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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Minutes of April 2018 Commission Meeting

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (the Commission) held a meeting on April 19-20, 2018, in Denver, CO. Portions of the meeting concerned organizational and other pre-decisional and deliberative matters and were closed to the public pursuant to Public Law 114-328, section 554(b)(3). The Commissioners agreed to make a separate version of these minutes available to the public.

Attendance

Commissioners present:

- Mr. Edward T. Allard III
- Mr. Steve Barney
- The Honorable Janine Davidson
- Ms. Avril Haines (4/20 only)
- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck
- Ms. Jeanette James
- Mr. Alan Khazei
- Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
- Ms. Shawn Skelly
- The Honorable Debra Wada

Commissioners absent:

- The Honorable Mark Gearan

Others present:

- Kent Abernathy, Executive Director
- Jill Rough, Director of Research and Analysis
- Keri Lowry, Director of Governmental and Public Engagement
- Paul Lekas, General Counsel
- Peter Morgan, Deputy Director of Operations (present for portions)
- Amy Schafer, Military Propensity Research Team Lead

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- Judson Crane, Selective Service Research Team Lead
- John Lira, National Service Research Team Lead
- Sandy Scott, on detail from the Corporation for National and Community Service

April 19, 2018

Discussion with Colorado Service Leaders

From 0800-0900 MT, Commissioners held a stakeholder meeting with leaders from the Colorado service community. The meeting occurred at the Colorado Governor's Mansion Carriage House in Denver, Co. In addition to Commissioners and staff, the following individuals attended:

- Donna Lynne, Lieutenant Governor and Chief Operating Officer, State of Colorado
- Mickey Hunt, Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
- Colonel Scott Sherman, Chief of the Joint Staff, Colorado National Guard
- Fred Jarman, Garfield Deputy County Manager and former Serve Colorado Commissioner
- Ernest House, Executive Director, Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs
- Ken Goodson, Southwest Region Director, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps
- Dan Dunlap, State Program Director, Corporation for National and Community Service
- Antonio Mendez, Executive Director, Serve Colorado, The Governor's Commission on Community Service
- Patrick Meyers, Chief of Staff to Governor Hickenlooper

An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate memorandum for the record (MFR).

Business Meeting

From 0900-0945 MT, the Commission held a business meeting. The Chairman closed this business meeting because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated.

Mr. Abernathy briefed the Commission on staff developments. He provided an update on personnel, facilities, the travel system, and information technology (IT) developments. He noted that staff had met with the winning vendor for the Commission's IT contract. The contract will involve enhancing the Commission's website, implementing a new inspire2serve.gov email system, remote access, and Office 365, among other things. Mr. Abernathy also briefed Commissioners on recent discussions with congressional staff regarding the Commission's legislative proposals. He informed Commissioners that Dr. Rough is in contact with the different Commission Work Groups and is developing an initial framework to guide Work Group deliberations. He noted that staff had begun to prepare memoranda for the record to provide accounts of Commissioner engagements, rather than continuing to include such information in the monthly minutes. Mr. Abernathy provided an overview of engagement efforts, noting that

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Ms. Lowry has made contact with over 30 stakeholder groups thus far. He further noted that staff intends to be more proactive in engaging media.

Mr. Abernathy then reviewed the Denver agenda with Commissioners.

Following Mr. Abernathy's briefing, Chairman Heck moved to approve minutes from the March 2018 Commission meeting. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the March 2018 minutes.

Chairman Heck then requested comments on the proposed amendment to the Commission's business rules. No Commissioner raised any question or concern. Chairman Heck moved to approve the amended business rules and the Commission voted unanimously to do so.

In response to a question from Mr. Allard, Mr. Lekas notified Commissioners of a new Federal Register filing that would extend the deadline to respond to the Commission's request for information to September 30, 2018.

Review of Meeting with Colorado Service Leaders

Mr. Khazei praised the inclusion of Ernest House, head of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, at the roundtable discussion with Colorado service leaders. He stressed the importance of connecting with Indian country and building on the strong tradition of service among tribal communities. He also recommended that the Commission look at ways to close the divide with tribal communities; he thinks service can be a way to do that. Mr. Allard concurred in Mr. Khazei's sentiments. Mr. Allard has met with tribal leaders in Palm Springs and had the same sense as expressed by Mr. House about their dedication to service as well as their interest in helping the Commission. Dr. Rough noted the Commissioners' comments and indicated that staff is working on ways to engage the Native American community.

