative to ensure seamless coordination across the enterprise and mitigation of potential problems before they occur. Other critical factors for successful initiatives coordination include active leadership engagement and transparency that will enable challenges and barriers to be addressed and resolved promptly.

12. Internal and external decisions and events can create significant budgetary, planning, and service delivery impacts on the Department. Examples include new legislation, Executive Orders, court rulings, internal policy decisions, new presumptions, and global conflicts. Please describe your views for how a large organization like VA should track these various requirements to be able to plan, adjust budgets and operations, and take other appropriate steps. Please also describe whether you believe VA currently has adequate systems in place to

ensure policies directed through laws, executive orders, etc., are properly implemented, tracked, and measured.

Please describe your views for how a large organization like VA should track these various requirements to be able to plan, adjust budgets and operations, and take other appropriate steps.

I am not familiar with the VA planning and budgetary processes. DoD utilizes the PPBE (Planning, Programming, Budget and Execution) process that, if executed properly, forces an organization to plan and program 2-4 years out committing to sustain capital expenses such as EHRs or facility infrastructure. This must be based on the strategy of the organization. The budget year (1 year out) helps to refine the last programmed year for any internal / external decisions and events. The year of execution should minimize the decision space for organizations to implement those programs that were developed in the planning and programming phase. Every organization should also define a requirements development process to ensure that requirements fall into a planning/programming, budget, or year of execution category. The ability to move money to cover large requirements is limited the closer you get to the year of execution.

Please also describe whether you believe VA currently has adequate systems in place to ensure policies directed through laws, executive orders, etc., are properly implemented, tracked, and measured.

I am aware of recent GAO and OIG reports indicating the need to strengthen governance within certain VA programs. But as a Veteran, I have also seen VA implementing major legislative requirements in recent years, such as simplifying community care through the MISSION Act, and changes to education benefits through the Forever GI Bill. I understand that OEI recently took on the role of ensuring that executive orders, legislation, and other directives are implemented and tracked within VA so, if confirmed, I would work with leaders across the Department to ensure we are meeting Congress' intent and delivering on the care and benefits Veterans have earned.

**UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

Pre-Hearing Questions for Mr. Guy Kiyokawa

Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Enterprise Integration

Department of Veterans Affairs

From Senator Moran

1. *Please state why you want to be Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration and what skills and experience make you qualified for this important role?*

This a challenging time to bring Veterans, their families, and VA employees through the ongoing pandemic. However, I believe it is also an opportunity to bring together many diverse VA initiatives that would benefit from one another. I want to draw those connections and continue to move the VA forward as an enterprise. I have spent the past 8 years working through the challenge of bringing together first shared functions across the Military Health System previously performed by the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Defense Health Agency (DHA). This led to standardization, better outcomes, and efficiencies. However, this was balanced with areas that also remained unique to the three Services. Within the past 6 years, I have also brought together diverse initiatives across the Military Health System responding to several National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) statutes including the movement of Army, Navy, and Air Force hospitals to the DHA. This integration continues in the midst of bringing service members, their families, and retirees through the ongoing pandemic. The DHA developed the DoD COVID-19 vaccination plans and implemented the administration of over 5M vaccine doses to support service members and beneficiaries.

If confirmed, I would use these experiences to drive VAs management capabilities for effective governance, decision making, and transparency to achieve the Secretary's priorities of providing access to quality health care and timely delivery of VA services and benefits to Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

2. *If confirmed, what will your priorities be?*

If confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration, I would focus on the five following areas.

1. Solidifying the foundation for managing VA through a governance process that ensures agile and evidence-based decision-making.
2. Moving strategy into actions that are measurable and drive the resources to ensure that the Secretary's initiatives reach objectives. This includes standardizing program management and its relevant processes.

3. Improving enterprise data management – building a common system architecture to ensure the interoperability of systems that collect and manage data. This in turn will help all three Administrations target specific areas with well managed and disciplined programs.
 4. Effectively implementing and drafting policy that is focused not only on improving the lives of our current Veterans, but also looks to meet their future needs.
 5. Aligning functions across the department to better leverage resources to maximize service and benefit delivery to Veterans and their families.
3. *Please describe your professional work for the last 10 years, including positions held, major job duties, operating budgets, and number of subordinate employees and/or organizations. Also please include any major accomplishments for each position.*

2015- Present, Deputy Director, Defense Health Agency (DHA) (Senior Executive Service, Tier 3) 7700 Arlington Blvd, Falls Church, VA 22041

Organizes, directs and manages, through senior level program directors, the Defense Health Agency (DHA). Oversees the overall operational planning, policy planning, direction and timely execution of the Agency's health care programs including a \$3.7B headquarters operating budget. Responsible for the Military Health System oversight and execution of financial management, information technology, education & training, medical research, human capital management, facilities management, clinical quality and safety, TRICARE Health Plan, Procurement, Medical Logistics, Public Health, and Combat Support Agency functions. The DHA administers health care to 9.5 million uniformed service members, retirees and their families through military treatment facilities and the TRICARE Health Plan.

- DHA led the COVID-19 Vaccine Operational Planning Team for DoD. This included coordination amongst Service (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps), Joint Staff, and OSD leadership to develop an integrated plan and execute vaccination of 6.1M service members, civilian/ contract staff, and beneficiaries. Coordinated with HHS Operation Warp Speed, FDA, and CDC.
- Led DHA strategic planning efforts utilizing Balanced Scorecard methodology. Building consensus and buy-in while holding senior leaders accountable as objective owners responsible for measurable initiatives supported by projects. Prioritized initiatives and projects allowing shift of resources.
- Led change management to bring four different health systems (Army, Navy, Air Force, and DHA) into a single integrated system by transitioning hospitals and clinics to the DHA.
- Led the development of the program, campaign plan, and execution to collect 10k units of COVID Convalescent Plasma (CCP) within five months. Collected 10,422 units within that time period.
- Leads monthly sessions with 20 Military Service Organizations and Veterans Service Organizations addressing topics of interest and leverage their platforms to inform membership/ our beneficiaries.

- Guided the program management efforts for the next TRICARE contract (T5), (current contract is 5 years \$58B) including incorporating NDAA 2017 directives and changing the approach from individual reimbursement to contractor responsibility for health outcomes. The result of this 3 year effort, was final approval and on-time submission of the Request for Proposal published on 7 April 2021.
- As the Senior Medical Advisor to the Armed Forces Retirement Homes (AFRH), I worked with the Director, Washington HQ Services, CEO AFRH, and home leaders to ensure the safety of residents and staff as a result of COVID-19. I assisted the homes in developing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements and required COVID Testing.
- Senior DHA representative in planning and establishing the Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization (FEHRM) office in coordination with multiple VA leaders. Worked to ensure that DHA supported the FEHRM with acquisition expertise, clinical / business functional leads, and the IT infrastructure support ensuring successful launch of this organization which oversees the deployment of an electronic health record for DoD, VA, and US Coast Guard.
- DHA is responsible for the deployment of MHS Genesis (DoD electronic health record). Responsible for change management of clinical and business processes. Also responsible for consolidated and modernized IT infrastructure. Also expanded Health Info Exchanges ensuring interoperability with civilian and VA health systems.
- Managed DHA Reform efforts leading to \$74M in FY19 savings. This included enterprise purchasing of medical supplies \$56M, standard purchase of pharmacy automation \$10M, and consolidate contracted clinical services across 8 MTFs \$8M. I tracked the tasks and milestones for each of the eleven initiatives crucial to the National Defense Strategy Reform efforts.
- Led and implemented three major restructuring efforts for the DHA including creation of internal governance with the intent of delegating authorities while increasing accountability through performance reviews.
- DHA senior representative to the VA-DoD Health Executive Council (HEC) and the Joint Executive Council (JEC) as the responsible leader for many initiatives aligning VA and DoD efforts.

2013-2015 Chief of Staff, TRICARE Management Activity (TMA), (Colonel, US Army) (as of 1 OCT 2013, Defense Health Agency (DHA))

Office of the Asst. Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Falls Church, VA

Responsible for executive management of all staff functions for over 1400 civilian and military personnel in the operation of the DHA and the transition of TMA to the DHA. This includes the execution of consolidating ten functions from the Army, Navy, and Air Force into the DHA. This included budget, facilities, logistics, information technology, public health, research & development, pharmacy, the health plan, education & training, and contracting.

- Transitioned over 1700 civilian and military personnel from TMA and Services to DHA
- Led ten shared services to \$136 million in savings in FY 2014

Substitute for Deputy Director representing the DHA in the Medical Deputies Action Group

2012 – 2013 Army Liaison, Military Health System Governance (Colonel, US Army) Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Falls Church, VA

Responsible for facilitating the work group developing the implementation plan, and supporting analysis, to create a new Defense Health Agency that included plans for ten shared services.

- Facilitated and gained concurrence by multiple stakeholders who don't work for the same leaders building consensus to an approved plan. This required stakeholder buy-in, consistent strategic communications, and engagement of senior Army (General Officers at all levels) and DoD leadership (SES and political appointees).

2010 – 2012 Director, Facilities (Colonel, US Army) Office of the Surgeon General / US Army Medical Command (MEDCOM), Falls Church, VA

Responsible for effective and efficient direction, control, and operation of medical facilities management for the US Army. This includes the planning, programming of funds, design/construction as the owner's representative, activation, and maintenance of all US Army medical facilities worldwide which includes 9 medical centers, 21 hospitals, 81 health clinics, 124 dental clinics, 96 veterinary clinics, and 14 biomedical research activities, valued in excess of \$10 billion. I managed an annual operating budget of \$319M and supervised over 160 military officers, civilian employees, and contract employees. Also managed 14 Fisher Houses including coordination with the Fisher House Foundation, Intrepid Heroes Fund, and the Fisher family.

