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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Minutes of July 2018 Commission Meeting

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (the Commission) held a meeting on July 19-20, 2018, in Waco, TX. The meeting concerned organizational and other pre-decisional and deliberative matters and was 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
- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck
- Ms. Jeanette James (July 19 only)
- Mr. Alan Khazei
- Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
- Ms. Shawn Skelly
- The Honorable Debra Wada

Commissioners absent:

- The Honorable Mark Gearan
- Ms. Avril Haines

Staff present:

- Kent Abernathy, Executive Director
- Paul Lekas, General Counsel
- Jill Rough, Director of Research and Analysis
- Jeff McNichols, Deputy Director of Government Affairs and Public Engagement
- Peter Morgan, Deputy Director of Operations
- Other Commission staff (present for portions)

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July 19, 2018

Business Meeting

Beginning at 0800 CT, the Commission held a business meeting. The Chairman moved to close this and other business meetings to occur on July 19-20 because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated. All Commissioners present agreed.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Heck then moved to approve minutes from the June 2018 Commission meeting. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the June 2018 minutes with minor amendments.

Trip Overview

Mr. Abernathy provided the Commission with an overview of the events planned for July 19 and 20.

Research Plan Update

Dr. Rough led a discussion about the research plan for the next six months. She began by reminding Commissioners to provide information on knowledge gaps to enable staff to arrange appropriate briefings for the Commission meetings in October, November, and December.

The Commission plans to convene public hearings in the first half of 2019. They will follow a congressional hearing model with some type of public component. Staff is developing the hearing topics and would need to identify potential witnesses in the next couple of months. Dr. Rough noted that further detail would be provided later. She also noted that during the August meeting in Memphis, Keri Lowry would brief the Commission on the 2019 engagement plan.

Dr. Rough then discussed the interim report. She noted that in June, Commissioners discussed the primary audience and messaging. Staff understands that the Commission wants the interim report to push the envelope on creating a dialogue on issues within the Commission's mandate without creating a firestorm; further, the Commission would identify matters under consideration but would not go into specifics or decisions on the Commission's recommendations. Vice Chair Wada requested that the report also cover terms and definitions, engagements, the Commission's definition of service, highlight barriers, and note certain "shining stars" in our communities. Dr. Rough noted that those items would be included. Chairman Heck reiterated his understanding that the Commission would want the interim report to address the topics mentioned by Vice Chair Wada and, in the body of the report, address strategic themes about areas the Commission is exploring without saying where the Commission will end up on those areas. Dr. Rough said that staff had created a writing cell and prepared a draft table of contents and plans to provide a full draft to the Commission before the November meeting. The goal remains to issue the report in January 2019.

Update on Propensity to Serve Work Group.

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Dr. Rough briefed the Commission on deliberations of the Propensity To Serve (P2S) Work Group. She explained that in May and June the Work Group had completed a review of propensity and military service, including reviewing the general framework for assessing military service and exploring 30 specific policy proposals. The Work Group narrowed its list of proposals to focus on high-level issues and avoid “in the weeds” proposals about military eligibility and military marketing. The remaining proposals are clustered into three groups: K-12 education issues; broad societal issues (such as youth cohorts, technology trends, and social media); and talent acquisition and talent management. To support the Work Group, staff will now conduct a deep dive into specific policy proposals, with a proposal regarding the ASVAB as a test case. Staff intends to follow the deep dive approach for the top ten proposals relating to military, national, and public service.

Dr. Rough said that starting with this July meeting, the Work Group would turn to public service. In August, the Work Group will consider policy proposals around public service, and in September and October, will turn to national service. Following those discussions, the Work Group will re-integrate the three pipelines and also identify cross-cutting initiatives that require deliberation across the three Work Groups.

Ms. Skelly asked if the Commission would consider eligibility or would instead leave those decisions to DoD. Dr. Rough said it was her understanding that the Work Group did not want to get into the weeds on DoD’s institutional authority.

Time Management Discussion

Mr. Barney raised an administrative question about background work undertaken by Commissioners and whether that work should obligate Commissioners to record a day of service. Chairman Heck provided guidance on time management to assist Commissioners in making full use of those days when they are scheduled to attend meetings or other events. Mr. Lekas provided guidance based on the Commission’s business rules and the legal standards, and agreed to provide further guidance at future meetings.

Deliberation Regarding Ends, Ways, and Means Work Group

As recommended by Ms. Haines, the Commission deliberated about the scope of work to be undertaken by the Ends, Ways, and Means (EWM) Work Group.

