**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND**

**PUBLIC SERVICE**

**Subject: 10/01/2018 Internal Notes from Senate Armed Service Committee (SASC) Meeting**

**SASC Staff:**

* Gary Leeling, Minority General Counsel
* Jonathan Clark, Minority Counsel
* Sean O’Keefe, Majority Professional Staff

**NCoS Staff:**

* Jeff McNichols
* Eleanor Vuano
* Judson Crane
* Amy Schafer
* Colin Neafsey

**Key Takeaways:**

***SSS and Mobilization***

* When asked about the political feasibility of a large-scale mobilization, one SASC staff member responded that SSS is kept around largely for political reasons, but no one realistically thinks it will be used. However, for this reason, he believed many people would be receptive to changes implemented to SSS which made it better suited for conflicts the United States was likely to face in the future. He remarked that the draft is currently designed to replace large numbers of infantry overseas; however, such numbers are not likely to be needed in the future and the current lead time for training and skills development for various occupations needed to fight modern wars makes the SSS model less practical.
* SASC staff commented that a database which tracked skills and education level would better fit the needs of future conflicts, and intimated that the system need not induct people into the formal structure of the military if there was an alternative way to access their skills. Though SASC staff referenced the IRS’s ability to collect up-to-date occupation information, they believed it would be politically infeasible to mandate that everyone update their information throughout adulthood and raised concerns about privacy and cybersecurity of such a database. However, one staff member commented that he believed there were ways to incentivize individuals to provide their information and thought the Commission’s idea of a “targeted ask” for volunteers was feasible, citing individuals’ willingness to volunteer in response to national emergencies like 9/11.
* Given the 2016 decision to open all military occupations and, from their perspective, the most realistic use of mobilization was more along the lines of a skills draft, minority staff expressed strongly that any update to SSS which did not include female registration would have little chance of passage.

***Propensity to Serve in the Military***

* SASC staff identified two areas of recent committee focus regarding military personnel: (1) reducing the sole emphasis on the 18-24 demographic and looking for ways to bring in non-traditional recruits through lateral entry, especially with critical skill sets; and (2) improving upon the Army’s disjointed approach to recruiting where marketing and recruiting are operated separately, and little cooperation exists between Army’s active, guard, and reserve components.
* In advocating for better cooperation among Army recruiters, SASC staff referenced that military academies, which turn away many talented individuals who demonstrated propensity to serve, refer unsuccessful applicants to ROTC programs and discuss GI Bill benefits acquired through direct service. This comment led to a broader discussion on the need for recruiters to improve their presence on college campuses as attending some level of higher education has become the norm, rather than the exception. Many individuals do not complete their degree––for financial and other reasons––and present a population who might be more receptive to acquiring benefits through service.
* SASC staff found merit in investigating ways in which the marketing department at recruiting commands could access funding beyond a year-to-year cycle so they could better compete with the private sector for advertising spots. SASC staff stated that this proposal fell beyond their purview but recommended reaching out to staff from the Appropriation Committee to investigate ways—whether lump sum allocation or multi-year appropriation—to improve military efficiency and competitiveness in marketing. SASC staff cautioned, however, that appropriations are deeply political and to be careful in how certain asks are phrased.
* Commenting on how the civil-military divide impacts long-term diversity of thought and experience in the military, SASC staff asked the Commission to look for ways to better incorporate individuals who may be propensed to serve but do not satisfy current eligibility standards or fit into one of the specific opportunities available in the military. One SASC staff member commented that alternative testing may help identify such individuals, citing the Army’s Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System (TAPAS) which tests individuals at MEPS across fifteen personality dimensions to connect individual personality traits with probability for future success in the military.[[1]](#footnote-1) In addition, the staff member thought it was worthwhile to approach recruiting commands to gauge willingness or desire to adjust certain eligibility standards. Finally, the staff member advocated for connecting service opportunities­­––so that even if an individual did not qualify for military service he or she might still be directed to another form of service––as studies have shown individuals who complete any form of service are more likely to recommend military service.

***Strategic Insights***

* SASC staff recommended providing SASC with another briefing prior to the release of the interim report and engagement with any individual member offices so that SASC can consider the scheduling of any hearings which might affect the report’s impact and can accurately respond to any inquiries from individual members.
* In addition to discussing long-term funding options for marketing with staff from the Appropriations Committee, SASC staff recommended reaching out to staff from other committees such as HSGAC, Foreign Relations (AID, State, and other service-oriented organizations), Commerce (Coast Guard and NOAA), and Finance (incentives and punishments related to tax) for idea generation and to float potential recommendations.

1. “For folks, who score in the lowest category on the Armed Forces Qualification Test, a component of the ASVAB, they are required to take the TAPAS, and if they score below the 10th percentile on TAPAS, they are not allowed to enlist, she said. Similarly, those who are not high school diploma graduates or equivalent, must score above the 30th percentile on TAPAS or they are not allowed to enlist.” For more information on TAPAS, see “[Personality Test Helps Ensure Civilians are Compatible for Amy Life](https://www.army.mil/article/148691/Personality_test_helps_ensure_civilians_are_compatible_for_Army_life/).” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)