- Defended four large construction projects, worth \$1.7 billion, targeted for cancellation by the DoD Comptroller and scrutinized by Congressional staffers. I identified external and internal politics that would influence the outcome of these decisions. I then worked closely with multiple agencies from the hospitals to the Army / DoD leadership, Government Accounting Office, and Congressional staffers ensuring consistent messaging, analysis, and understanding of common goals. The result was all four projects received Congressional authorization.
- Continued development of contracting innovations through the MEDCOM Support Teams located in two Corps of Engineer (COE) Districts. I ensured consistency of contract products to support planning, design, construction, maintenance, activation (initial outfitting and transition), energy management and sustainability initiatives. For example, I led the group to develop an indefinite delivery indefinite quantity contract shortening the contract timeline for initial outfitting and transition. This innovation caught the attention of the VA which invited my organization to explain how we accomplished this task.
- Effectively used technology in a DoD facility management system (Defense Medical Logistics Support System – Facility Management) to link facility condition index assessments to construction projects directly through the identified deficiencies. This

provided the commander the risk of reducing facility budgets. Decisions early in the fiscal year limited the facilities budget. The increased risk of not reducing deficiencies led to increases in facilities funding.

- Partnered with regional commanders, administrators, and facility managers to define project requirements and properly portray the supporting information through the MEDCOM project prioritization process. This coupled with the aforementioned ability to portray risk in budget reductions resulted in significant budget increases. In 2006, the total SRM expenditure, including year-end execution, averaged \$405 million. By fiscal year 2008, we had expanded the expenditure to \$560M.

- Developed facility project requirements providing quick and detailed responses to Congressional inquiries resulting in an additional \$240M in construction funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

- Established MEDCOM process for developing lease requirements. I was responsible for working individual lease requests to ensure approval at every level to include development of leases with the corresponding Corps of Engineer district. Result of this effort was creating additional physical clinic capacity closer to beneficiaries' homes.

4. *VA is charged with providing various benefits and services for qualifying Veterans and family members. In general terms, please describe the outcomes that VA should be seeking for Veterans through these benefits and services.*

VA's mission is to provide Veterans with world-class health care and ensure that Veterans, their families, and survivors have timely access to services and benefits to include honoring our Veterans with their final resting place and lasting tributes to their service. VA's fourth mission is on display today as VA supports the nation's response to national emergencies such as the pandemic. Ultimately, everything I do will be grounded in what is best for Veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors, and I agree with Secretary McDonough that this is our sacred obligation. Any outcome that the VA seeks should also be connected to effective oversight and management through a disciplined governance process. This would assist the Department in in setting and attaining measurable milestones and objectives in each of these outcomes and will also allow for the right timing and distribution of resources.

5. *Please describe your approach to change management for a large organization and how you apply that to modernization efforts at VA.*

My approach to change management first requires gaining a common understanding with stakeholders of the intent and objective of the change. Without this understanding and acceptance, there is limited buy-in. Another important aspect is involving all the individuals who comprise the process and will make the necessary changes. Their involvement and ownership are critical to making a measurable change. Finally, those same individuals should feed improvements into the process that might benefit the larger enterprise. The application to modernization efforts in the VA are directly related to the

deployment of new systems such as the electronic health record. Corporate and local staff empowered to develop the standardized work flows are the only stakeholders who can ensure adoption. At the corporate level, data and an enterprise approach creates the standard. The local level provides feedback to determine if it is a unique local situation or if it improves the enterprise approach. And as always, these changes should be grounded in what is best for Veterans, their families and caregivers, and survivors.

6. *As a military Veteran, how have you engaged with VA to receive services and benefits during and since your transition out of the military? Based on your experience, what can VA do to improve how it serves Veterans?*

As a military Veteran, I utilized the VA health assessment leading to my disability rating. It was a seamless process that I accomplished with the help of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). I have also used the Post 9-11 GI Bill which is a great program supporting Veterans and their families at educational institutions across this country. There is always room for improvement. The ongoing challenge is in developing programs that support a standard benefit that is applied to different personal situations. Each Veteran has a different need and situation. Ensuring we can meet those needs through standard processes is an ongoing challenge.

7. *Nearly everything that VA does in terms of benefits and services can be tied back to active military service. As a senior military leader and a senior executive in the Department of Defense, to what extent did you and other leaders consider the impacts policy decisions would have on VA and on Veterans? Please provide a relevant example.*

In many cases the approach DoD has taken to policy decisions focused on the mission and ability to accomplish that mission in a measurable way. Incorporation of the VA mission and support to Veterans is a deliberate approach when identified as a requirement or objective of a DoD policy. For example, the journey to an interoperable medical record led to the requirement that the DoD would develop Health Information Exchanges to share medical records with civilian institutions where DoD beneficiaries might receive care. This journey started with the intent that creating these exchanges across the US would also improve the interoperability with the VA. In turn, the VA had embarked on a similar effort leading DoD to adopt the VA effort and exponentially increasing the number of exchanges with civilian health care institutions.

8. *VA is modernizing many of its IT systems to improve service and benefit delivery. VA is also investing in positions to improve management of data. How should a large and complex organization like VA create, collect, store, and analyze data to maximize the outcomes for Veterans using finite resources?*

In my experience with the DoD, the largest challenge was to set a strategy to a) develop a common IT infrastructure supporting data systems, b) set a program management standard to address current and future requirements, and c) run existing data systems

through their life cycle plan to either align with the common IT infrastructure and program management or determine the need to sunset the system. In the DoD, the military health system sits on a huge amount of longitudinal data for service members, families, and retirees. Bringing the systems together and setting a standard approach to developing and maintaining systems was our first step. This included creating the standard IT infrastructure through the Desktop to Datacenter (D2D) which was an overall IT program that relied on the common infrastructure known as the Medical Community of Interest (MEDCOI). From here new systems operate on a highly reliable infrastructure that can address continuously changing cyber requirements. Legacy systems also operate on this new infrastructure but follow a strategy based on their requirements. The result was sunset of legacy systems or their continued development through the standard process.

9. *GAO and VA's Inspector General have identified numerous issues with VA's Electronic Health Record Modernization program, most of which stem from a lack of acquisition and requirements management. Please describe your approach to ensuring requirements management is not neglected in any major acquisition program. Also, what lessons would you apply from your professional experience to mitigate such issues?*

Veterans deserve access to quality health care, including a modern electronic health record (EHR) that enables the sharing of health information within VA, with the Department of Defense and with community care providers. My approach to requirements management is grounded in the DoD Acquisition process. Early in DoD's EHR journey the medical community accepted that we were the functional leads who must represent the single voice of the customer (functional champion) to the acquisition lead (program manager). We also learned very quickly that we needed to update and standardize our IT infrastructure. Any latency in the infrastructure performance was blamed on the EHR. The medical community did not try to run the acquisition or the IT infrastructure improvement, instead we focused on standardizing workflows and change management improving healthcare outcomes. It was also important that the frontline medical staff were the heart of the change management process and could see the value of standardizing the way we did business. A huge lesson learned was the power of our Pay it Forward program which brought staff from hospitals that had implemented the EHR to hospitals who were training to implement the EHR. This was crucial to the hospital staff owning the process.

PRE-HEARING QUESTIONS**Submitted by Senator Murray****Guy Kiyokawa, Nominee for VA Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration****Women Veterans**

I continue to hear from women veterans and other minority veterans that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) still has work to do in serving their needs. If confirmed, how will you use your role leading VA's Office of Enterprise Integration to ensure their experiences are reflected in the data VA uses to shape its strategic planning?

I've had the honor of serving 29 years in the Army alongside Veterans from multiple eras spanning the Vietnam War generation to the Post-9/11 generation. I am personally committed to ensuring that every single one of them, including all the women and other minority Veterans receive the care and benefits from the VA that fits their needs. My military career moved me thirteen times across this country and overseas. The ability for diverse groups of Veterans to access benefits varies on their cultural upbringing and geographic location. I have seen firsthand the differences between beneficiary populations in the Pacific, West Coast, Texas, South, and the Mid-Atlantic including both rural and metropolitan areas. The VA must balance standardized processes with the unique requirements from a growing diverse group of Veterans. The VA must understand and account for cultural, gender, and socio-economic differences effectively to connect with and serve all Veterans.

The Office of Enterprise Integration is responsible for data strategy and management. If confirmed as the Assistant Secretary, I would ensure that core data systems are leveraged to support the Secretary's vision of embracing diversity and serving all Veterans by coordinating closely with the Center for Women Veterans and Center for Minority Veterans. This will ensure female and minority Veterans' experiences are reflected in the data VA uses to shape strategic policy. More importantly, I would leverage analytic capabilities to forecast future demographic data to help drive future requirements. Predictive analytics should drive programs that in many cases take several years to develop and implement. I would also ensure data informs the objective measures that provide feedback on how we are meeting the requirements from a diverse demographic population to include the unique medical needs of women.

Transition

During the transition for veterans from the Department of Defense (DoD) to VA, a warm handoff is critical to ensure veterans, especially those with posttraumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, are able to navigate the VA health care system and receive the care they deserve. As VA modernizes its systems, how will you ensure DoD and VA are sharing information to ensure every veteran has a smooth transition and is able to receive the care they deserve?

