



March 21, 2017

Social Media Policies of the Military Services

Subcommittee on Military Personnel, Committee on Armed Services,
United States House of Representatives, One Hundred Fifteenth
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STATEMENT
OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL MARK A. BRILAKIS
DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER & RESERVE AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES OF THE MILITARY SERVICES
ON
21 MARCH 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the subcommittee today to provide an overview on Marine Corps social media policies.

As our Commandant testified to last week, we are all disturbed and outraged by the allegations that Marines have been subjected to online humiliation, including denigrating comments and posting of images, in some cases by fellow Marines. We take this online behavior as an attack on our Marine Corp ethos. We believe that every Marine who earns our title commands the respect of all Marines, past and present. We must hold accountable any behavior that has a corrosive effect on the good order and discipline within our Corps. We are committed to using all means within our authority to address this unacceptable conduct; our social media policies are one tool to accomplish this.

MARINE CORPS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES

The Department of Defense (DoD), Department of the Navy (DoN), and the Marine Corps all have policies regarding use of social media. Our social media policy reminds all Marines that they are on duty 24/7, that their actions must reflect our core values, and that they are responsible for all content they publish on social networking sites, blogs or other websites. Marines must be thoughtful about non-Marine related content they post since the lines between Marines' personal and professional lives blur when online. Marines must use their best judgment at all times to avoid inappropriate behavior that could bring discredit upon themselves, their unit and the Marine Corps. This includes posting any defamatory, libelous, abusive, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful or otherwise offensive or illegal content. While the current policy is non-punitive, it warns Marines that any violations of federal law and DoD regulations or policies

may result in disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

Underpinning this policy is that, as Marines, each of us owes the rest of the force the respect and dignity they have earned as a U.S. Marine.

An update to our policy was just published (ALMAR 008/17). This policy specifically addresses individual online behaviors such as those we are discussing today; lays out our expectations for Marines; and delineates what is and is not acceptable. It also clearly identifies the punitive nature of certain online activities. Additionally this new ALMAR contains information related to victim care and how to report suspected prohibited behavior. I believe our new policy is stronger. It tells all Marines that such abhorrent behaviors are not part of being a Marine and are also punishable under the UCMJ. The previous policy said that, but it did not say it quite as directly. We are currently undertaking another review of other policies and are committed to still doing more.

RECENT CHANGES/ACTIONS

First, as stated by our Commandant, hearings such as this are an opportunity to ask Marines to come forward, not just Marines that may have been victimized, but Marines aware that such activities exist and are justifiably sickened by them. The Commandant has also utilized multi-media and personal engagements, including a trip to Camp LeJeune to address the force, to personally express the seriousness of this matter and urging individuals who are victims or have information to provide to do so.

In addition, our Commandant has established a task force, chaired by the Assistant Commandant, to get at the root of this problem. Its goal is to assess the degree to which such behaviors exist in the Marine Corps and how to stop them. The timeline is aggressive and the intent of the Commandant is perfectly clear: The superb women who serve in your Marine

Corps are vital to our readiness and warfighting capability. They join the Marine Corps to serve in a tough outfit and prove daily they are tough, ethical warriors. For now, we have a problem in our ranks in just how these patriots are treated – sometimes without the respect and dignity they deserve and have earned. We must keep and retain their trust. This task force will conclude with a set of actionable recommendations upon which leadership can act. It will involve senior officers and enlisted, males and females, and will expand to include the expertise called upon by this problem. In the long run, this effort will involve commitment by every tier of leadership within the Marine Corps.

VICTIM SUPPORT

Marines, their dependents, and civilians impacted by this online misconduct are our highest priority. We will take care of them. As I speak, we are working to identify and contact victims, in coordination with NCIS who is leading the investigation. Right now, the number of identified victims is small, and we need people to come forward. However, no matter the number, we will take care of those victimized or otherwise impacted by this behavior.

We have established many avenues to access support services and made sure our service providers have the tools necessary to support those impacted. We stand ready to provide immediate crisis intervention, information, and referrals to anyone who comes forward. Among our service providers are Chaplains, Victims' Legal Counsel, NCIS, advocates, the Inspector General, and others. Recently, we added the DSTRESS Helpline for 24/7/365 anonymous referral service across multiple platforms. To reach the widest audience with our message of support, we created a website listing support services and answering potential questions.

