



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Minutes of March 2019 Commission Meeting

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (the Commission) held a meeting on March 27-29, 2019, in College Station, TX. Portions of this 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. Steve Barney
- The Honorable Dr. Janine Davidson
- The Honorable Mark Gearan
- The Honorable Avril Haines
- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck
- Ms. Jeanette James
- Mr. Alan Khazei
- Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
- Ms. Shawn Skelly
- The Honorable Debra Wada

Commissioner absent:

- Mr. Edward Allard

Staff present:

- Kent Abernathy, Executive Director
- Paul Lekas, General Counsel
- Jill Rough, Director of Research and Analysis
- Keri Lowry, Director of Government Affairs and Public Engagement
- Peter Morgan, Director of Operations
- Other Commission staff

March 27, 2019

Business Meeting

The Commission convened at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX, shortly after 0900 CT. All Commissioners were present except for Mr. Allard. The Chairman moved to close this and other business meetings to occur on March 27-29, 2019, because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated. A motion was made and seconded, and all Commissioners present agreed.

Chairman Heck moved to approve minutes from the February 2019 Commission meeting. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the February 2019 minutes with minor clarifications and technical edits.

Chairman Heck provided an overview of the next several months and proposed that the Commission identify time to develop its position on the theme and overarching context of the final report. Doing so prior to voting on policy alternatives in July will assist the voting process and enable staff to begin shaping the draft of the final report. Commissioners considered alternatives and all agreed that discussion on this topic should occur at a time suitable to all members. They agreed to begin the meetings scheduled for Friday, April 26 and Friday, June 21 at 0700 ET to allow for two two-hour discussions on this topic.

Mr. Abernathy then reviewed the schedule of events for March 27-29.

Preparation for April Hearings

Vice Chair Wada, assisted by staff, briefed the Commission on content issues relevant for the April 2019 hearings on the Selective Service System (SSS). A slide deck accompanied this briefing.

Vice Chair Wada began by reviewing the priorities established by the Selective Service System Work Group (SSSWG). The SSSWG identified two leading priorities to guide policy development: conscription must be fair and equitable, and the SSS must provide the nation with adequate protection in the event a draft would be needed. Other policy priorities considered by the SSSWG included transparency, high compliance (i.e., ensuring a high percentage of eligible individuals register), efficacy and lethality, solemnity, and flexibility.

Vice Chair Wada noted that the SSSWG had decided not to include recruitment as an overall objective even though the SSS has been used for recruiting purposes. Commissioners discussed this point, with some noting that a reformed SSS could be designed to enhance recruiting into the military services.

Dr. Davidson pointed to the history of the all-volunteer force (AVF) as it developed in the post-Vietnam Era, suggesting that the SSS may have been designed to avoid solemnity and prioritize compliance rate even if men were not aware that they had signed up. She asked about research into how the SSS was designed at that time, an era with notable anti-draft sentiments and

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distinguishable from the “thank you for your service” era that exists today. Chairman Heck applauded this insight while noting that the move towards more passive registration through state motor vehicle departments and student loan applications occurred in the mid-1980s or later, well after Vietnam.

Ms. Skelly suggested a causal relationship between driving compliance and registration rates and maintaining an SSS almost under the radar in its business conduct. Mr. Barney wondered about ways to balance the two objectives: on the one hand, maintaining a high compliance rate while, on the other, reintroducing solemnity. Vice Chair Wada acknowledged the competing interests, noting the necessary balance between the two. She indicated that between the two, the SSSWG supports higher compliance, which leads in theory to a more fair and equitable draft, rather than solemnity.

Vice Chair Wada next identified the broad recommendations generated through SSSWG deliberation. The first recommendation is to clarify the purpose of the SSS. The second is to encourage the President to issue a call for volunteers prior to any draft. The third is to limit referrals and exemptions from possible conscription. The fourth is to maintain active registration.