If confirmed, I will support the Secretary's goal of improving the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of benefits and services between the DOD and VA. A key component to sharing information amongst federal entities is establishing a standard system architecture to support interoperability. The DoD and VA are on that path with the Electronic Health Record (EHR) and the Defense Medical Logistics Support System (DMLSS) to enable the seamless transition for Service member's data moving from one department to the next. This interoperability would improve the hand off particularly for complex medical cases that involve TBI and PTSD.

I have spent the past 8 years working through the challenge of bringing together first shared functions across the Military Health System previously performed by the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Defense Health Agency (DHA). This led to standardization, better outcomes, and efficiencies. In my experience with the DoD, the largest challenge was to set a strategy to a) develop a common IT infrastructure supporting data systems, b) set a program management standard to address current and future requirements, and c) run existing data systems through their life cycle plan to either align with the common IT infrastructure and program management or determine the need to sunset the system. If confirmed, I will use this experience to bring together the EHR Program Office, the Functional Champion, the IT community, and the financial community to keep the balance in responsibilities and accountability for actions. All of this is to ensure that Veterans leaving the military get the smooth transition and quality care they deserve.

To: Mr. Kiyokawa, Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Enterprise Integration & James Rodriguez, Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans' Employment and Training
From: Senator Blumenthal
Re: QFRs for October 6, 2021 SVAC Nomination Hearing

Electronic Health Record Demographic Data Collection

The following questions are in regard to a recent lawsuit against the VA focused on data collection and the role of how gender and race might affect the VA's handling of claims:

- **Mr. Kiyokawa: What will you do to improve internal oversight to identify and address discrimination against Black veterans? What will you do if demographic data the VA possesses reveals discrimination? [can you commit to coming back to me with such a review?]**
- Answer: I've had the honor of serving 29 years in the U.S. Army alongside Veterans from multiple eras spanning the Vietnam War generation to the Post-9/11 generation. I am personally committed to ensuring that every single one of them, including women and minority Veterans receive the care and benefits they have earned. Discrimination against Black Veterans or any other Veteran is abhorrent to me. If confirmed, the Office Enterprise Integration (OEI) provides a unique opportunity to engage with organizations across the VA enterprise to include each VA Administration, the Office of Human Resources and Administration, the Center for Minority Veterans, and the Veterans Experience Office to fulfill VA's responsibility and administer benefits and services. If evidence of potential discrimination were to be revealed, I would swiftly engage with the appropriate officials to address the situation.
- **Mr. Kiyokawa: What is your opinion about whether the VA should collect information about sexual orientation and self-identified gender identity for the purposes of reviewing and safeguarding against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender?**
- Answer: My opinion is that Veterans should feel free to provide information on their sexual orientation and gender identity. However, this decision is a personal choice and should not be mandated by law or policy. This information should be used not only to safeguard against discrimination but to also ensure that programs meet these Veteran's medical and emotional needs.

- **Mr. Kiyokawa: How can the development of a modernized Electronic Health Record system augment equity when disability compensation and other benefits are awarded at the VA?**
- Answer: A modernized electronic health record that is seamlessly integrated with DoD and community providers ensures a longitudinal record that provides a clearer picture of a Veterans health and includes a complete history of injury, rehabilitation, and care. This information allows for more thorough and complete disability evaluations ensuring that all Veterans are equally evaluated against a common standard.

Senator Mazie K. Hirono

Questions for the Record

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee
Pending Nominations – Kiyokawa, Rodriguez
October 6, 2021

Questions Guy Kiyokawa, Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Enterprise Integration

Sexual Harassment History

To ensure the fitness of nominees for any of our appointed positions, I ask every nominee who comes before me to answer the following two questions:

- 1. Since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors, or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?**

Answer: No, I have not.

- 2. Have you ever faced discipline, or entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?**

Answer: No, I have not.

Disparities in Representation

In his response to my questions for the record, Secretary McDonough committed to upholding President Biden's pledge to promote diversity across the federal government.

- 1. Do you support the Secretary in his commitment?**

Answer: Yes, I emphatically do.

- 2. How can OEI fold this goal into the Office's mission?**

Answer: In my 35 years in the military and Federal service, I've seen first-hand that a diverse workforce, leadership, and teams lead to the best outcomes. I am personally committed to promoting diversity across VA and the federal government. If confirmed and in coordination with the Secretary, I would work to determine the best way for OEI to fold this into their mission.

TAP

During the hearing, you proposed a number of ways the Transition Assistance Program can be improved to increase veterans' engagement in the program and to better convey its value.

1. What, if any, legislative changes can be made to better serve those going through TAP?

Answer: The consistency of TAP ensures every service member is provided the same opportunities. However, not every service member is in the same situation when they receive their TAP briefing. I was fortunate to have a job while going through TAP, but each veteran is in a different place in the job / career search. We must make it easy for a veteran to retrieve that information at the appropriate time in managing their careers. While I don't have specific recommendations for legislative changes, I am committed to working with appropriate officials to provide any relevant technical assistance on the matter.

Sen. Rounds
Questions for the Record
Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee
Hearing on Pending Nominees
10/6/21

Questions for Mr. Kiyokawa

1. Based on your experience with the Defense Health Agency, do you have any ideas or recommendations for the Department to better meet the needs of veterans and community care providers?

Answers: I have spent the past 8 years working through the challenge of bringing together shared functions across the Military Health System previously performed by the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Defense Health Agency (DHA). This led to standardization, better outcomes, and efficiencies. The Defense Health Agency mission delivering health care is primarily focused on ensuring that service members are medically prepared to go to war and the medical personnel are properly trained for their wartime mission. This creates a demand on our health care system that is also in place to support the health care needs of 9.6 million beneficiaries. The balance between direct care (DoD hospitals) and purchased care is an ongoing effort that must focus on the service members and their go to war mission. The DoD has continued to improve on that balance which must also put the patient at the center ensuring proper coordination of care between the direct and purchase care systems. We continually focus on ensuring the beneficiary is not the only advocate for their care between the two systems. I believe my experiences in the Army and as Deputy Director of DHA have prepared me for this opportunity to integrate efforts within VA and ensure we continue to deliver the care and benefits Veterans have earned.

1a. Are there processes that you could recommend implementing to mimic the administrative success that TRICARE has had?

Answers: While I do not yet have the full details of the billing process for community care at VA, I believe my experiences in the Army and as Deputy Director of DHA have prepared me for this opportunity to integrate efforts within VA and ensure we continue to deliver the care and benefits Veterans have earned.

2. Are there lessons learned from your time with the Defense Healthy Agency which you could apply to assist the Department in the deployment of new programs?

Answers: I believe my experiences in the Army and as Deputy Director of DHA have prepared me for this opportunity to serve as Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration. At DHA, we brought together shared functions previously performed by individual branches and gained

greater outcomes and efficiencies through standardization. I believe the same lessons learned would apply to deployment of new programs. New programs frequently focus on a system or procedure at a local hospital. This is not a bad place to start, but it is important to maintain an enterprise performance improvement process to seek out these new programs, assess the outcome data, and determine if it is applicable to other locations. Any new programs should be viewed through an enterprise lens to ensure they are evidence-based and interoperable with existing programs.

2a. Is there anything you would have done differently in the deployment of the Electronic Health Record Modernization program?

Answers: As I have not yet been confirmed, I don't have specific details on VA's deployment plan. In general, from my perspective at DHA, we recognized that buy-in and change management are the keys to system adoption. I understand VA is working closely with DoD on the health record modernization program and incorporating lessons learned into VA deployment sites.

**UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

**ROOM 412 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
Telephone: (202) 224-9126**

**QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES**

The Rules of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs require that a Presidential nominee whose nomination is referred to the Committee submit, on a form approved by the Committee, a sworn statement concerning his or her background and financial interests, including the financial interests of the nominee's spouse and children living in the nominee's household. The Committee form is in two parts:

- (A) Information concerning the employment, education, and relevant background of the nominee, which is made public; and
- (B) Information concerning the financial and other background of the nominee, which is made public only when the Committee determines that such information bears directly on the nominee's qualifications to hold the position to which the individual is nominated.

Committee action on a nomination, including hearings or a meeting to consider a motion to recommend confirmation, shall not be initiated until at least five days after the nominee submits this form unless the Chairman, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, waives the waiting period. In order to assist the Committee in its consideration of nominations, the Committee requests that each nominee complete the attached Questionnaire for Presidential Nominees. The notarized original and any supplemental information should be delivered to:

Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Room 412, Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Attention: Chief Clerk

PART I: ALL OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS PART WILL BE MADE PUBLIC

1. Basic Biographical Information

Please provide the following information.