Dr. Davidson felt the discussion with Colorado service leaders underscored the influence that parents have on the next generation. She recommended that Commissioners think about the parent-influencer narrative as the Commission considers its recommendations, in particular around government service. She described parent influence, along with culture, as a potential structural barrier to service. She noted the importance of conveying that service should be seen as a resume builder and not as a negative thing. Along these lines, she noted the difficulties that applicants face with the USAJOBS website, another structural barrier to service that makes it difficult for interested individuals to enter public service.

Dr. Davidson then turned to military service. Building on input from the service leaders discussion, she noted that our current approach to military recruiting prevents those who have engaged in transgressions during their youth from joining the military. She recommended the Commission think about whether young people should be afforded a second chance.

Ms. James turned the discussion to rural communities, noting that she appreciated input on this subject from the Colorado service leaders discussion. She expressed continued concern about how the Commission will engage with rural communities particularly as its 2018 visits are

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centered around large cities. Recognizing that the Commission will reach out to rural communities during its Iowa visit, she recommends the Commission allocate time for rural outreach during other visits, such as to Texas. Just as the Commission needs to understand the specific and unique challenges of tribal areas, so too does it need to understand the unique challenges of very rural areas.

Mr. Barney concurred. He suggested arranging visits in Texas rural communities a couple of days prior to the Waco trip as a way to learn about the issues facing those communities.

Dr. Rough noted that staff is exploring ways to engage with rural communities and, referencing the earlier discussion, tribal communities. She informed Commissioners that some engagements would occur in connection with Commission site visits and that the Engagement Team would be identifying additional opportunities for Commissioners to engage with these communities, perhaps outside of Commission site visits.

Mr. Khazei returned to, and concurred with, Dr. Davidson's point about the benefit of service for one's career. Dr. Davidson added that too often people see service as a distraction that moves them away from their career path, when in reality service provides experiential learning that helps people to develop their careers. Mr. Scott discussed Employers of National Service, a program initiated under the Obama administration. Five hundred employers have signed onto the program, and in so doing have indicated their desire to hire alumni of AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps. Vice Chair Wada noted that in her own experience, when she worked on the Hill, her mother asked when she would get a real job. Dr. Davidson added that this perception may stem in part from the programs not paying enough to seem like "real" jobs.

Ms. James asked if staff could arrange to have Commissioners meet with parents of high school students, which could help to understand their position and engage them in a conversation about the value of service opportunities.

Mr. Barney contrasted this perception with what Commissioners heard in their meeting with representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). Children of the LDS faith are raised to focus on serving others. In contrast, many 17 or 18 year olds feel they cannot afford to take time off before going to college. He stressed the importance of talking with children about the fundamental issues of service at a very young age, in order to develop an ethos of service within a community.

Discussion with Students, Teachers, and Administrators of North High School

From 1030-1230 MT, Commissioners held stakeholders meeting with students, teachers, and administrators of North High School in Denver, CO. The meeting occurred at North High School and occurred in two sessions: first with students, and second with teachers, counselors, and administrators. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

Work Group Deliberations

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From 1345-1445 MT, Commissioners met in Work Groups to deliberate issues concerning the matters within the scope of their respective Work Groups. Accounts of these sessions are set forth in internal MFRs.

Public Meeting at Denver Museum of Nature and Science

From 1500-1700, the Commission held a public meeting at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. A full account of the public meeting will be made available in a transcript.

April 20, 2018

Work Group Deliberation

From 0720-0800 MT, members of the Commission's Ends, Ways, and Means Work Group met to deliberate issues concerning the matters within the scope of the Work Group. An account of this session is set forth in an internal MFR.

Discussions at the U.S. Air Force Academy

Commissioners Haines, James, Khazei, and Kilgannon, accompanied by staff, traveled to the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) in Colorado Springs, CO, for discussions with USAFA staff and cadets. The sessions lasted from approximately 0930-1230 MT. Accounts of these sessions are set forth in a separate MFR.

Discussion with Civilian Conservation Corps Leaders and Members

From approximately 0900-1100 MT, Commissioners Heck, Wada, Davidson, Barney, Skelly, and Allard held meetings with leaders and members of the Conservation Corps in Denver, CO. Accounts of these sessions are set forth in separate MFRs.

Discussion with Federal Employees

From approximately 1230-1400 MT, Commissioners Heck, Wada, Davidson, Barney, Skelly, and Allard held a meeting with recently hired federal government employees at the Denver Federal Center. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

Executive Session

From 1445-1520 MT, Commissioners convened an executive session outside the presence of staff.

Business Meeting and Review of Trip

Beginning at 1525 MT, Commissioners and staff reconvened to recap the visit to Denver and discuss issues involving future Commission events. The Chairman closed this meeting to the public because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated.