The Marine Corps is going out on every possible forum, including official Marine Corps social media, to ask Marines to come forward. The Commandant's messages are clear: Treat your fellow Marines with the respect and dignity they have earned and they deserve. We are better than this. Every tier of leadership is involved to get this message across. Marine leaders are addressing their Marines to share the Commandant's message.

We take every allegation of misconduct seriously and we will hold individuals responsible for discriminatory and discrediting actions. We call on all Marines to take a stand against this destructive conduct and to support and respect every Marine for the commitment they made when they earned their Eagle, Globe, and Anchor.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS/RESOURCES NEEDED

Our ability to manage what happens on social media is a complex issue. Social media is probably the most relevant place today where unacceptable behavior and Constitutional and privacy protections collide. It is an evolving area of both policy and law.

The UCMJ generally does not distinguish between online and in-person actions; once discovered and reported, conduct which is criminal can be punished regardless of where it takes place. For distribution or sharing of a recording to violate Article 120c, the photo or video must have been taken without the consent of the other person and where that person had a reasonable expectation of privacy. However, Article 134 allows commanders to punish activity that is prejudice of good order and discipline or brings discredit upon the service. Speech that is constitutionally unprotected, such as dangerous words and obscenity, may be punished as a violation of Article 134 if it is prejudicial to good order and discipline or service discrediting. Article 92, which allows commanders to punish both orders violations and dereliction of duty,

could also be used in various situations to punish online misconduct that violates Marine Corps policies on appropriate use of social media and online conduct.

Current orders may allow commanders to hold accountable those Marines who make social media commentary that is defamatory, threatening, or harassing. The Marine Corps and Navy are currently considering a proposed new article for the Navy Regulations that would prohibit the knowing and wrongful disclosure of an intimate image.

The vast and fluid nature of the internet does not lend itself well to the procedures for making a website or establishment “off-limits”. With online activity, the establishment involved is less clear than one with a brick-and-mortar location. That websites can be easily moved, removed, deleted, and rebuilt frustrates the effectiveness of this course of action. Difficulty with enforcement and First Amendment concerns also exist.

Our ability to reach those who have left the Marine Corps or who are not in any way affiliated with the Federal Government is limited. We can recall a member of the Individual Ready Reserve, but have no authority under the UCMJ over those who are off active duty and not in a retired or reserve status. Similarly, we have no authority to recall individuals whose misconduct was committed when they were not subject to the UCMJ. The individuals over whom we have no authority would have to be held accountable by civilian authorities.

Several options currently exist for commanders to take adverse administrative action against Marines who are found to have committed misconduct on social media and the internet. Our policy mandates processing for administrative separation after the first substantiated instance of sexual misconduct, certain forms of sexual harassment, or participation in supremacist or extremist organizations or activities. For those whose misconduct does not

require processing, commanders still have other options for processing the offender for administrative separation. We are coordinating with the Department of the Navy on the potential to add additional tools that would allow us to separate Service members who commit certain forms of social media and internet misconduct.

From a social media perspective, we have implemented an operational planning team as part of our task force to examine all capabilities that might assist victims in clearing inappropriate content from the internet, as well as ways we might increase discovery of service member misconduct in the cyber domain. We are sensitive to the legal and privacy considerations that must be carefully considered and addressed.

CONCLUSION

Every young man and woman who takes the oath to support and defend our Constitution, who puts on the uniform, and who puts their life on the line to defend our way of life here at home is provided a high degree of trust and respect by the American People. So too, should he or she be given that same trust and respect by those in uniform. Any breach of that trust and respect within the very ranks of the services themselves cannot be tolerated and must be dealt with immediately, decisively, and unceasingly. We will be immediate, decisive and unceasing in fixing this problem and defeating this attack on our core values by those who purport to be counted among us or who have once served our Nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

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**STATEMENT OF
VICE ADMIRAL ROBERT P. BURKE, U.S. NAVY
CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
AND
DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
(MANPOWER, PERSONNEL, TRAINING AND EDUCATION)
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES OF THE MILITARY SERVICES
MARCH 21, 2017**

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Introduction

Thank you Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, for this opportunity to discuss recent events. The military has felt the sting of disappointment from multiple reports of unprofessional and totally inappropriate behavior by some of our service members. Despite repeated efforts to end harassment and cyber bullying in our ranks, this intolerable behavior still exists.