<i>Position to Which You Have Been Nominated</i>	
<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date of Nomination</u>
Assistant Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration	June 23, 2021

<i>Current Legal Name</i>			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
Guy	Toshimitsu	Kiyokawa	

<i>Addresses</i>					
<u>Residential Address</u> (do not include street address)			<u>Office Address</u> (include street address)		
			Street: 7700 Arlington Blvd		
<u>City:</u> Vienna	<u>State:</u> Virginia	<u>Zip:</u> 22181	<u>City:</u> Falls Church	<u>State:</u> Virginia	<u>Zip:</u> 22042

<i>Other Names Used</i>						
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>	<small>Check if Maiden Name</small>	<u>Name Used From</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	<u>Name Used To</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Birth Year and Place</i>	
Year of Birth (Do not include month and day)	Place of Birth
1963	Honolulu, Hawaii

<i>Marital Status</i>					
Check All That Describe Your Current Situation:					
Never Married	Married	Separated	Annulled	Divorced	Widowed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Spouse's Name</i> (current spouse only)			
<u>Spouse's First Name</u>	<u>Spouse's Middle Name</u>	<u>Spouse's Last Name</u>	<u>Spouse's Suffix</u>
Kathryn	Ann	Kiyokawa	

<i>Spouse's Other Names Used</i> (current spouse only)						
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>	Check if Maiden Name	<u>Name Used From</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	<u>Name Used To</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
Kathryn	Ann	Samways		X	May 1963 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	July 1994 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Children's Names (if over 18)</i>			
First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix
Ben	Sang Soo	Kiyokawa	
Erin	Yoon Ah	Kiyokawa	

2. Education

List all post-secondary schools attended.

<u>Name of School</u>	<u>Type of School</u> (vocational/technical/trade school, college/university/military college, correspondence/distance/extension/online school)	<u>Date Began School</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Ended School</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still in school)	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Date Awarded</u>
University of Southern California	4-year undergraduate university	August 1982 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	May 1986 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	BS Civil Engineering	May 1986
Golden Gate University	Graduate school attended in person via Monterey California	Sep 1988 Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dec 1990 Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	MBA	Did not finish
Baylor University	Graduate school via Army Baylor program	June 1993 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	June 1995 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Masters Health Admin	June 1995
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>		

3. Employment

(A) List all of your employment activities, including unemployment and self-employment. If the employment activity was military duty, list separate employment activity periods to show each change of military duty station. Do not list employment before your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum of two years of employment history.

<u>Type of Employment</u> (Active Military Duty Station, National Guard/Reserve, USPHS Commissioned Corps, Other federal employment, State Government (Non-federal Employment), Self-employment, Unemployment, Federal Contractor, Non-Government Employment (excluding self-employment), Other	<u>Name of Your Employer/Assigned Duty Station</u>	<u>Most Recent Position Title/Rank</u>	<u>Location</u> (City and State only)	<u>Date Employment Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Employment Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still employed)
Federal Employment	Defense Health Agency	Deputy Director, SES-3	Falls Church, VA	OCT 2015 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est Present <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Active Duty Military	Defense Health Agency	Chief of Staff, Colonel, US Army	Falls Church, VA	May 2013 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Oct 2015 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Active Duty Military	Office of the Asst. Secy of Defense, Health Affairs Military Health System Governance	Army Liaison, Colonel, US Army	Falls Church, VA	May 2012 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	May 2013
Active Duty Military	Office of the Surgeon General / US Army Medical Command	Director, Facilities/ Colonel US Army	Falls Church, VA	June 2010 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	May 2012 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Active Duty Military	US Army War College / Dept of Veterans Affairs	US Army War College Fellow	Washington, DC	June 2009 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	June 2010 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Active Duty Military	US Army Medical Command	Director, Facilities/ Colonel / Lt Colonel US Army	Fort Sam Houston, TX	June 2006	June 2009
Active Duty Military	US Army Aeromedical Center and Lyster Army Health Clinic	Deputy Commander for Administration Lt Col USA	Fort Rucker, AL	June 2005	June 2006
Active Duty Military	Pacific Regional Medical Command / Tripler Army Medical Center	Executive Officer/ Lt Colonel US Army	Tripler Army Medical Center, HI	June 2003	June 2005

Active Duty Military	US Army Health Facility Planning Agency	Deputy Commander / Lt Colonel USA	Falls Church, VA	August 2002	June 2003
Active Duty Military	Office of the Surgeon General, US Army	Executive Assistant to The Surgeon General/ Lt Colonel / Major USA	Falls Church, VA	June 2001	August 2002
Active Duty Military	US Army Health Facility Planning Agency	Chief, Planning, Programming & Integration/ Major USA	Falls Church, VA	June 1999	June 2001
Active Duty Military	Europe Regional Medical Command	Chief, Health Facilities Planning Office, Major/ Captain USA	Heidelberg, GE	June 1996	June 1999
Active Duty Military	Walter Reed Army Medical Center	Administrator, Department of Surgery/ Captain USA	Washington, DC	June 1995	June 1996
Active Duty Military	Walter Reed Army Medical Center	Baylor University Administrative Resident/ Captain, USA	Washington, DC	June 1994	June 1995
Active Duty Military	US Army -Baylor University, Masters in Health Administration	Student/ Captain, USA	Fort Sam Houston, TX	June 1993	June 1994
Active Duty Military	18 th Medical Command	Chief, Facilities Division/ Captain USA	Yongsan, South Korea	June 1992	June 1993
Active Duty Military	US Army Health Facility Planning Agency	Intern, New Brooke Army Medical Center Project Office/ Captain	Fort Sam Houston, TX	August 1991	June 1992
Active Duty Military	US Army Combined Arms Service Staff School (CAS3)	Student/ Captain, USA	Fort Leavenworth, KS	June 1991	August 1991
Active Duty Military	US Army Medical Department Advance Course	Student/ Captain, USA	Fort Sam Houston, TX	Jan 1991	June 1991
Active Duty Military	Silas B Hays Army Community Hospital	Chief, Inpatient & Ancillary Care Support Branch/ CPT	Fort Ord, CA	March 1990	Dec 1990

Active Duty Military	237 th Medical Detachment	Flight Section Leader/ 2LT/ 1LT/ CPT	Fort Ord, CA	July 1987	March 1990
Active Duty Military	US Army Aviation Basic Course/ Initial Entry Rotary Wing Aviator Course	Student	Fort Rucker, AL	June 1986	July 1987
Reserve Training Military	ROTC Advance Camp	Student	Fort Lewis, WA	June 1985	July 1985
Reserve Training Military	ROTC Cadet Rotary Wing Training	Student	Fort Rucker, AL	July 1985	August 1985
Non-government Employment	Dames and Moore Geotechnical Engineers	Lab Technician	Honolulu, HI	May 1984	Aug 1984
Non-government Employment	Hanauma Bay Snorkeling Tours	Equipment maintenance and tour driver	Honolulu, HI	June 1983	Aug 1983
Non-government Employment	Moiiliili Grocery Store	Stock shelves and cashier	Honolulu, HI	June 1982	Aug 1982

(B) List any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions with federal, state, or local governments, not listed elsewhere.

<u>Name of Government Entity</u>	<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date Service Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Service Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still serving)	
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Present <input type="checkbox"/>

4. Honors and Awards

List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, civilian service citations, military medals, academic or professional honors, honorary society memberships and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievement.

- Military Awards: Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (2d award), Meritorious Service Medal (7th Award), Army Commendation Medal (3rd award), Army Achievement Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, National Defense Service Medal (2d award), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (3rd award), Air Assault Badge, Army Staff Identification Badge
- 2010 Department of Veterans Affairs Commendation.
- 2005 American College of Healthcare Executives Regent’s Award
- 2000 Charles E. Christ Award for the Outstanding Contributions to the US Army Health Facility Construction Program
- American College of Healthcare Executives – Diplomate (CHE)
- State of California, Board of Registration for Professional Engineers, Engineer-in-Training (EIT)
- Pilot’s License – Fixed Wing, Rotary Wing, Instrument Rating
- 4 year Army ROTC Scholarship – University of Southern California

5. Memberships

List all memberships that you have held in professional, social, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, or charitable organizations in the last ten years.

Unless relevant to your nomination, you do NOT need to include memberships in charitable organizations available to the public as a result of a tax deductible donation of \$1,000 or less, Parent-Teacher Associations or other organizations connected to schools attended by your children, athletic clubs or teams, automobile support organizations (such as AAA), discounts clubs (such as Groupon or Sam’s Club), or affinity memberships/consumer clubs (such as frequent flyer memberships).

<u>Name of Organization</u>	<u>Dates of Your Membership</u> (You may approximate)	<u>Position(s) Held</u>
Church of the Holy Comforter, Vienna, VA	2009 – present	Verger (2013-2015), run the church services and manage the acolytes and lay ministers
James Madison High School Band Boosters, Vienna, VA	2014 - present	President (2021-22); Vice President (2020-21)
Boy Scout Troop 1978, St. Mark Catholic Church, Vienna, VA	2015 -2020	Assistant Scoutmaster

Lakevale Estates Dolphins Swim Team, Vienna, VA: Northern Virginia Swimming League	2010-2019	Snack Bar Manager (2015-2019) Stroke and Turn Judge (2013-2018)
Potomac Valley Swimming, Greater National Capital Area	2013-2018	Stroke and Turn Judge
Center for Health Design - Research Coalition https://www.healthdesign.org/about/volunteers/research-coalition	2010-2012	Member, Lead and participate in Research Coalition efforts for the Center. Involvement included leading sub work groups in developing an Evidence Based Design Glossary and Behavioral Health design standards.
American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE)	1995-2015	Diplomate, CHE
AMSUS, The Society of Federal Health Professionals	2018- present	Member

6. Political Activity

(A) Have you ever been a candidate for or been elected or appointed to a political office?

No

<u>Name of Office</u>	<u>Elected/Appointed/ Candidate Only</u>	<u>Year(s) Election Held or Appointment Made</u>	<u>Term of Service (if applicable)</u>

(B) List any offices held in or services rendered to a political party or election committee during the last ten years that you have not listed elsewhere.