Dr. Rough led this deliberation. She noted that Ms. Haines had shared ideas with Chairman Heck and the two Vice Chairs. She said the Work Group had reached a general agreement on areas of need that should be addressed by the Commission. She referenced a productive conversation among some Work Group members, including Mr. Kilgannon and Mr. Khazei, about universal service alternatives and how they might be achieved.

Dr. Rough outlined several terms that Commissioners had used to describe the sort of alternatives the EWM Work Group might consider. Dr. Rough then reviewed a series of assumptions as to which the Commission appears to be in broad agreement:

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- that the Commission should consider a policy option that promotes some kind of universal service;
- that the Commission should promote all kinds of service;
- that the Commission should consider an option that facilitates matching people to type of service that is best fit for them individually; and
- that the Commission recognizes that military service is of special value to the country and should consider policy options that reflect that.

Dr. Rough then described two unrefined models of registration systems that Ms. Haines had outlined, noting that there are undoubtedly other alternatives the Commission may consider.

Dr. Rough then asked Commissioners to reflect on the approach the EWM Work Group should take going forward.

Vice Chair Wada began by asking what we mean by the “go big” option, saying in her mind that is mandatory national service. She then asked what Commissioners consider to be the “go big” option if mandatory is off the table. Dr. Rough noted that the Commission is tabling a discussion of mandatory until the fall, with the focus now on a system of universal service – encouraging, but not compelling everyone to serve. Ms. James referenced a conversation with Ms. Haines in which they considered this issue in terms of congressional strategy, which could favor a bolder recommendation—mandatory—understanding that the eventual policy would come somewhere under that.

Mr. Barney cautioned against a go-big option with a “universal suggestion of service” at its center. He felt this would be a disservice to the Commission’s charter. He favored some approach that would create a cultural expectation (vs. suggestion or encouragement) of service. Chairman Heck agreed. He described “universally encouraged” as a weak alternative and thinks the Commission must pursue “a universal expectation.” He strongly recommended the Commission put forth a recommendation that would (if successful) create an expectation that each individual will serve.

Ms. Skelly asked how the Commission would go about creating that expectation, noting that encouragement can be straightforward (videos, pamphlets, ads, and so on). Chairman Heck laid out his vision of a “go-big” idea by asking a series of questions: How do you change the mindset of the American people to one that has an expectation of service? How do you make sure people understand what it means to be a citizen of the greatest democratic republic in the world? How do you change how people think?

Commissioners discussed creating a culture through education. Several Commissioners talked about civics education. Dr. Davidson talked about whether public education has changed such that there is less focus on civics and sense of community (ala Robert Putnam), and suggested an evidence-based analysis of trends. In a similar vein, Ms. James mentioned changes in family dynamics and their impact on what we mean by “service” and civic responsibility. She also

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mentioned our meeting with LDS, where we learned about a community in which service is expected but not compelled.

Dr. Rough addressed these points, noting that there are really two, interlocking issues on the table. One is about developing an ethos among younger people, which relates to developing policy alternatives related to civics education and service learning. The other is about creating a universal expectation of service or a universal obligation of service. For the latter, the policy alternatives will be different depending on whether Commissioners opt for the expectation or the obligation approach.

Vice Chair Wada advocated for keeping mandatory service on the table. Her current view is that it provides an aspirational benchmark: the Commission can recommend mandatory while laying out the framework for a means to get there, starting with a system that promotes a universal expectation of service.

Mr. Khazei concurred with others' interest in a system of universal expectation vice universal encouragement. He suggested the country may not be ready for mandatory but should have a universal expectation that is "real." (For comparison, he noted that high school was not mandatory, and at some point, we decided it should be.) Mr. Khazei also recommend that the Commission explore the following discrete proposals: (1) developing "action civics" programs beginning in middle school; (2) converting the second semester of high school senior year into a period of service; (3) increasing the incentives for non-military service, possibly through a new civilian "GI" bill that, different from the current incentives system for national service programs, is not elitist; (4) developing a national service system that is less bureaucratic than AmeriCorps and provides more options for individuals; (5) creating employment preferences for those who serve; and (6) pursuing pilot programs, e.g., Chicago and Boston.

Mr. Khazei asked if Mr. Kilgannon had any thoughts. Mr. Kilgannon raised suggestions for future public engagements, including holding a forum with representatives from foreign countries to discuss their experiences with mandatory service (to include ambassadors or representatives), visiting Graceland in Memphis, and engaging public officials (mayors and governors) on the Commission's remaining visits. During this deliberation, Mr. Kilgannon did not offer any thoughts on a go-big option, either for or against.