Mr. Crane then clarified terminology used by the SSSWG to facilitate discussion with the full Commission. He identified the following key terms: *Suspend Registration* refers to pre-mobilization registration suspended in favor of passive or post-mobilization registration while retaining the boards, database, and operation staff of the SSS. *Standby* refers to an approach that would retain pre-mobilization registration and the SSS database but reduce other functions currently undertaken by the SSS. *Deep Standby* refers to the suspension of both registration and infrastructure, leaving behind a small staff to maintain existing records. *Disestablish* refers to the elimination of all SSS staff and functions.

Vice Chair Wada explained that the April hearings will cover different perspectives on the value of the SSS and whether it should be maintained in its current form, in a different form, or not at all. Panelist Bernie Rostker, a former Director of the Selective Service System, for example, is expected to discuss his proposal to suspend registration. Dr. Rostker is likely to testify that the data maintained by the SSS is stale and a better approach would be to gather current information at the time of mobilization. This approach would allow the SSS to slash its budget, cut staff, and so on. She reviewed figures of estimated costs and conscription times associated with moving the SSS into a different posture. These are set out on the accompanying slide deck.

As for modernization of the SSS, the SSSWG is exploring three areas. First is to broaden the pool by expanding the age of registration and/or expanding the age of conscription at the time of activation. Second is to establish a continuum between the AVF and the draft, which would involve creating a roster of volunteers – a list of individuals willing to volunteer in the event of a national emergency. Third is to endorse the “doctor draft” as a model for inducting highly skilled personnel. Referring to the concept of modernizing the SSS in general, Mr. Barney framed the question as “How does the nation prepare for what is essentially unknowable in the

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future?” He sees the Commission’s mandate as a green light to examine the SSS from this frame of reference.

Vice Chair Wada then turned to policy alternatives that the SSSWG has considered. From a lengthy list of alternatives, the group has focused on twenty for consideration by the full Commission. She summarized a handful of these, including: requiring DoD and the SSS to hold mobilization exercises; requiring DoD to update its personnel requirements and timeline for conscription; strengthening due process for individuals who fail to register, as civil penalties continue indefinitely, while an individual can age-out of the bar on naturalization; and recommending that future National Defense Strategies or Quadrennial Defense Reviews include a section on national mobilization activities and requirements.

Chairman Heck noted for the Commission that the policy alternatives considered by each work group that were not selected for consideration by the full Commission will be included in the proposal packages that staff is preparing for the July voting surge.

Vice Chair Wada addressed the process used by the SSSWG to select a policy alternative for full Commission discussion. The SSSWG moved forward any proposal supported by at least two of five group members, and any course of action supported by at least four of five group members.

Commissioners then discussed how a registration process could incorporate a ritual to convey solemnity. Vice Chair Wada said it could happen in various ways, including through Boys & Girls Clubs, and other organizations. Vice Chair Gearan described it as a citizenship rite of passage. Mr. Kilgannon added that solemnity could be addressed either through a celebratory approach or by providing registrants with a more full and complete understanding of what it is they are doing, i.e., registering for a possible military draft.

Dr. Rough then discussed the concept of mobilization. She noted that the SSSWG has scoped out standing conscription and prefers to view conscription as necessary in a break-the-glass emergency scenario rather than recommending rolling conscription.

Vice Chair Wada discussed the use of forces in a draft, noting that the Military Selective Service Act (MSSA) does not refer to “combat” or “combat replacement.” She said the SSSWG is exploring the purpose of the SSS and how to fill the requirements that need to be filled to address military needs in the future. This approach leads to a different conceptualization of the registration system. Chairman Heck noted that it will be imperative for the Commission to offer legislative language that defines the purpose of a draft to meet the national mobilization needs of the country in times of emergency and to clearly delineate that it is not solely to supply combat replacement troops. He added that the “combat replacement” language came from congressional statements that the Supreme Court in *Rostker* viewed as indicative of legislative intent.

Ms. James stressed the importance of that definition and the challenges that the word “combat” presents in practice. Active duty service members, she noted, have different definitions of what “combat” means and those definitions are rooted in their own reference points and the periods in which they served. She believes the term is a distraction and the Commission should not

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adopt it. Dr. Davidson agreed and felt a broader definition focused on a national emergency would tie into the overarching themes of civil society and democracy.