None

<u>Name of Party/Election Committee</u>	<u>Office/Services Rendered</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>

(C) Itemize all individual political contributions of \$200 or more that you have made in the past five years to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity. Please list each individual contribution and not the total amount contributed to the person or entity during the year.

<u>Name of Recipient</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Year of Contribution</u>
NA		

8. Public Statements

(A) List any testimony, official statements or other communications relating to matters of public policy that you have issued or provided or that others presented on your behalf to public bodies or officials.

NA

(B) List any speeches or talks delivered by you, including commencement speeches, remarks, lectures, panel discussions, conferences, political speeches, and question-and-answer sessions. Include the dates and places where such speeches or talks were given.

- 1) Defense Health Information Technology Symposium (DHITS) 2016, Orlando, FL (2 Aug 2016) – Presenter
- 2) Defense Health Information Technology Symposium (DHITS) 2017, Orlando, FL (25 July 2017) – Presenter
- 3) San Antonio Chamber of Commerce Discussion, Pentagon, (2 Feb 2016, 5 Feb 2019, 5 Feb 2020) – Presenter
- 4) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 13th Annual National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day, “Partnering for Health and Hope Following Trauma” (10 May 2018) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F82b9Ym_P9U my section is at the 55:11 mark
- 5) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 14th Annual National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day “Suicide Prevention: Strategies That Work” (6 May 2019) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEN_67xb4i4 my section is at the 1:01:22 mark. <https://www.samhsa.gov/childrens-awareness-day/past-events/2019>
- 6) AMSUS Annual Meeting (5 Dec 2019) <https://www.amsus.org/2019-annual-meeting-slide-presentations/>
- 7) AMSUS Annual Meeting (28 Nov 2018) <https://www.amsus.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Kiyokawa-Final.pdf>
- 8) AFCEA Bethesda Chapter, 10th Annual Health IT Day (16 Jan 2018) <https://bethesda.afceachapters.org/?q=content/10th-annual-health-it-day>
- 9) VFW National Convention, Kansas City, KS (24 July 2018), Presentation on TRICARE
- 10) Military Service Organizations and Veterans Service Organizations Monthly Meetings with DHA (Jan 2016 – Apr 2021)

(C) List all interviews you have given to newspapers, magazines or other publications, and radio or television stations (including the dates of such interviews).

- Veterans Affairs & Military Medicine Outlook Spring 2017 (May 17, 2017) https://issuu.com/faircountmedia/docs/veterans_affairs_military_medicine_
- Federal News Network Radio Interview with Roger Waldron (27 July 2017) <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/off-the-shelf/2017/12/a-inside-look-at-the-defense-health-agency/>
- WFED Federal News Network Interview Panel (19 June 2019), *Agencies must know their customer first before they can deliver an excellent experience*, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/federal-insights/2019/06/agencies-must-know-their-customer-first-before-they-can-deliver-an-excellent-experience/>

- Military Health System Communications Office (12 Feb 2020) [BAMC recognized as 'meritorious' military hospital > Washington Headquarters Services > News Display \(whs.mil\)](#)
- The Seattle Times, "Former Navy Vice Admiral Leading Washington's Coronavirus Response Brings Experience in Medicine, Military", (26 March 2020) <https://www.chronline.com/stories/former-navy-vice-admiral-leading-washingtons-coronavirus-response-brings-experience-in-medicine.4559>

9. Agreements or Arrangements

See OGE Form 278. (If, for your nomination, you have completed an OGE Form 278 Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report, you may check the box here to complete this section and then proceed to the next section.)

As of the date of filing your OGE Form 278, report your agreements or arrangements for: (1) continuing participation in an employee benefit plan (e.g. pension, 401k, deferred compensation); (2) continuation of payment by a former employer (including severance payments); (3) leaves of absence; and (4) future employment.

Provide information regarding any agreements or arrangements you have concerning (1) future employment; (2) a leave of absence during your period of Government service; (3) continuation of payments by a former employer other than the United States Government; and (4) continuing participation in an employee welfare or benefit plan maintained by a former employer other than United States Government retirement benefits.

<u>Status and Terms of Any Agreement or Arrangement</u>	<u>Parties</u>	<u>Date</u> (month/year)

10. Lobbying

Have you ever registered as a lobbyist? If so, please indicate the state, federal, or local bodies with which you have registered (e.g., House, Senate, California Secretary of State).
No

11. Testifying Before the Congress

(A) Do you agree to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress upon the request of such Committee?

Yes

(B) Do you agree to provide such information as is requested by such a committee?

Yes

**Nomination Material for
James D. Rodriguez**

STATEMENT OF JAMES D. RODRIGUEZ

NOMINEE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR, VETERANS EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING SERVICE BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS OF
THE UNITED STATES SENATE

OCTOBER 6, 2021

Thank you Chairman Tester and Ranking Member Moran. And, thank you to all the members of the Committee, for inviting me to speak today, and for our conversations in recent days.

I want to thank President Biden and Secretary Walsh for the honor of this nomination. I share their compassion, and commitment to the employment of our transitioning service members, Veterans, and military spouses. Since the age of eighteen, I have served our Nation in some capacity that was directly related to supporting our men and women in uniform and their families, so this has truly been my life's work. And none of this could have been accomplished without the support of my support system: My wife Vanessa who has been by my side and my best friend for more than thirty years, my two daughters Courtney and Casey whom are my shining lights, my son-in-law Justin, my mother and father in-law Mike and Alice and the rest of my extended family and friends.

I grew up in a small town in Texas called Aransas Pass, along the Gulf Coast. I was raised by my grandmother under very modest circumstances and spent most of my youth growing up in the projects. There were times when I went without food, electricity, and heat. I was one of the many kids who were on the free breakfast and lunch program, which helped our family immensely. I had every opportunity to find a lot of trouble to get in to, but instead I started working various jobs and threw myself into high school sports.

At fifteen years old, I worked as a deck hand on a shrimp boat in the Gulf of Mexico and then as a deck hand on a smaller boat that went out in to Matagorda Bay every morning at 5:00 am. I worked in fast food during the summers so I could save up money to buy my own school clothes and help pay utility bills for my grandmother. I graduated high school and waited for my ship date to boot camp, working in the local shipyard as a welder's assistant inside the steel hulls of shrimp boats in the infamous Texas summer heat.

Fortunately, I found my calling in the United States Marine Corps where I was able to serve at duty stations across the country and with allies around the world. As a young enlisted Marine, I recognized the power of education. I enrolled in my first college course after returning from Desert Storm in 1992. Seventeen years and many duty stations and deployments later, I finally graduated with my undergraduate degree in 2009. Fortunately, completing my graduate degree only took two years and I continue to be a lifelong learner. We are thankful to have two daughters -- a Red Raider and an Aggie, who graduated on time.

The truth is, my story is no different than many other men and women whom have overcome personal challenges and have dedicated their lives to something bigger than themselves. For twenty-one years, I had the honor of serving alongside Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen who came from communities all across this great Nation. I saw the dedication each one of them

had to each other in and out of uniform. Throughout my entire career, I have always tried to lead by example, with compassion and dedication to the team and mission. During my six years as a Marine Corps Drill Instructor, my philosophy was that we were not only training these men and women to be good Marines, but we were also training them to be good citizens.

This point was driven home to me when I served as the company FirstSgt of Wounded Warrior Battalion West at Balboa Naval Medical Center in San Diego from where I ultimately retired in 2009. These brave men and women sacrificed physical and mental health in defense of our Nation, and most would have to transition out of the military before their enlistment was complete, which exacerbated their stress. This was my first real understanding of the military to civilian transition challenges. If I am fortunate to be confirmed as the Assistant Secretary, I will continue to work with Congress and the truly dedicated DOL-VETS team to bring the best programmatic resources to these good citizens.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

Pre-Hearing Questions for Nominee
James Rodriguez to be Assistant Secretary,
Veterans' Employment and Training Service, Department of Labor
From Chairman Jon Tester

1. What is your leadership style? What is your vision for DOL VETS?

My 21 years on active duty in the United States Marine Corps and my executive education in the corporate space taught me that listening is more important than speaking. Leading by example has been the hallmark of my career and leading with compassion and integrity is how I have always led my teams. I firmly believe in diversity of thought and opinions as well as inclusivity of all. That said, my vision is to lead an organization that enables all veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses to reach their full potential in the workplace and build a comprehensive team to provide the best programmatic resources in a timely manner.

2. You are currently serving as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at DOL VETS – what challenges have you identified within VETS and how do you plan to address them?

Comprehensive collection and analysis of data and research to identify and improve services to underserved veteran communities and under-employed veterans is a priority of VETS in order to understand how to appropriately allocate resources to these areas. We are finalizing an MOU with the Department of Health and Human Services that provides us with access to the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) and expanding our utilization of BLS data that will enable a deep dive into where our veterans are employed and in what capacity. This will also allow us insight into where our Veterans are not employed so we can expand our corporate partnerships to create more employment opportunities.

Additionally, getting all active duty service members to the entire three-day TAP course in a timely manner to support their training and preparation for transition prior to separation continues to be a challenge. We are working closely with DOD to identify gaps in information distribution to service members and working with leaders to increase participation rates in the three day course. I have also addressed this with the Joint Executive Committee and at the Transition Assistance Program Executive Council.

3. What experiences and knowledge did you gain as Deputy Assistance Secretary of Defense in the DOD's Office of Warrior Care Policy that have translated to your work at DOL VETS?