There is no room in our Navy for this toxic behavior and we are aggressively going after it. It makes us weaker, erodes trust within our team, and cedes advantage to the enemy. We are committed to eradicating this behavior and mindset from our force. The United States Navy is a professional force, and the American people expect us to maintain high standards. We expect better of ourselves.

In a personal message last week to all Navy commanders, the Chief of Naval Operations stressed that "...we have a problem that we really need to solve, we are not going to put a Band-Aid on it, whitewash over it, or look the other way." He emphasized that, "The discovery of online sites that degrade members of our team has shined a light on the fact that this problem persists. But we get daily reminders of it, when individuals are disrespected by crude jokes, wisecracks, sexual harassment, and in its worst manifestation, sexual assault – a serious violent crime. Despite a steady effort to get after this, we're not making enough progress."

While it is common to hear that "these actions are being taken by only a small minority," this is an unacceptable answer. This demeaning activity is utterly offensive and we cannot let ourselves be tainted by a pathetic few who do not share our values of honor, courage and commitment. We cannot allow these individuals to cause divisions in our teams. When we fight, we depend on each other with our lives. We trust the person to our left and right to have our back. There are no bystanders. Everyone must be engaged to win.

Tolerating vulgar comments from our peers, subordinates or seniors gives others the impression that we condone that behavior or might go easy on someone who does. We must get past the inability to speak out and not let fear of acceptance ruin us. Those who thought they could behave this way with anonymity or without consequence will find out they are flat wrong. This is an issue of the ideals of dignity and respect *and* warfighting readiness - we *will* continue to investigate and take action as appropriate.

This type of behavior is not who we are. I cannot stress enough that Navy is going after this behavior and it is not a one-and-done review. Rather, a comprehensive strategy underpins our efforts. We will not tolerate this in our ranks. Nor will we tolerate cowardice in the dark shadows of the internet.

Current Social Media Policies

Our social media policies mirror our general policy, in that any form of harassment, discrimination, or hazing, online or otherwise, is not tolerated, and is inconsistent with our core values. This policy provides commanders with mechanisms to administer judicial or non-judicial punishment as appropriate. Behaviors that rise to the level of sexual harassment, whether conducted person-to-person, online, or by any other method, are covered under this policy.

We have developed several training products, to include Social Media Handbooks for Ombudsmen, Command Triads, Public Affairs Officers, and other guidance explaining our policy in plain language. Each includes information about personal and operational security and appropriate online conduct.

What We Are Doing – Policy Refinements and Additional Actions

Following the discovery of the “Marines United” website, Navy stood up a Senior Leader Working Group to attack this issue from the top down. We are going after this problem in several ways, including:

- Completing force-wide discussion on “No Bystanders” and expectations of online conduct, as outlined by the Chief of Naval Operations on March 16, 2017
- Investigating suspected misbehavior and holding individuals accountable as appropriate – both criminally and administratively
- Encouraging anyone with direct knowledge of explicit photos taken or distributed without consent or knowledge, to contact the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) via text, web, or smartphone app
- Establishing NCIS Text Tip Hotline links on Navy websites
- Reviewing the Uniform Code of Military Justice and Navy policy governing administrative separation
- Reviewing online policies and guides for Sailors’ personal and professional activity.
- Expanding the extent to which we address online behavior in our continuing sexual assault/sexual harassment campaign plan
- Reviewing and expanding initial recruit and officer accession training
- Executing a Leader Development Framework, part of the Navy’s *Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*. The framework outlines how the Navy will develop leaders who demonstrate both operational excellence and strong character.

Resources Available to Victims of Cyber Bullying and Hazing

Sailors or civilian employees who see or experience online misconduct are being strongly encouraged to promptly report it to their supervisor or chain of command. Additional reporting methods include contacting the NCIS text and tip line or the IG Hotline, especially for those instances in which the supervisor or chain of command may be involved in alleged misconduct. To assist personnel in accessing other methods of reporting, all Navy websites have been updated to provide a link to the NCIS text and tip line.

We provide support to victims through multiple resources, including counselors, chaplains, deployed resiliency counselors, mental health providers, legal assistance, Victim Legal Counsels, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Victim Advocates, *Military OneSource* counseling, and command managed equal opportunity representatives.