Ms. Skelly referred to the concept of “combat power” which is used doctrinally to refer to a broader set of positions that includes not only infantry but also logistics, intelligence, and so forth. Judson Crane, Research Team Lead for Selective Service, noted that the term “combat” is used formally to designate approximately 30% of military roles, with many others considered “combat support.”

Commissioners discussed how, in the past, many Americans have been called upon to assist wartime efforts in service of a national need. Historically, as Mr. Barney noted, many of those individuals served in supporting the warfighter rather than being the warfighter—such as volunteers with the industrial base during World War II—but their role was nevertheless critically important to the nation.

Mr. Kilgannon urged caution in the Commission recommending that the U.S. government create imperatives in a way different than they have been understood with respect to the survival of the nation. Mr. Barney clarified his position that he wanted to ensure the Commission not pigeonhole the SSS as purely a means to generate combat replacement troops; rather, the SSS must be responsive to the national security needs of the nation.

Vice Chair Wada then provided an overview of the April hearings on selective service. She reviewed the research questions that guided panelist selection and introduced panelists who had confirmed participation.

Chairman Heck stated that he plans to ask the Department of Defense (DoD) representative—the Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness—to defend each of the four rationales the Department had announced publicly in support of the current SSS. Members of the SSSWG supported this and noted they had discussed the same topic in their last work group session. Ms. James recommended that the Chairman send a letter to DoD stating an expectation that DoD will address this issue during testimony.

Vice Chair Wada provided background on a course of action that the SSSWG has considered that would involve creating an individual ready reserve (IRR) of volunteers. The question is whether there is a way to incentivize individuals to identify their skills and licensing information, submit to a physical, and agree to be a first-call-up volunteer in exchange for receiving some information and incentives. Ms. James suggested these volunteers could receive some form of security clearance as an incentive. Ms. Haines cautioned against the idea of using clearances as an incentive to serve given, among other things, the clearance backlog and concerns regarding the number of people who have clearances. Building on the volunteer/incentive concept more broadly, Ms. Haines suggested viewing the proposal as a continuum, with appropriate incentives applying on an increasing basis based on the individuals’ role. The continuum would include not only voluntary military service but also availability for call-up in the event of emergencies and disasters, by the federal government and the several states. Vice Chair Wada indicated that the SSSWG had not explored this approach and had focused on the break-glass context, which is why the topic of clearances had arose: if a national security event were to occur that would

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require an influx of cyber experts, those experts would be unable to assist immediately without already holding clearances. Ms. Haines, referring to the continuum approach, suggested the Commission explore how to connect it with the registration system proposal that the Ends, Ways, and Means Work Group has explored.

Following a thirty-minute break, Vice Chair Wada introduced a discussion about the first two hearings in April, designed to address questions about maintaining or transforming the SSS. Vice Chair Wada reviewed the research questions set out in the slide deck.

Ms. Haines recommended adding “What is the value of the SSS?” to the set of research questions to encourage panelists to address different options for meeting a contingency component. She also recommended, building on input from Mr. Barney and the text of the Commission’s enabling legislation, that panelists address whether the SSS could fill a role in terms of mobilizing individuals with specific skillsets.

Vice Chair Wada then reviewed the confirmed and proposed panelists for the April hearings. Commissioners discussed individual panelists and the perspectives they would bring to bear on selective service issues.

Dr. Davidson recommended that the hearings include people thinking about the future of war and how demographic shifts, for example, might affect the future needs of the United States. She described someone who could speak to homeland defense and national security in the context of potential existential threats to the nation in the future, such as those in cyber or banking. She recommended broadening the lens to include the potential need for emergency conscription if people simply stopped joining the military and the AVF structure no longer satisfied the nation’s needs. Dr. Davidson noted it may be too late to secure a panelist such as August Cole but, at a minimum, the Commission would need to develop information on this angle. Vice Chair Wada identified two panelists who could speak to these issues and Dr. Davidson requested that they be primed to address those at the hearings.

Mr. Barney asked how the nation could ensure it has a process and the requisite analytical approaches to identify needs as they arise. This function is not built into the SSS, he noted. Dr. Davidson explained how this connects with a core mission of this Commission. If the Commission dispenses with the SSS because the nation has the best AVF in the history of the world, it will need to justify that approach in light of potential future uncertainties. Given those uncertainties, the Commission will need to consider a system designed with sufficient flexibility to address unknown needs that may arise.