I developed personal and professional partnerships that allowed me to work closely with federal agencies that had a vested interest in supporting Veteran transition and allocation of benefits and resources. For example, we developed a comprehensive recovery care plan that could be built while a service member was on active duty and then could seamlessly be transferred to VA in order to maintain continuity of support and services that were critical to the service member's medical treatment and recovery plan. This re-enforced my

insistence on interagency collaboration and it has worked well to support the changes to our programs such as those we are working on within the Homeless Veteran Integration Program.

4. Describe the working relationship between DOL as a whole, and DOL VETS specifically, in coordinating various programs with VA. What could be improved?

DOL-VETS interacts with VA in numerous forums. We are currently providing consultation on multiple studies administered by VA, such as an evaluation of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) as mandated by the NDAA for FY2019 and a study on Gulf War II women veterans by the VA Center for Women Veterans. Additionally, a Joint Workgroup between VA's Veteran Readiness and Employment Service (VR&E) and VETS continues to assist veterans in reaching their full potential in the workplace. Following VR&E's determination that a veteran or service member is entitled to Chapter 31 benefits, local VR&E, VETS, and American Job Centers (AJC) staff coordinate efforts to provide local labor market information (LMI) to be used in developing the veteran's Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) and providing employment services to assist the veteran in securing suitable employment. Also, the recent deployment of the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP) was implemented through a coordinated effort between VA and DOL. The implementation of VRRAP included the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Employment & Training Administration (ETA), VETS and VA. Apprenticeship opportunities continue to grow, offering promising career paths for veterans with disabilities to earn sustainable wages and achieve their potential. DOL and VA, along with DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy, initiated a pilot project to promote apprenticeship participation among Chapter 31 participants. The pilot will conclude in 2021. We further collaborate through the DOD-VA Joint Executive Committee and its subordinate committees, working groups, and executive councils to advance benefits and health support to America's veterans.

Improving data and research sharing and joint research both DOL and VA can leverage efforts to advance equity and inclusion in our underserved veteran communities by using data and research to guide changes and increase access to our programs.

5. Describe the working relationship between DOL as a whole, and DOL VETS specifically, in coordinating various programs with DOD, including promoting and advancing TAP. What could be improved?

DOL-VETS' mission is to prepare America's veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses for meaningful careers, provide them with employment resources and expertise, protect their employment rights, and promote their employment opportunities.

DOL-VETS is able to accomplish its mission by working closely with other agencies within, and outside of, the Department. For example, TAP is a cooperative effort between the Departments of Labor, Defense, Education, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security, as well as the Small Business Administration and Office of Personnel Management. In addition to conducting the DOL TAP workshops, DOL works collaboratively with the other

interagency partners to provide program oversight. In conjunction with DOD and VA, DOL co-chairs the TAP Interagency Executive Council.

Improving research collaboration with both DOD and VA can leverage efforts to identify gaps in service by using data and research to guide changes and increase access and awareness of employment programs and resources for our transitioning service members and military spouses.

6. How can DOL VETS work to improve employment opportunities for homeless veterans?

DOL-VETS can work to improve employment opportunities for homeless veterans by enhancing its research capabilities, increasing outreach to veteran service organizations, and continuing to collaborate with DOD, VA, and other agencies.

DOL-VETS is dedicating more resources to collecting and analyzing data and studies on veteran homelessness. DOL's Employment and Training Administration has agreed to develop a Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) report that would meet the directive requirement that directs DOL to include updates in the FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification on racial equity and access to programs at the Department providing services to homeless veterans. DOL's Chief Evaluation Office has also partnered with VETS to conduct an evaluation of the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP), which includes a data analysis to examine the long-term employment outcomes of HVRP participants and a qualitative assessment to describe grantees' program models, partnerships, and the veterans they serve who have experienced homelessness.

DOL-VETS will increase outreach to underrepresented veteran communities, improving awareness of HVRP. It is also important to conduct listening sessions with Veterans Service Organizations, improving our understanding of unique challenges encountered by veterans of different communities.

Finally, prevention of homelessness among veterans begins with successful transition from active duty to the civilian workforce. DOL-VETS, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veteran Affairs must continue work together to ensure that all transitioning service members complete Transition Assistance Program requirements prior to separation and establish the relationships and routines necessary for sustained physical, mental, and emotional health.

7. What do you see as DOL VETS' role in preventing veterans homelessness and interrupting cycles of chronic homelessness?

DOL-VETS plays a critical role in assisting in the prevention of homelessness by ensuring that the transition from military to civilian careers is successful. By ensuring successful transitions, our service members are equipped to leverage their military service and training to meet the challenges of the future and achieve their full career potential.

8. How can DOL VETS work to improve employment opportunities for minority veterans?

We know disparities exist between the outcomes of minority veterans and their non-minority veteran peers. Several recent reports highlight significant differences in how these subpopulations fare compared to their peers. By developing a more nuanced understanding of the challenges that different groups of veterans face, we can better target and tailor outreach and interventions to help these underserved populations overcome barriers and thrive. As noted earlier, it is also important to conduct listening sessions with Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), improving our understanding of unique challenges encountered by veterans of different communities. It is also important for DOL-VETS to continue to improve data maturity in order to improve DOL-VETS analytical capabilities related to underserved and minority veterans.

9. What role should DOL VETS play in the effort to collect, aggregate, share, and leverage data to inform the employment situation of veterans for government and public consumption?

DOL-VETS strives to be the voice of veterans' employment, where our decisions are informed by data and research. The role we currently play is to collect, analyze, and share the data from our VETS programs and make use of publicly available data from sources such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau. With additional analysts who have joined the VETS team and support from DOL's Chief Evaluation Office and Office of Data Governance, we are working towards the goals of the Evidence Act and Open, Public, Electronic and Necessary (OPEN) Government Data Act. By sharing DOL-VETS' aggregated data and findings for public consumption, we aim to be more transparent and to empower our partners to understand more about veterans' employment.

10. Do you believe DOL is doing enough to ensure that all federal agencies are delivering a consistent message to transitioning servicemembers, veterans, and their families regarding the services and resource available to support employment?

DOL works closely with its interagency partners to ensure messaging to transitioning service members, veterans, and their families is consistent.

For transitioning service members, DOL frequently collaborates with its partners to coordinate and assist one another with messaging and promoting each other's program information. For example, TAP interagency partners coordinate regularly to cross pollinate each other's TAP workshops across program areas throughout a service member's transition timeline; to include pre-separation briefings, TAP workshops, and Capstone.

That said, DOL-VETS can work towards continuing to identify opportunities to ensure all federal agencies are delivering a consistent message to transitioning service members, veterans, and their families. This can be done by expanding a communication strategy that partners with other agencies.

11. How has COVID-19 affected DOL VETS' programs and veterans employment?

For TAP, the participation rates dropped, especially at the onset of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged every facet of our lives. For many transitioning service members, recently separated veterans, and their families, the pandemic amplified the uncertainty of the military to civilian transition process. In response to this unprecedented public health crisis, DOL-VETS' delivery of services in support of the interagency TAP quickly pivoted from in-person instruction to providing virtual services at installations across the globe.

Many of the Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (JVSG) staff situated within AJCs were reassigned out of JVSG to support the increased number of Unemployment Insurance claims across the country. As a result, the number of veterans served by Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) decreased, and most states were unable to expend their grant funding. DOL-VETS quickly acted to request an extension of all states' expenditure period to give them additional time to spend the funds assisting the veterans in their states.

Similarly, because of COVID some homeless shelters were shut down which had an impact on HVRP. However, other grant organizations rallied together and continued to provide services and low-cost readers so veterans could virtual interact with counselors, cubicles were also set up at HVRP locations to make it safer for vets to come in and maintain social distance.

During the pandemic, overall veteran unemployment rose, as did their non-veteran counterparts. However, we saw a reduced impact on veterans with veteran unemployment reaching a max of 6.5% after reaching historically low numbers and bottoming out at 3.1% pre-pandemic. We are proud to say that veteran unemployment continues to fall and in August was down to 3.8%, lower than non-veteran rates

12. Are there new programs and initiatives you would like to implement or expand if confirmed?

This past year DOL-VETS created a new office called the Office of Research and Policy. As part of our efforts to improve the effectiveness of programs and identify gaps in services to veterans, transitions service members and military spouse, DOL-VETS will continue to expand the data gathering and analytical capabilities of this office to help support data driven decision making. In addition, DOL-VETS will explore a customer experience model to help improve programs.

Questions for the Record
James Rodriguez, Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans' Employment and Training
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
Hearing Date: October 6, 2021

Senator Blumenthal

Military Transition for Junior Enlisted Military Personnel

- Mr. Rodriguez: What steps would you take to improve transition for the junior enlisted population?

Increasing participation in the DOL TAP Workshop is critical for improving the transition for the junior enlisted population. The Fiscal Year 2020 VETS Annual Report to Congress showed significantly lower participation numbers than the previous year. We are working with the Department of Defense (DoD) to perform a root cause analysis to understand why the participation numbers are so low for 2020. My initial observation is that pivoting from in person training to a virtual platform resulted in a disruption of services due to a lack of resources and technical challenges. However, as these issues were addressed via collaboration with our DoD counterparts, the numbers slowly improved over the course of the year. I fully believe in our programs, but their effectiveness is obviously tied to their delivery. We will continue to work with our partners in the transition space to ensure that the Transition Assistance Program is offered in regular, predictable, and accessible formats and that all transitioning personnel are afforded the time to attend.