Additional Tools We Need

We are currently assessing all legal and administrative tools at our disposal to attack this problem, and considering additional authorities we might need, and we welcome your assistance.

Once we complete our reviews and assessments, we will not hesitate to ask Congress for assistance in providing additional tools to help eradicate this behavior from our Navy.

Summary

Admiral Richardson charged commanding officers at each level of leadership to talk to every member of their team about what respect for teammates looks like – at work, at home and online. He instructed commanders to make it absolutely clear that individuals who do not, and cannot, live up to our professional standards, in competence and character, are not welcome in our Navy. He reiterated that our standards call us to a higher commitment than the law – we are better than that. Finally, he charged them with making it crystal clear that to remain the world’s most powerful Navy, we must be 100 percent focused on staying ahead of our competition, which starts with leadership and teamwork that is built on trust and respect. This is a challenge to all Navy leaders. Navy leaders, from the flag level down to the deck plates, own this problem. As a team, we will solve it.

RECORD VERSION

**STATEMENT BY
MG JASON T. EVANS
DIRECTOR OF MILITARY PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

FIRST SESSION, 115TH CONGRESS

ON SOCIAL MEDIA (ONLINE CONDUCT) POLICIES IN THE ARMY

MARCH 21, 2017

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

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, Distinguished Members of this Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the United States Army to provide testimony regarding the Army's Social Media and Online Conduct policies.

The Army Position on Social Media/Online Misconduct

The Army is a values-based organization comprised of trusted Army professionals – Soldiers and Army Civilians – who serve our nation. Harassment, bullying, hazing, stalking, discrimination, retaliation, any other type of misconduct that undermines dignity and respect will not be tolerated. The Army has worked diligently to develop a holistic continuum for professional conduct in all aspects of Soldiers' and Army Civilians' lives. The Army has implemented our online conduct policies throughout every level of training and military education so that every Soldier understands how to treat others with dignity and respect, even while benefiting from the potential anonymity of the internet.

Current Army Social Media/Online Conduct Policies.

Army policy for online conduct, which is punitive, states that hazing, bullying, and other behaviors that undermine dignity and respect are fundamentally in opposition to the Army Values and are prohibited. This policy, along with supplemental guidance published in 2015, also makes clear that this prohibition applies at all times and extends to all forms of virtual or electronic media government issued and personal devices. Commanders and supervisors at all levels are responsible for enforcing this prohibition:

and are required to publish and post written command policy statements on the treatment of persons; conduct annual hazing and bullying training including online conduct; and take appropriate action in response to alleged violations. Commanders also conduct Command Climate assessments at a minimum annually that may identify inappropriate behaviors.

The Army's Ongoing Social Media/Online Conduct Initiatives

In 2015, Army senior leadership established a special initiatives team to address online harassment via social media, and to address the challenge of preventing and responding to unprofessional behavior online. Then Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN (Retired) Raymond Odierno, stated, "I expect Soldiers to uphold our Army values, on and off duty, and treat each other with dignity and respect. This applies to our day-to-day interactions, at the office, in the field, on deployment, and at home, both in person and across social media." As a result of GEN (Retired) Odierno's commitment to combatting online harassment, the professionalization of online conduct initiatives team was established. This team included representatives of the major stakeholders: the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASA (M&RA)), the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCS, G1), the Inspector General, Criminal Investigations Division (CID) and the Provost Marshal's Office (PMO), The Judge Advocate General (TJAG), Installation Management, the Chief Information Officer (DCS, G6), Public Affairs (OCPA), Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and prevention (SHARP), Equal Opportunity (EO) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and Deputy Chief of Staff for Training (DCS, G3).

The special initiatives team outlined three lines of effort, coordinated across the Army and approved by leadership, to achieve the goal of curbing unprofessional online behavior by Soldiers. The three lines of effort focused on (1) updating existing policies, (2) updating training materials and infusing the training base with information and best practices, and (3) sharing information regarding responsible online conduct.