Vice Chair Wada then briefed the Commission on four policy recommendations that the SSSWG intends to bring to the full Commission for deliberation and vote. These recommendations did not have full support within the work group. One proposal would involve face-to-face registration with the SSS, including a required video that addresses the importance of registration and its meaning to the nation. Two of five group members supported this. The others raised concerns about how this requirement would affect the overall registration rates (i.e., compliance), which, in turn, has an impact on the fairness and equity of an eventual draft.

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The other proposal would respond to a recommendation by the conscientious objector (CO) community to allow registrants to check a box indicating that the registrants intends to apply for CO status in the event of a draft. Although this recommendation would nevertheless require an individual to establish CO status at the time of conscription, there is concern that it could create misunderstanding and confusion and could encourage people who do not adhere to CO beliefs to sign up in hopes of not being drafted. Mr. Crane added context, noting that at the end of the Vietnam War, approximately 35% of CO applications were granted. He also explained that the SSS currently provides protection for COs in the form of alternative service and has close connections with many in the CO community. Several Commissioners provided input on the proposal, identifying pros and cons, and agreed both that the topic should come before the full Commission and that the precise language would be critical in evaluating the proposal.

Vice Chair Wada described another proposal to align the time of service for a conscript with the current requirements for service in the National Guard and the reserves – the duration of the war plus six months. Currently, conscripts are required to serve for two years, but it takes eight-to-ten months to complete basic combat training and much longer for more technical fields. Mr. Khazei questioned whether this topic was within the Commission’s mandate. Mr. Barney felt it would be within the mandate if viewed from the perspective of ensuring enough people are ready when needed. He did not recommend that the Commission identify what the correct period should be but suggested the Commission could speak to the challenges and recommend against an arbitrary limitation like two years. Mr. Lekas confirmed that the two-year period is set out in the MSSA and so a recommendation to make the period contingent on, for example, the draft enabling legislation would have to be done through a legislative change. Mr. Khazei felt that addressing this could become a distraction, noting general concerns and skepticism that people have after 18 years of war. He recommended the Commission think about the unintended consequences for young people who have known nothing but war and a difficult workforce economy.

The next proposal raised by Vice Chair Wada involved local SSS boards and whether they should remain fully staffed in peace time or replaced with another construct. She and Ms. James laid out the pros and cons. Ms. James emphasized the connection to the local community, especially in local areas, and likened the boards to a jury of one’s peers. Dr. Davidson felt that the local board approach made sense because of skepticism that people have of the centralized federal government. Vice Chair Wada suggested an alternative approach involving a smaller cadre of trainers who, at the appropriate time, would deploy to train others.

Returning to the April hearings, Mr. Kilgannon recommended that panelists understand that while the Commission is aware of pending court cases involving women and selective service registration, it is looking at selective service requirements in a much broader way and is considering several options that may or may not be affected by the decisions. Dr. Rough stated that staff would ensure this is reinforced in the preparatory calls with panelists which Ms. Lowry stated would begin in the following week.

Dr. Rough noted that Ed Hasbrouck will be a panelist and will speak to issues regarding the Department of Justice (DOJ) and enforcement of draft registration requirements. Mr. Lekas said

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his team had reached out to the appropriate office within DOJ and was informed that they do not set the policy for enforcing draft registration and has been unable to locate any current guidance from DOJ that does address this issue.

Preparation for March Hearings

The Commission reconvened at 1255 CT to discuss the national service hearings scheduled for the following day. Ms. Lowry reviewed logistics for the hearing and pointed Commissioners to testimony received from the panelists. Chairman Heck asked that staff include tabs in Commissioner binders. He also asked that Commissioners not ask additional questions after the light turns yellow. In response to a question, Chairman Heck noted that the Commission does not pay expenses for panelists to come to hearings.