I also want to ensure that all transitioning, including junior enlisted, service members are fully aware of the resources that are available to them as they exit military service, which is why VETS launched the Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot (ENPP). The ENPP will give transitioning service members warm hand-offs to American Jobs Centers and private sector entities which can provide individualized job readiness support to junior enlisted, and all other, transitioning service members. I look forward to collecting data from thirteen initial sites and slowly expanding this program as we validate its efficacy. We will also continue to encourage participation in Transition Employment Assistance for Military Spouses (TEAMS) as well, to support junior enlisted spouses as they seek new employment opportunities.

- Mr. Rodriguez: How would you re-design programs so they resonate with transitioning junior enlisted personnel better?

First, we must ensure that TAP resonates with transitioning service members as a valuable tool for their success and not simply another required training event. If viewed as just another mandatory training, then attentive participation is reduced and results are impacted. To address this concern, this past year VETS stood up a new office, the Office of Research and Policy. As part of our efforts to improve the effectiveness of programs and identify gaps in services to

veterans, transitioning service members and military spouses, the Office of Research and Policy will continue to expand our data gathering and analytical capabilities to help support data-driven decision-making. We also continue to look at ways to expand our programs; for example, we recently expanded our TAP curriculum to include a Wounded Warrior and Military Spouse Caregiver Employment Workshop that focuses on the unique circumstances faced by wounded veterans and their caregivers. In addition, we are in the preliminary stages of assessing our own customer experience model to help improve our programs.

With regard to VETS DOL TAP Workshops, all of our TAP curricula are reviewed and revised annually to ensure the content is relevant to the preferences and needs of participants and up-to-date. Curricula updates are based on input from transitioning service members, DOL stakeholders, and external stakeholders, such as the military services, career transition professionals, and employers, to name a few.

An area of focus is apprenticeship placement programs that can guide junior enlisted service members into a variety of registered apprenticeship programs. Industries such as IT, finance, cybersecurity, construction, automotive, and transportation have a need for additional workers that our transitioning junior service members can fill. Therefore, if confirmed, I will work closely with DoD to identify new opportunities for transitioning service members to participate at the earliest point in their transition process.

- Mr. Rodriguez: How will you improve data sharing at TAP between DoD, DoL, and VA to ensure that better longitudinal tracking is conducted to assess the long-term employment outcomes of the veteran population who left the service in the junior enlisted ranks?

Since, my appointment in January 2021, I have worked closely with my colleagues at DoD and VA to identify areas of improvement in the TAP curriculum that focus on junior enlisted service members. I have also directed my team to share data that will be captured in our pilot program, which is being conducted by our contractor Eightfold.ai. Beginning on November 1st, the captured data will show what skills sets are being utilized in the civilian job market when junior enlisted transition and will allow us to support the creation of more robust resumes and align service members with available jobs across the country.

Furthermore, I work collaboratively with DoD and VA, as co-chairs of the TAP Executive Council, to provide oversight on the TAP program. TAP Executive Council interagency members meet and coordinate on a regular basis to ensure the partners are supporting and advancing ongoing implementation, assessment, and enhancement of TAP, as well as to reduce redundancy, better serve unique populations, and improve coordination of services across program areas. This collaborative interagency partnership delivers transition assistance annually to approximately 200,000 service members.

By working together with DoD and VA to improve research and collaboration, we seek to identify gaps in service to guide changes. This data-driven decision-making will increase access to and awareness of employment programs and resources for our transitioning service members and military spouses. Additionally, DOL is engaged in efforts with the Department of Health and Human Services to obtain access to data under the National Directory of New Hires. This

information will improve our ability to track veteran employment data over time once they've gained civilian employment. This data is considered the most accurate and timely information available in regards to veteran employment and will assist in identifying gaps in industries in which our transitioning service members and veterans can locate employment opportunities.

Senator Hirono

Sexual Harassment History

To ensure the fitness of nominees for any of our appointed positions, I ask every nominee who comes before me to answer the following two questions:

1. Since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors, or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

No.

2. Have you ever faced discipline, or entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?

No.

TAP

Many of the questions asked of you during the hearing focused on specific aspects of the Transition Assistance Program, and it was clear that there are improvements that can be made to ensure servicemembers transitioning out of active service have the support they need during this process.

1. What, if any, legislative changes can be made to better serve those going through TAP?

We know that TAP is beneficial to service members as they transition to the civilian workforce. We know that a successful transition leads to improved employment outcomes, minimizes homelessness, and sets veterans on a path to future financial freedom. More service members attending TAP during their transition is good for the service members, military families, and the American public that want taxpayer dollars spent efficiently.

One way to improve participation rates is to clarify guidance to DoD, VA, and DOL on the ability of transitioning service members and their commanders to waive mandatory training. I believe it is very beneficial for all service members to attend TAP at the earliest point in their transition process in order for them to review resources that are beneficial to them as they get closer to their actual separation date. As it stands, a service member or the chain of command may be able to waive TAP training with little difficulty during the transition period. Often times, the value of TAP participation is underestimated, therefore access to valuable and timely information that can support the entire transition process is missed.

2. How will you begin to change the culture around TAP to help servicemembers, veterans and their families better understand that TAP is a tool to help them succeed, not a task they just need to get through?

Transitioning from the military is a defining moment in all of our service members' lives. I believe that part of the solution to veterans' unemployment lies in a collaboration between government entities and the private sector. If confirmed, I will make this type of collaboration a priority. One recent example of DOL-VETS leveraging formal partnerships is the Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot (ENPP), which started in April 1, 2021 and provides one-on-one career assistance to transitioning service members and their spouses at select military installations worldwide. VETS signed a memoranda of understanding with nine organizations that have agreed to serve as partners in support of ENPP. Partner organizations' support will include apprenticeship opportunities, hiring events, digital matching of skills and experiences, employment mentorship and networking with organizations committed to employing veterans, employment referrals and placement, workforce training, and wrap around services within communities for additional support services. VETS selected organizations with demonstrated experience in providing employment and training services to transitioning service members and their spouses. Since the inception of the pilot, 17.9 percent of ENPP participants have been female service members. VETS is currently gathering data on employment outcomes through ENPP and the early trends look promising.

**UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

**ROOM 412 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
Telephone: (202) 224-9126**

**QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES**

The Rules of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs require that a Presidential nominee whose nomination is referred to the Committee submit, on a form approved by the Committee, a sworn statement concerning his or her background and financial interests, including the financial interests of the nominee's spouse and children living in the nominee's household. The Committee form is in two parts:

- (A) Information concerning the employment, education, and relevant background of the nominee, which is made public; and
- (B) Information concerning the financial and other background of the nominee, which is made public only when the Committee determines that such information bears directly on the nominee's qualifications to hold the position to which the individual is nominated.

Committee action on a nomination, including hearings or a meeting to consider a motion to recommend confirmation, shall not be initiated until at least five days after the nominee submits this form unless the Chairman, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, waives the waiting period. In order to assist the Committee in its consideration of nominations, the Committee requests that each nominee complete the attached Questionnaire for Presidential Nominees. The notarized original and any supplemental information should be delivered to:

Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Room 412, Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Attention: Chief Clerk

PART I: ALL OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS PART WILL BE MADE PUBLIC

1. Basic Biographical Information

Please provide the following information.

<i>Position to Which You Have Been Nominated</i>	
<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date of Nomination</u>
Assistant Secretary, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, Department of Labor	July 16, 2021

<i>Current Legal Name</i>			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
James	Daniel	Rodriguez	

<i>Addresses</i>					
<u>Residential Address</u> (do not include street address)			<u>Office Address</u> (include street address)		
			Street: 200 Constitution Ave NW		
City: Georgetown	State: TX	Zip: 78626	City: Washington	State: DC	Zip: 20210

<i>Other Names Used</i>						
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>	<small>Check if Maiden Name</small>	<u>Name Used From</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	<u>Name Used To</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Birth Year and Place</i>	
Year of Birth (Do not include month and day)	Place of Birth
1970	Corpus Christi, Tx

<i>Marital Status</i>					
Check All That Describe Your Current Situation:					
Never Married	Married	Separated	Annulled	Divorced	Widowed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Spouse's Name (current spouse only)</i>			
Spouse's First Name	Spouse's Middle Name	Spouse's Last Name	Spouse's Suffix
Vanessa	Lynn	Rodriguez	

<i>Spouse's Other Names Used (current spouse only)</i>						
First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix	<small>Check if Maiden Name</small>	Name Used From (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	Name Used To (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
Vanessa	Lynn	Sandoval		X	September 1970 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	May 1992 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Children's Names (if over 18)</i>			
First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix
Courtney	Jayde	Servantez	
Casey	Ryan	Rodriguez	

2. Education

List all post-secondary schools attended.

Name of School	Type of School (vocational/technical/trade school, college/university/military college, correspondence/distance/extension/online school)	Date Began School (month/year) (check box if estimate)	Date Ended School (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still in school)	Degree	Date Awarded
University of Maryland University College	University	June 2001 Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	June 2009 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	BA	June 2009
George Mason University	University	June 2011 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	December 2013 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	MA	December 2013
Georgetown University, Government Affairs Institute	University	June 2013 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	June 2013 Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	
Babson College	College, school of executive education	May 2012 Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	May 2012 Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	

3. Employment

(A) List all of your employment activities, including unemployment and self-employment. If the employment activity was military duty, list separate employment activity periods to show each change of military duty station. Do not list employment before your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum of two years of employment history.