Chairman Heck summed up the conversation, referring to Ms. Haine's request for input. His sense is that Commissioners are supporting an option more along the lines of Ms. Haine's second option, i.e., to reinvent the registration system into a more holistic "Serve America" system, whether universal or mandatory, that would be the system through which people are introduced to various opportunities to serve. He said he did not hear Commissioners supporting keeping the system largely as it is.

Engagement Briefing

Beginning at approximately 0930 CT, Mr. McNichols briefed the Commission on the status of engagement efforts. He described a robust engagement schedule that has included 70

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engagements on Commission trips with 25 additional engagements to occur during remaining trips. Looking forward to 2019 and 2020, Mr. McNicholas noted that the engagement team would be looking broadly at three categories of events: public hearings; conferences and similar gatherings; and public meetings around the country. Mr. Abernathy indicated that the Governmental and Public Engagement team would brief the Commission on an overall engagement plan during the Memphis trip.

Dr. Davidson recommended that staff connect with the Center on Civics Education during the upcoming visit to California.

Deliberation on Selective Service Matters

Following a short break, the Commission reconvened at 0956 CT. The Commission engaged in a deliberation on issues being considered by the Selective Service System (SSS) Work Group and provided guidance for further work by the SSS Work Group.

Vice Chair Wada requested that the Commission hold a vote on the question of whether a draft or draft contingency remains a necessary component of United States national security. An options memo addressing this topic had been circulated to Commissioners ahead of the meeting. Vice Chair Wada indicated that with an affirmative response, the SSS Work Group would turn its attention to what a registration system should look like and whether it should be modified in any way.

Chairman Heck opened the floor to discuss the question presented by Vice Chair Wada and the SSS Work Group.

Mr. Barney referenced a message he circulated to Commissioners articulating the necessity of having a registration system. As Mr. Barney explained, even if we may never want to use it, so long as our military engages people on the ground there will be a need for ground combat replacement troops that may not be satisfied through the all-volunteer force model.

Vice Chair Wada referenced the Commission's visit to the SSS data center in Chicago. She noted that while other data systems exist, they lack the capacity to execute on the need to identify individuals for a possible draft. Mr. Allard noted that the SSS data center has a thorough knowledge of the information in the SSS system that would not be easily transferable to another entity, such as the Social Security Administration. Vice Chair Wada noted that recreating the system of MOUs between SSS and other government data systems would take a significant amount of effort in terms of time and resources. She further noted that the current SSS system applies to all men living in the United States, including those here illegally, and some of those individuals lack social security numbers.

Commissioners asked whether their decision on this research question would be subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Mr. Lekas explained that he considers the Commissioners' vote on this question as a vote on an administrative matter that will facilitate the Commission's ability to narrow the scope of potential options, rather than as a final decision on an issue within the Commission's mandate. He further noted that the question itself was developed by

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Commissioners based on their deliberation on the scope of matters covered by the Commission's statute.

Mr. Kilgannon expressed the view that from a historical perspective, a registration system is necessary because the possibility of a draft remains necessary. He referenced Constitutional decisions supporting the existence of the draft and registration system based on congressional authority to raise an Army and Navy (Article I, Section 8). He views a military draft as a necessary component of national security, noting that he would view forms of registration systems as well as other reasons for conscripting individuals into service from a very different perspective.

Mr. Barney referenced Rep. Mike Coffman's position—as expressed during the Commission's launch event in January 2018—that other, non-SSS systems are adequate to the text. He asked his fellow Commissioners whether, in light of the information learned during the Chicago visit, the Commission is prepared to decide that—contrary to Rep. Coffman—there are no systems adequate to replace the current SSS system.

Chairman Heck agreed that there needs to be a mechanism by which to identify individuals for service in a national emergency. He noted that he continues to struggle with the question of whether there should be a mandatory registration system, and expressed continued concern about DoD's lack of support for the three primary arguments it has asserted in favor of the current system (i.e., deterrence, bridging the civil-military divide, and low-cost insurance).

Vice Chair Wada noted Chairman Heck's concerns, indicating that the SSS Work Group continues to look at support for the arguments asserted by DoD. She reframed the question before the Commission as whether the Commission should rely solely on volunteers versus retaining a mechanism for involuntary conscription.