Ms. Lowry reminded the Commission how to refer to different participants in national service programs. She noted that AmeriCorps refers to its participants as “members” and both Senior Corps and Peace Corps refer to their participants as “volunteers.” Former participants of AmeriCorps are called “alumni” and of Peace Corps are called “returned.”

Ms. Lowry noted that panelist Barbara Stewart, the CEO of CNCS, as a representative of the Administration, could be limited in speaking freely about growth and expansion. She noted that the President’s budget proposed to eliminate funding for CNCS and reduce the Peace Corps’ budget by \$14 million. Congress provided both programs with small increases in funding in the last fiscal year.

Ms. Lowry noted that 46 individuals had RSVP’ed favorably for the morning hearing, and 41 for the afternoon hearing. Staff arranged local interviews with Commissioners. Morgan Levey and Christina Flores provided details about surrounding engagements with students from the Bush School of Government and Public Service and Texas A&M University.

Legal Update

Thereafter, Mr. Lekas provided an update on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests made to the Commission and the Commission’s response.

He explained that the Commission had received 23 FOIA requests, eight of which sought substantive records from the Commission. The eight requests came from three requestors. Mr. Lekas summarized the records sought and explained that Rachel Rikleen, Deputy General Counsel and the Chief FOIA Officer, works closely with members of the Governmental and Public Engagement team to respond to requests.

Mr. Lekas noted that two requestors had sought public comments submitted to the Commission. These records did not fall squarely under any FOIA exemption and a determination was made to release the public comments with limited redactions for personal contact information. Mr. Lekas noted that the public comments would be released on the Commission’s website in the following week and Commission staff would supplement the release approximately once per month with any new comments received.

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Operations Update

Peter Morgan, Director of Operations, briefed the Commission on updates to the SharePoint portal used by Commissioners to access research material and other Commission documents. He explained that updates were made to improve the organization of the material and make the portal easier to navigate.

Outreach and Engagement Update

From approximately 1330 to 1430 CT, the Commission received a briefing on outreach and engagement efforts. The discussion began with a review of upcoming public hearings. Ms. Lowry reviewed the status of panelist confirmations for public hearings in April and May. Commissioners offered to assist in connecting with panel candidates.

Jill Rough, Director of Research, gave an overview of the two hearings scheduled for June, outlining the research objectives of the hearings.

Mr. Lekas discussed proposed panelists for the first hearing on civic education. Dr. Davidson suggested that the panel address the role of the federal government in inspiring and catalyzing civic education. Ms. Haines suggested staff consider a representative from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation to address service learning. Mr. Khazei suggested staff consider John King, former Secretary of Education, in lieu of Arne Duncan. Mr. Khazei also suggested Eric Liu to address civic education and creating an ethos of service.

Dr. Rough then spoke about proposed panelists for the second hearing on the service registration system proposal. Commissioners discussed alternative panelists, noting the challenges associated with identifying the right mix of panelists for the hearing topic. Ms. Haines raised questions about the panel and agreed to provide further thoughts. She concurred on the recommendation to have a behavioral science perspective represented on the panel. Mr. Kilgannon recommended that the Commission seek the views of the American Civil Liberties Union or another organization representing the privacy and civil liberties perspective, either as part of the hearing or in a written statement.

Ms. Lowry then introduced a discussion of recent engagements. Mr. Barney began by reviewing his participation on a public service roundtable with the National Academy of Public Administration. He was impressed with the work that went into the roundtable and the input provided by participants. He felt the Commission needed to have a process to acknowledge the input it is receiving from various sources. Ms. Skelly discussed a recent engagement at the Commission's office with high school students from Wisconsin. She found it interesting that none of the participants had ever considered a career in government. They described it as a waste of time and a side track to what they wanted to do with their careers. Vice Chair Wada also attended this engagement and concurred with Ms. Skelly. She said the students expressed pressure to go to college and felt their parents would not allow them to consider anything other than that. Mr. Abernathy closed by discussing a Peace Corps leadership and advocacy event at which he delivered a speech about the Commission.