In response to the first line of effort regarding policy, the Army published interim guidance regarding online conduct in July 2015, re-issued in February 2017, to supplement the existing policy in Army Regulation 600-20 concerning the treatment of persons. The interim guidance, which will be incorporated into the next update of the regulation, advises Army personnel that online misconduct, to include harassment, bullying, hazing, stalking, discrimination, and retaliation, is inconsistent with Army Values and negatively impacts command climate and readiness; it encourages Army personnel to apply a “Think, Type, Post” approach to the use of electronic communication devices; and it encourages personnel experiencing or witnessing online misconduct to report it. The Army Social Media Handbook similarly advises Army personnel to: “**Think**” about what message is being communicated and who could potentially view it; “**Type**” messages that are consistent with U.S. Army Values; and “**Post**” only if the message demonstrates dignity and respect for self and others.

Furthermore, the Army developed methods to track and report online misconduct; updated its policies and contractual provisions to clarify Contractor responsibility for

appropriate online conduct; and updated its Acceptable Use Policy and Network Access User Agreement to address online misconduct while using government systems.

Members of the Army Team may seek information regarding mistreatment of persons or online misconduct from the following agencies: Family support services; Equal Opportunity professionals; Equal Employment Opportunity offices; the Inspector General (IG); law enforcement; and Army SHARP professionals. Agencies then refer complaints to the Commander, the IG, or law enforcement to file a complaint pertaining to the treatment of persons. Victims of sexual harassment conducted online are eligible for advocacy services from SHARP professionals, including referral services to mental health or Special Victim's Counsel (SVC), if applicable.

In response to the second line of effort regarding training, the Army modified the standardized Army programs of instruction and training plans on equal opportunity during initial military training and professional military education. This training includes discussion points and vignettes with respect to electronic communications and online conduct. These discussion points and vignettes have been incorporated into institutional, command, and unit training packages for Equal Opportunity (EO), Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Treatment of Persons, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP), and Cyber Awareness, among others. This training is for enlisted and officer personnel, and includes pre-command courses for command teams from company through brigade level, and functional courses that train recruiters

and initial military training cadre, such as drill sergeants and Advanced Individual Training platoon sergeants.

The instruction on social media and online conduct provides guidance on how Soldiers should conduct themselves online in a way that is consistent with the Army's Command Policy and the Army Values. The training defines online conduct and misconduct, and emphasizes the "think, type, post" approach that Soldiers should exercise to reduce the likelihood that they will they'll behave inappropriately online. Multiple vignettes are included to generate analysis and discussion, with checks on learning. The lesson also dispels the myths of anonymity, non-attribution, and impunity surrounding Soldier use of social media. In addition to giving Commanders and Leaders the information and tools they need to educate their Soldiers and respond appropriately to complaints, this line of effort contributes immeasurably to the Army's efforts to train current and future Soldiers and Army Civilians on how to protect themselves, identify and prevent inappropriate behavior, and report online-related misconduct.

In response to the third line of effort regarding communication, Army Public Affairs has developed a strategic messaging campaign to raise awareness of appropriate online conduct and the consequences of misconduct. As part of our communications information campaign, the Army has developed a Social Media Handbook that includes expanded discussion of online responsibilities and a "Best Practices" section on protecting oneself from and reporting online misconduct. In addition, the U.S. Army

Criminal Investigation Command is enhancing the Army's cyber understanding through cyber-crime prevention flyers to safeguard our Soldiers during their online activities.

Finally, the "Not in My Squad" program developed by the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic presents workshops and videos to Soldiers and Army Civilians on professional conduct. This initiative was designed to help Soldiers assess the state of mutual trust and cohesion within their squads. The grass-roots nature of the workshops helps junior leaders to gain situational understanding and inspire ethical and professional behavior. Based on their perceptions in the survey and workshops, individuals are directed to resources that can help them reinforce success, make adjustments to strengthen areas of weakness, and consider alternatives that can remediate areas of concern. This program facilitates leader involvement and accountability and aids in the creation of a professional and ethical culture among members of the Army Team.

Accountability and Monitoring

Leaders are responsible for communicating social media expectations to their Soldiers and Army Civilians. Army personnel using social media must abide by the UCMJ at all times, even when off duty while utilizing their private devices.

The Way Forward

The Army is aware of the potential negative aspects within the social media networks and is proactively working through policies, training, and programs to ensure Soldiers remain vigilant and know appropriate online behavior. The Army will continue to enforce

standards and imbue Soldiers and Army Civilians with Army Values and place an emphasis on professional behavior in all that we do.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to share the Army's program and initiatives. I look forward to your questions.