Ms. James supported some mechanism for involuntary conscription in part because we do not know what the future may hold. She has concerns about the country's ability to get the number of volunteers on a continual basis to maintain the scale.

Ms. Skelly expressed serious concern about DoD's arguments. Her view is that the Commission needs to turn to the hard work of exploring potential modifications to the current system, even though the Commission remains unsatisfied with existing rationales supporting the current registration system.

Chairman Heck then called a vote of Commissioners. All nine Commissioners physically present voted in favor. Ms. Haines voted in favor by proxy provided to the Chairman ahead of the meeting, in accordance with the business rules.

Commissioners then discussed other countries' views of the United States' ability to generate combat power. Staff's understanding from discussions with experts is that other countries do pay attention to military personnel issues in the United States though the possibility of a draft does not factor into their regular assessment.

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Work Group Deliberations

From approximately 1030CT to 1200 CT, 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 memoranda for the record (MFRs).

Business Meeting

The Commission reconvened at 1226 CT to continue its business meeting. Commissioners who attended the partial Commission visits to Iowa and Illinois, which occurred on June 26-27 and June 28-29, respectively, provided briefings of those trips. The notes recorded below are intended to supplement MFRs prepared for the various engagements in Iowa and Illinois.

Debrief on Iowa

Ms. James briefed the Commission on the visit to Iowa. She explained that the primary purpose of the Iowa trip was to engage with people in rural communities. She noted that some residents preferred the term “smaller communities” to “rural communities,” and others questioned how “rural” these communities truly are with the advent of technology in communications. (Dr. Davidson mentioned the unique status of “digital deserts,” which are limited in their ability to take advantage of advances in communications technology.)

Commissioners met with representatives of AmeriCorps NCCC in Vinton, Iowa – the location of an AmeriCorps NCCC campus. One theme emerging from this discussion was that specialized programs that work well in urban areas are not as effective in rural communities. Ms. James noted, as an example, a foster grandparent program. An individual wishing to serve as a foster grandparent may need to travel a long way to reach the nearest school; the individual may be encouraged to serve as a foster grandparent if provided transportation reimbursement. Ms. James also noted the significance of brain drain in the community they visited, raising the importance of developing programming to attract young people back to their community.

The group also learned about the critical need for flexibility in these rural communities, specifically flexibility to tailor solutions to the needs of the communities. Ms. James noted that smaller communities often lack the institutional of higher education or philanthropic pools that provide matching funds for federal programs like AmeriCorps. Also, performance measures used by AmeriCorps programs do not always apply to smaller communities. Mr. Khazei concurred in these points, particularly in the need for AmeriCorps and other programs to develop flexibility to facilitate the programs’ ability to work better in smaller communities. He also noted that AmeriCorps programs can be particularly valuable in smaller communities that lack some of the institutions—such as Boys and Girls Clubs—common in more populated areas. Ms. Skelly added that it is important to consider the role of administrative requirements in preventing the abuse of funds. Chairman Heck recommended that the topic of administrative requirements—which are necessary, which may be amenable to flexibility—be addressed through a briefing during one of the Commission’s fall meetings.

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Ms. James then provided a detailed review of the Commissioners meeting with NCCC representatives. She discussed Commissioners visit to the local county fair. She closed by addressing the Commission's public meeting. The public meeting occurred in the basement of a Methodist church. Speakers included the mayor, the state director of 4-H, and an individual who worked with veterans. The overall tenor of the meeting was calm. She noted that the audience included some Quakers.

Debrief on Chicago

Mr. Khazei led a discussion of the recent trip to Chicago.

He spoke about a gathering with business leaders, who expressed interest in mandatory service and in the idea of having an expectation of service. Business leaders were also interested in incentive packages, including loan forgiveness and other elements. There was discussion about the possibility of a pilot program, which had been raised previously in Boston. Business leaders expressed interest in this idea. Mr. Khazei spoke with Michael Alter after the event and Mr. Alter plans to speak with local organizers about this possibility.

Mr. Khazei next discussed a session with opportunity youth that occurred in Englewood. Several of the youth whom the Commissioners met explained that they became involved in service either through a mentor or because they found themselves in trouble. Each said that service was a life changing experience. They spoke to the importance of having people like them in leadership roles. They also spoke to how many young people do not have exposure to opportunities and do not get opportunities.

Mr. Khazei also highlighted the Commission's meeting at the McCormick Foundation, which included what he described as a "groundbreaking" conversation about civics in schools. He referenced the new civics legislation that Illinois is implementing, and efforts in Chicago to pursue "action civics" and service learning.