Commissioners discussed a variety of themes emerging from the Denver-area engagements. Commissioners discussed ways to inculcate the expectation to serve – somehow to instill in

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young people the “service bug” or ethos of service. Dr. Davidson identified as an emerging theme a desire among people not to be told they have to serve, although she noted that people are told that they must attend high school. Following on input from the Commissioners’ visit to North High School, she suggested considering a recommendation to tell high schools that they must incorporate some aspect of service into their curriculum, such as North’s requirement that each student engage in 20 hours of community service in order to participate in the graduation ceremony. Other Commissioners also expressed interest in the high school community service requirement. Dr. Davidson noted that the Commission has talked with many people who have realized that they can make a career out of service after they begin to serve.

Mr. Kilgannon informed Commissioners that he spoke with the North High School principal about the pledge of allegiance, noting that the classrooms lacked U.S. flags. The principal said the pledge of allegiance is not part of the school day though students are not prohibited from reciting it. From this insight, Mr. Kilgannon turned to the motivation of students engaged in service. His sense is that while students seem motivated to serve and help, they do not seem tethered to a love of country – but may be tethered to a love of community. He contrasted this to the motivation of cadets at the Air Force Academy who said they were motivated primarily by patriotism, and those who had other motivations developed a patriotic spirit soon after commencing at the Academy.

Ms. Haines asked Mr. Kilgannon to expand on his concept for a public service academy, which he raised earlier in the day. Mr. Kilgannon asked faculty and staff at the Air Force Academy for their views on creating a public service equivalent to a military academy as a way to develop a leadership cadre for public service. Dr. Davidson added that doing so would, like the military academies, serve in part as a socioeconomic equalizer. Mr. Kilgannon continued, noting that a public service academy could, like the military academies, include an appointment process, honor code, physical fitness requirement, and other elements that may help to instill the honor and patriotism and rigor that the military academies instill in their cadets.

(At this point in the discussion, Mr. Kilgannon departed.)

Mr. Khazei addressed the service academy concept. He noted that a Teach for America alum promoted this several years ago; Congress drafted legislation but it did not go anywhere. Mr. Khazei believes that a concept like this would send an important message to the country.

Ms. Skelly turned back to the Denver engagements, noting that they helped the Commissioners to engage in “real learning” in terms of getting out to talk to different people and communities. She felt the trip made a good use of Commissioners’ time and set a strong standard that she hopes the staff can continue to meet.

Commissioners then identified a number of suggestions for future site visits. Suggestions included having tent cards for meetings so Commissioners can address attendees by name; minimizing the number of background briefings, such as the Air Force Academy briefing on the admissions process, to maximize the time for engagement; reserving the last several minutes of meetings for a “lighting round” in which Commissioners ask attendees for their

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recommendations on things to maintain, expand, or fix. Commissioners endorsed the approach of splitting up into two groups, feeling it enabled them to cover more ground on a single site visit.

Ms. Haines raised several other ideas for Commissioner consideration. She asked what role Hollywood might take in generating a conversation or changing the perception of public service. Separately, building on a discussion with folks from the Air Force Academy, she asked about the potential for developing a surge capacity in the cybersecurity space. And, she noted the value of public service in assisting veterans transitioning from military service to civilian life. She recommended that the Commission gather ideas of this nature that have been proposed to it and, in future engagement, seek people's views on the various ideas.

Ms. James provided input on the public meeting format to guide future public meetings. She noted the awkwardness of the moderator standing above the panelists, and recommended that the moderator sit alongside the panelists. She thought the panel at the public meeting in Harrisburg proved more successful than the Denver public meeting in engaging conversation among the audience. Mr. Barney concurred with Ms. James, noting that the panelists in Denver seemed to come with prepared remarks.

(At this point in the discussion, Mr. Allard departed.)

Chairman Heck emphasized the importance of engaging with the audience, and directed the staff to reevaluate the need for a panel at each public meeting. Other Commissioners agreed. Ms. James suggested staff consider a range of methods—to include keynote speakers and panel discussions—and choose the approach that works best for the particular location and audience. Ms. Haines endorsed having a third party to present in some fashion at each public meeting to supplement the Commission's background presentation and the town-hall component. Ms. James recommended that the third party be someone local. Chairman Heck concurred, and recommended that each public meeting begin with the Commission's background presentation and then be followed by remarks from a local individual telling their story or a conversation among local panelists.

Commissioners then discussed feedback received during Denver engagements regarding women registering for the draft. Among other things, they noted that Air Force Academy cadets and North High School students expressed strong support for women registering on equality and diversity grounds.

Prepared by Paul Lekas, General Counsel

Adopted by the Commission on May 11, 2018