Type of Employment (Active Military Duty Station, National Guard/Reserve, USPHS Commissioned Corps, Other federal employment, State Government (Non-federal Employment), Self-employment, Unemployment, Federal Contractor, Non-Government Employment (excluding self-employment), Other	Name of Your Employer/Assigned Duty Station	Most Recent Position Title/Rank	Location (City and State only)	Date Employment Began (month/year) (check box if estimate)	Date Employment Ended (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still employed)
Active Duty Military Duty Station	United States Marine Corps / Marine Corps Logistics Base	Private First Class/Lance Corporal	Albany, Ga	January 1989 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	April 1989 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Active Duty Military Duty Station	United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune	Lance Corporal/Corporal	Jacksonville, Nc	May 1989 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	October 1992 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Active Duty Military Duty Station	United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Air Station El Toro and Tustin	Corporal/Sergeant	Irvine, Ca	November 1992 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	January 1997 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Active Duty Military Duty Station	United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Recruit Depot	Sergeant/Staff Sergeant	San Diego, Ca	January 1997 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	May 2000 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Active Duty Military Duty Station	United States Marine Corps, MCAS Futenma	Staff Sergeant/Gunnery Sergeant	Okinawa, Japan	June 2000	June 2003
Active Duty Military Duty Station	United States Marine Corps, MCB Quantico, Va.	Gunnery Sergeant/First Sgt	Quantico, Va	June 2003	July 2007
Active Duty Military Duty Station	United States Marine Corps, MCB Camp Pendleton, Ca.	First Sgt	Camp Pendleton, Ca	July 2007	September 2008
Active Duty Military Duty Station	United States Marine Corps, Naval Hospital San Diego, Ca.	First Sgt	San Diego, CA	September 2009	April 2009
Non-federal employment	BAE Systems Inc,	Program Manager and Director	Arlington, Va	May 2009	June 2014
Federal Employment	Department of Defense – Office of Warrior Care Policy	Deputy Assistant Secretary Defense	Crystal City, Va	June 2014	January 2017

Non-federal employment	ProSphere LLC	Vice President	Alexandria, Va	April 2017	October 2018
Non-federal employment	Deloitte LLP	Specialist Executive	Arlington, Va/Austin, Tx	October 2018	January 2021
Federal Employment	Department of Labor, VETS	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary	Washington, DC	January 2021	Present
Non-federal employment, consulting firm	The Rodriguez Group, LLC	Co-founder and Principal	Woodbridge, Va.	August 2016	Inactive

(B) List any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions with federal, state, or local governments, not listed elsewhere.

<u>Name of Government Entity</u>	<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date Service Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Service Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still serving)
University of Maryland Global Campus	Adjunct professor	Est January 2017 <input type="checkbox"/>	Present <input type="checkbox"/> Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>

4. Honors and Awards

List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, civilian service citations, military medals, academic or professional honors, honorary society memberships and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievement.

- A. 1988-2009 Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait), Marine Corps Drill Instructor Ribbon 2nd award, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon 5th award, Military Outstanding Volunteer Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal with 2 campaign stars, National Defense Service Medal 2nd award, Good Conduct Medal 6th award, Navy Battle "E" Ribbon, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Navy Unit Commendation 2nd award, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal 2nd award, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal 2nd award, Meritorious Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Certificate of Commendation 2nd award, Meritorious Mast 3rd award, Letter of Appreciation 3rd award.
- B. 2009-2014 BAE Systems Chairman's Award, Warrior Integration Program Bronze x 2, Wounded Warrior Project Carry Forward Award Finalist, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

- Hire Our Heroes Award, Fisher House Foundation Patriot Award, United Services Organization Circle of Stars Award
- C. 2017 Office of the Secretary of Defense award for exceptional public service

5. Memberships

List all memberships that you have held in professional, social, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, or charitable organizations in the last ten years.

Unless relevant to your nomination, you do NOT need to include memberships in charitable organizations available to the public as a result of a tax deductible donation of \$1,000 or less, Parent-Teacher Associations or other organizations connected to schools attended by your children, athletic clubs or teams, automobile support organizations (such as AAA), discounts clubs (such as Groupon or Sam’s Club), or affinity memberships/consumer clubs (such as frequent flyer memberships).

<u>Name of Organization</u>	<u>Dates of Your Membership</u> (You may approximate)	<u>Position(s) Held</u>
Allied Forces Foundation	April 2017 – April 2018	Board of Advisors
Combined Arms	May 2019 – December 2020	Board of Advisors
Marine Corps League Williamson County, Tx	August 2019 – January 2021	Junior Vice Commandant
Travis Manion Foundation	April 2019 – December 2020	Post 9/11 race director in Austin, Tx.

6. Political Activity

(A) Have you ever been a candidate for or been elected or appointed to a political office?

<u>Name of Office</u>	<u>Elected/Appointed/ Candidate Only</u>	<u>Year(s) Election Held or Appointment Made</u>	<u>Term of Service (if applicable)</u>
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense	Appointed	June 2014-January 2017	

(B) List any offices held in or services rendered to a political party or election committee during the last ten years that you have not listed elsewhere.

<u>Name of Party/Election Committee</u>	<u>Office/Services Rendered</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>

8. Public Statements

(A) List any testimony, official statements or other communications relating to matters of public policy that you have issued or provided or that others presented on your behalf to public bodies or officials.

- a. On February 3rd, 2015 as the DASD Warrior Care Policy, provided testimony at the HASC on the state of Wounded, Injured and Ill programs within DOD.
- b. On the 21st April 2021, as the DASP for DOL VETS, provided testimony to the SVAC roundtable on the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program.
- c. On May 12th, 2021, as the DASP for DOL VETS provided testimony to the HVAC on the Transition Assistance Program.
- d. On May 26th, 2021 statement for the record to the HVAC hearing on the Transition Assistance Program.

(B) List any speeches or talks delivered by you, including commencement speeches, remarks, lectures, panel discussions, conferences, political speeches, and question-and-answer sessions. Include the dates and places where such speeches or talks were given.

- a. June 21st, 2019 Commencement speech at Alamo IDEA College Preparatory in McAllen, Texas
- b. January 29th, 2021 Teamsters Military Assistance Program and ABF Freight Skillbridge graduation for transitioning service members – Virtual
- c. February 5th, 2021 speech to annual VETS/VSO virtual coffee
- d. February 16th, 2021 address to *Veteran Employment Advisory Council (VEAC)* – Virtual
- e. March 1st, 2021 address to the American Legion's National Veterans' Employment and Education Commission – Virtual
- f. March 4th, 2021 NVTAC Community of Practice (CoP) session – Virtual
- g. February 4th, 2021 address to Chicago VETS/SWA conference – Virtual
- h. February 19th, 2021 address to the VETS Dallas Region state workforce annual conference – Virtual
- i. March 12th, 2021 address to the VETS Atlanta Region state workforce agency annual conference – Virtual
- j. March 29th, 2021 National Veterans Training Institute podcast – Virtual
- k. April 5th, 2021 address to the VETS Philadelphia Region state workforce agency annual conference – Virtual
- l. April 21st, 2021 Virtual Chicago VETS/SWA conference –
- m. June 14th, 2021 address to Commercial Driver's License certification transitioning Soldiers graduation – Virtual

- n. June 22, 2021 NATIONAL COALITION FOR HOMELESS VETERANS ANNUAL CONFERENCE – Virtual
- o. June 29th, 2021 address to American Legion and DOD roundtable - Virtual
- p. Estimated April 2016 Channel 7 interview on DOD’s Warrior Care Policy
- q. Estimated January 2017 Channel 4 interview on DOD’S Warrior Care Policy
- r. Estimated June 2016 America’s Warrior Partnership roundtable, Atlanta, Georgia
- s. Estimated April 2015 Department of Education roundtable on employing people with disabilities
- t. Estimated July 2016 Speech to the National Geospatial Agency on internship programs for wounded, injured and ill service members
- u. Estimated September 2016 Speech to the CIA on internship programs for wounded, injured and ill service members
- v. Estimated October 2016 Speech at the Pentagon on Hispanic Heritage month
- w. Estimated October 2016 Speech at the Defense Intelligence Agency on Hispanic Heritage month

(C) List all interviews you have given to newspapers, magazines or other publications, and radio or television stations (including the dates of such interviews).

- a. May 28th, 2021 Federal New Network interview

9. Agreements or Arrangements

X See OGE Form 278. (If, for your nomination, you have completed an OGE Form 278 Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report, you may check the box here to complete this section and then proceed to the next section.)

As of the date of filing your OGE Form 278, report your agreements or arrangements for: (1) continuing participation in an employee benefit plan (e.g. pension, 401k, deferred compensation); (2) continuation of payment by a former employer (including severance payments); (3) leaves of absence; and (4) future employment.

Provide information regarding any agreements or arrangements you have concerning (1) future employment; (2) a leave of absence during your period of Government service; (3) continuation of payments by a former employer other than the United States Government; and (4) continuing participation in an employee welfare or benefit plan maintained by a former employer other than United States Government retirement benefits.

<u>Status and Terms of Any Agreement or Arrangement</u>	<u>Parties</u>	<u>Date</u> (month/year)

10. Lobbying

**Have you ever registered as a lobbyist? If so, please indicate the state, federal, or local bodies with which you have registered (e.g., House, Senate, California Secretary of State).
No**

11. Testifying Before the Congress

(A) Do you agree to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress upon the request of such Committee? Yes

(B) Do you agree to provide such information as is requested by such a committee? Yes