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Deliberation: Serve America Registration System Proposal

From 1445 to 1530 CT, Ms. Haines led a discussion about the service registration system proposal developed in the Ends, Ways, and Means Work Group (EWM). She explained that EWM had reached consensus on the registration system proposal following the full Commission's discussion of two alternative models during the February meeting. She noted that this discussion would seek to identify the contours of the proposal and list some of the questions that remain outstanding. Prior to this session, all Commissioners had received a white paper outlining the current proposal.

Ms. Haines explained how mandatory and voluntary registrants would experience the registration system. Mandatory registrants would register with what is provisionally called the Mandatory Draft Registration System (MDRS), essentially a reformed SSS. The MDRS web portal would make it very clear that individuals are registering for a potential draft. Registrants would be prompted to go to a second web portal to register with what is provisionally called the Serve America System (SAS). For a registrant who opts into SAS registration, the information they entered in the MDRS would automatically populate into the SAS, and the SAS would then prompt that individual for further information. Through the SAS, the individual would have access to information about voluntary options in military service, public service, and national service. Voluntary registrants, defined as those who are not subject to mandatory registration with the MDRS, could visit and register with the SAS and gain access to information about voluntary options in military service, public service, and national service.

Ms. Haines explained that the current proposal includes the ability for military, national, and public service organizations to send material to mandatory registrants to tell them about options in those spaces, like what JAMRS currently does via the SSS. Currently, JAMRS provides information to the SSS and the SSS incorporates that information into their mailings to registrants but the registrants' information does not go to the DoD. For example, under the proposal, the Peace Corps could provide the MDRS with a flyer that would be sent by the MDRS to all mandatory registrants or to a demographic slice of the registrant pool.

Ms. Haines next identified some of the open questions associated with the proposal: Who should be responsible for paying for the mailings sent via the MDRS? What should the "MDRS" and "SAS" be called? How does one design the overall system both to promote participation and to send message of an expectation of service across the board? How do both parts of the system deal with critical skills? Is there a way for the SAS to facilitate state-run service programs such as civilian reserve corps? How would non-federal government entities, including state, local, and tribal agencies, link into the SAS in a useful way?

Ms. Haines opened the conversation for discussion, asking if Commissioners believed this to be a model that met the requirements the Commission had set out and was a model the Commission would be comfortable endorsing.

Vice Chair Wada supported a registration system proposal in concept. She noted that mandatory registration would be the main driver of people to the system, drawing a comparison to commissaries and exchanges: without a commissary, no one would go to the exchange.

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Mr. Barney endorsed the concept of having two ways to enter the system. He cautioned against the Commission being overly prescriptive with respect to technical issues and how the databases are constructed and noted the difficulties faced by prior U.S. government efforts. He recommended building on a functioning model like the SSS and tweaking that model but felt that the attributes outlined by Ms. Haines are exactly the ones the Commission should explore.

Vice Chair Gearan noted that he was very taken by the solemnity frame and asked how it would factor into the registration system proposal. He believed the Commission should view the proposal through the lens of citizenship and, for 18-year-olds, as a rite of passage, rather than a concept to develop the infrastructure needed for a culture of service. He believed the key would be to link the proposal to the solemnity frame in a way that elevated all streams of service.

Chairman Heck noted that solemnity was a main reason that the MDRS would have a different landing page than the SAS. The MDRS would be a more military-focused website. He recommended considering low-cost approaches to building a ceremony around registration, such as with local Veterans of Foreign Wars chapters. As to Vice Chair Wada's remarks about mandatory registration as a driver, Chairman Heck expressed his view that relying on the forcing function of mandatory registration to drive people to consider voluntary service opportunities would represent a failure. Acknowledging that this approach may seem aspirational, Chairman Heck suggested exploring other ways to generate interest, possibly by enlisting media organizations.

Ms. Skelly noted the challenge of "turning the Titanic" in a generational sense, particularly for the initial cadre of individuals making use of the voluntary service system. Dr. Davidson expressed her view that while this sort of culture change would take time, the SAS proposal could help by making it easy for people to find service opportunities. In that sense, it would address a concern the Commission has heard time and again: that many young people do not know what options are out there and do not know what to do next or where to look.