STATEMENT

BY

MR. ANTHONY M. KURTA

**PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF
DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS**

**OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

OF THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

MARCH 21, 2017

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED
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US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today regarding the Department of Defense's (DoD) policies addressing sexual harassment, hazing, and bullying by Service members through the use of electronic communications, including online social media sites.

The Department is committed to promoting an environment where all Service members are treated with dignity and respect. We are focused on eradicating behaviors that undermine military readiness, including unlawful discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), hazing, and bullying. Such misconduct is fundamentally at odds with our core values and the expectations of the American people. These behaviors jeopardize our military missions, weaken trust within our ranks, and erode unit cohesion.

DoD is an institution held in high regard by the American people, mostly because we embody high standards and values. However, we are not a perfect institution. We do our best to uphold our standards and values across the world, every minute of every day. On occasion, Service members fail to meet them; when that happens, we endeavor to the best of our ability, to hold each and every one accountable for their action. It is because of this we are an effective fighting force able to carry out the missions assigned by our nation.

Personal behavior in social media represents an area where we find it difficult to: (1) be aware of what Service members are doing in that space, and (2) hold Service members accountable. As the members here today are aware, just because an American citizen joins the military, they do not give up all their rights. In the recent cases reported in the media, the individuals clearly demonstrated unacceptable behavior. In response, we will offer our full support for any Service members targeted by this abhorrent behavior. We will also take all available action to hold offenders appropriately accountable.

I can tell you that the Secretary of Defense is investing a significant amount of his personal time to this issue, providing his vision and direction directly to the Service Secretaries and the Department's most senior uniformed leaders and listening to those most involved in setting and upholding our standards and values. The Secretary believes that our most successful and ready warfighting units are those with the best discipline; they also have the lowest rates of bad behavior. On the battlefield, you must have full trust and confidence in your teammates. That is not possible when you do not treat them with dignity and respect. So, the Secretary has charged all of his leaders to ensure the proper command climate through proactive and positive leadership. In addition to the Secretary's direct guidance to leaders, the Department has issued

some policies in this space over the past few years.

Current DoD Policies:

In September 2014, the Department issued an updated policy memorandum on Prevention and Response to Sexual Harassment. This policy strengthens the policies and programs associated with sexual harassment; directs senior-level oversight of prevention training; outlines mechanisms for reporting incidents of sexual harassment, including procedures for reporting anonymously; and requires the reporting of the response to and resolution of alleged sexual harassment involving members of the Armed Forces. The policy states that all complaints of sexual harassment are processed according to existing sexual harassment investigative procedures.

- In December 2015, the Department issued a Hazing and Bullying Prevention and Response policy memorandum. The policy prohibits hazing and bullying in all circumstances and environments, including off-duty or in “unofficial” unit functions and settings. This policy includes such behaviors that may occur in the context of in-person interactions or “via electronic communications.”
- In January 2017, DoD issued “The DoD Retaliation Prevention and Response Strategy and Implementation Plan.” The plan directs the Military Services and the National Guard Bureau to update their respective social media policies to specifically prohibit retaliatory behavior, including, but not limited to, reprisal, ostracism, cruelty, oppression, maltreatment, and bullying against any victim, bystander, or first responder to a sexual assault or sexual harassment report. Required implementation of the aspects of the plan by the Military Services is projected to be completed by the end of FY 2018.

DoD and Service policies prohibit any form of harassment, hazing, and bullying. Current policy directs each Military Service to plan and conduct , in-person training within units to inform Service members how to prevent sexual harassment and ensure they are aware of the avenues for reporting such conduct, to include making anonymous reports. To comport with DoD sexual harassment, hazing, and bullying prevention and response policies, the Military Services have Service-specific policy and prevention efforts. You will hear directly from the Service representatives on this topic.

In closing, I want to assure members here today that this issue has the personal attention

of the Department's most senior leaders. It reduces our warfighting effectiveness. We will address it by continuing to build up awareness of our core values and standards and ensure we hold appropriately accountable those who fail to meet those standards. We thank Congress and the Subcommittee for their steadfast support of our efforts to promote the safest and most respectful environment for our Service members and for the civilian workforce who support them.