Mr. Khazei then addressed the public meeting, which featured what he described as a fabulous panel. He noted that certain members of the audience expressed strong feelings about the draft and tended to drown out people interested in speaking on other topics. He noted Ms. Haines' suggestion that the Commission place talking points on its website to respond to allegations (such as those levied by audience members in Chicago) that the Commission was part of a conspiracy intended to reimpose the draft.

Chairman Heck explained that he would be working with staff to implement logistics to address concerns that have arisen in some public meetings and ensure equal opportunity for individuals attending public meetings to share their views.

Ms. James, moved by the discussion with opportunity youth, recommended creating videos of young people explaining their stories that then could be shared on the Commission's website.

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Mr. Allard then led a discussion on the two SSS engagements that occurred during the Chicago trip. The first was to the headquarters for SSS Region 1, and the second was to the SSS data management center. These engagements are detailed in MFRs prepared by staff.

Vice Chair Wada and Mr. Allard spoke about SSS' efforts to ensure the security of their data. Vice Chair Wada noted that this is a priority for the SSS Director. Mr. Allard explained that SSS has in many ways set the standard for data security at a small federal agency but has been reluctant to emphasize its efforts out of concern that doing so would make it a target.

Outreach and Engagement Events

At approximately 1330 CT, Commissioners departed for a series of engagements in Waco and nearby Clifton and Cranfills Gap. Commissioners split into two groups, with Chairman Heck, Dr. Davidson, Mr. Allard, Ms. James, and Mr. Khazei remaining in Waco, and Vice Chair Wada, Mr. Barney, Mr. Kilgannon, and Ms. Skelly traveling to Clifton and Cranfills Gap.

The Waco-based group held discussions with federal, state, and local civil servants and with faith-community leaders and volunteers. These discussions are recorded in MFRs. The group then hosted a public meeting at the Dewey Community Center.

The group visiting Clifton and Cranfills Gap held discussions with local faith leaders, civil servants, and volunteers. These discussions are recorded in MFRs.

July 20, 2018

Work Group Deliberation

From approximately 0715 CT to 0800 CT, members of the Ends, Ways, and Means Work Group met to deliberate issues concerning the matters within the scope of the Work Group. Ms. Haines participated by phone. An account of this session is set forth in an internal MFR.

Business Meeting

The Commission reconvened at 0935 CT in Fort Hood, Texas, with eight Commissioners present. Commissioners engaged in a discussion of the Texas trip followed by an executive session; both were held in closed session per Commissioner agreement.

Recap of Engagements on July 19

Chairman Heck requested comments and thoughts about engagements held on July 19.

Mr. Allard felt the public meeting was among the best the Commission has held. He appreciated Chairman Heck's interaction with the public during the comment and question-and-answer period.

Vice Chair Wada addressed the visit to Clifton and Cranfills Gap. She found the discussion with faith leaders, civil servants, and business leaders to be valuable, and noted that Commissioners had a positive experience at the volunteer fire department. Ms. Skelly highlighted the unique

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composition of participants at the civil service event, which included the local mayor, folks from the chamber of commerce and from the neighboring city and county, faith leaders, and others. She described this fabric of a local community as likely indicative of other rural areas. She was impressed by the local civil servants' devotion to provide critical services to their community. Vice Chair Wada compared this to the military: many people are born into it, as was the case with the fire chief and the assistant fire chief, whose fathers both served.

Chairman Heck spoke to the work of volunteer firefighters based on his own experience. He emphasized that the commitment includes not only the volunteers but the entire community. Bosses must allow their employees to leave on a moment's notice if called to an emergency.

Mr. Barney spoke to generational issues affecting smaller communities. Young people move away and do not return; businesses do not grow; tax bases do not grow; infrastructure declines with no relief in sight; people are not attracted to move into the smaller communities. There is a concern that the next generation will not remain in the community to provide services now handled by their elders. Nevertheless, he felt there was a strong sense of service in the Cranfills Gap and Clifton communities.

Chairman Heck said he felt staff did well with logistics. He also appreciated the decision to divide the Commission into two groups, which enabled the Commission to increase the number of meaningful engagements that Commissioners could experience.

Commissioners then spoke about the meeting with faith leaders from Clifton and Cranfills Gap. Mr. Kilgannon explained that the group included two Salvation Army representatives, one from Texas Baptist Men, two from an alcohol and drug rehabilitation facility called Hope House, and one who runs a senior program at a local community college. Overall, participants felt they were providing services but did see the provision of services as an opportunity to share their message of faith. Some, as noted by Mr. Barney, believe they are at times viewed with skepticism about their motives, which is a challenge that other faith-based service organizations face.

During the visit to Clifton and Cranfills Gap, Commissioners asked meeting participants for their views about women registering for selective service. Vice Chair Wada mentioned one individual who noted that he would have concerns as a father but from a cultural perspective would probably lean towards supporting registration to make sure women have every opportunity. She highlighted another individual who said his views on women in the military changed during a trip to Israel. Prior to the trip, he believed that women should stay home and take care of the house. In Israel, he saw women integrated into the IDF and that made him think that women could do anything. Ms. Skelly highlighted another individual, from Texas Baptist Men, who had concerns about women in the military until he was in Iraq in a civilian capacity and assigned a security detail with female soldiers and observed first hand their competency to serve in the military and in combat.

Ms. Skelly recommended that the Commission account for people's understanding of what modern combat is when considering their views on women in the military. She noted that although permitting women to serve in infantry roles is a relatively recent development, they

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have been in combat roles for a while, and the very frank discussion in Clifton and Cranfills Gap shows that people’s perceptions may change based on their experiences.

Mr. Khazei turned the discussion to bridging the military-civilian gap. He believes that a comprehensive system will help in achieving that goal, noting the bond created when people from civilian service and military service meet each other. Mr. Khazei believes that a recommendation to promote civics in schools should include education about our military, what the military does, and how the military relies on an all-volunteer force. He feels that it should not be necessary to travel to Israel to understand what the military does given that the United States has been at war for 17 years, but with only one percent of the population assuming the burden, there is a gap that should be closed.

Vice Chair Wada and Mr. Barney spoke about how people in the communities they visited today seem ready to help, no matter the ask. Mr. Khazei noted that having a more universal expectation of service would mean that the current generation of people serving in smaller communities could look to the next generation to assume their roles as firefighters and civil servants.

Dr. Davidson connected the discussion to what Commissioners had heard in discussions with AmeriCorps members. Many members began with AmeriCorps because they were affected by someone who had served. She noted the significant socio-economic barriers that many face, pondering what the Commission could do to crack the code to enable more people to serve.

Chairman Heck referred to a discussion he had following the public meeting. An audience member asked Chairman Heck about his use of the phrase “universal expectation” in response to an another’s comment about “universal encouragement.” The audience member noticed this difference and felt the difference was real and that the Commission should explore creating a universal expectation rather than merely encouraging service. Dr. Davidson referred to the Commission’s deliberation on this topic from the prior day. She noted that the continuum from opportunity to expectation to obligation will correspond to different programs, incentives, marketing initiatives, and so on.

Mr. Allard commented on a young man who participated in the faith-based group discussion in Waco. This individual is Muslim and is studying to attend medical school. His father served in the military for over seven years. He found doors shut to him because of his name. Staff member Brian Collins, Team Lead for Public Service, recalled that this individual reached out to Fort Hood about a program but never heard back, while his friend, “Joey,” who had similar credentials, received a response from the same program the next day.

Commissioners closed this discussion with general observations. Chairman Heck emphasized strengthening American democracy as an intangible benefit of service. Dr. Davidson recommended the Commission consider how learning to have respectful discourse with others—which she described as what makes us American—should factor into its recommendations.

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On an administrative note, Mr. Abernathy confirmed that Commissioners prefer to have binder material prepared for Commission meetings and trips presented in chronological order rather than by topic.

Executive Session

From approximately 1015 CT until 1100 CT, Commissioners convened an executive session outside the presence of staff.

Outreach and Engagement Events

From approximately 1100 CT to 1200 CT, Commissioner met with a group of active duty non-commissioned officers at Fort Hood. An account of this discussion is set forth in a separate MFR.

Thereafter, Commissioners split into two groups to continue discussions at Fort Hood. A group consisting of Vice Chair Wada, Mr. Allard, Mr. Barney, and Ms. Davidson held discussions with children and spouses of military members. A separate group consisting of Chairman Heck, Mr. Khazei, Mr. Kilgannon, and Ms. Skelly held a discussion with a group of active duty mid-career officers. Accounts of these engagements are set forth in separate MFRs.

These sessions concluded at approximately 1400 CT.

Prepared by Paul Lekas, General Counsel

Adopted by the Commission on August 16, 2018