Ms. James expressed appreciation to her fellow Commissioners for endorsing the current, third option, which settled the concerns she had about the two models the Commission had considered in February. Ms. James requested that the Commission, if it ultimately moves forward with the current proposal, makes clear that funding would be required for the MDRS/SSS to send information to registrants on behalf of other entities. Ms. James also addressed the name "MDRS," explaining that to her it helped to convey the solemnity and purpose of the system, in contrast to "SSS," which conveyed neither.

Vice Chair Gearan noted the importance of solemnity. To that, he added the concept of a rite of passage, suggesting that the registration proposal could help to convey both, under a holistic umbrella of what it means to be a citizen or "citizen service for the 21st century." To these concepts, he added a third: voter registration. He envisions an individual entering citizenship at 18 years old by registering for a military draft, registering to find out how else they can serve America, and registering to vote.

Mr. Kilgannon referenced concerns that he raised about this issue in prior Commission meetings. He explained that he thinks of solemnity primarily with reference to military service. He views

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military service as distinct from other types of service because of the level of risk and danger, potentially life and death, and freedom or lack thereof, associated with military service. He expressed concern about using the cudgel of mandatory registration beyond military conscription. He does not feel that the leverage of mandatory registration should be used or exploited to extend mandatory registration for other purposes. Mr. Kilgannon expressed generally that he prefers a minimalist approach to a registration model. He has general concerns about collection, use, and protections of information by the federal government. At the same time, he understands why a registration system could help people to understand other opportunities that may exist.

Mr. Kilgannon continued by expressing his concern about a slippery slope – in other words, a risk that a registration system developed for one purpose would, in the future, be used for other, unintended, potentially broader purposes. He indicated a hope that the final report would reflect some of these thoughts.

Nevertheless, Mr. Kilgannon stated that the proposal is one that he can support and he thanked Ms. Haines for her work in developing it. Ms. Haines then confirmed the Commission’s consensus on at least a frame for the registration system proposal and the identification of open questions relating to that proposal.

Ms. Skelly supplemented the proposal with a suggestion that the SAS should permit individuals to browse information without registering. Several Commissioners weighed in, and all agreed to incorporate this feature into the proposal.

Commissioners then discussed whether the term “register” captured the correct tone of the action individuals would take with respect to the SAS. Alternatives were considered, including “enroll.” Ms. Haines noted that it is important to choose a word consistent with the desire for every American to serve. She felt that a term like “subscribe” would not convey the sense that individuals *should* be serving.

Vice Chair Gearan emphasized the important role that a proposal, such as this one, could have to elevate all streams of service. He recommended the Commission identify the umbrella for the proposal, whether it should be a notion of citizen service for the 21st century or something else.

Mr. Kilgannon asked whether there should be one umbrella covering the entire proposal or whether the two systems should be treated separately. He emphasized the importance of identifying the owner of each system. The role of the SSS, as owner of the MDRS, for example, would be different than the role of the owner or manager of the SAS. The latter would serve as something of a marketer that would explore ways to entice and make people feel good about using the SAS to explore and find opportunities.

Vice Chair Gearan recommended that the Commission either “go big” or risk ending up as a report on a shelf. His instinct is for the Commission to tie its proposal to an overarching idea. His preference would be “citizen service” as a unifying concept in a nation divided. He supports including voter registration as a component of the proposal.

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Vice Chair Wada then spoke to the value of the proposal from a military service perspective. She believes the SAS part of the proposal is what will drive interest in military service, noting that today's younger generation for the most part has no interest in the military and does not know much about military service. She sees value in national service helping to draw attention to military service and believes a proposal like this can assist in that effort.

Ms. Haines informed the Commission that thought would be put into different approaches for framing the Serve America proposal.

Research Update and Voting Preparations

The Commission reconvened at 1550 CT for a research update delivered by Dr. Rough. She provided a slide deck to guide the discussion.

Research Update

Dr. Rough explained that the research effort is currently focused on vetting policy alternatives through consultation with experts on myriad issues. Consultation takes the form of solicited statements of the record, interviews, roundtable discussions, and other means. Dr. Rough asked Commissioners to inform Commission staff if they desire to request views from particular outside organizations or individuals that they would want on the record prior to voting in July.

Ms. James, appreciating the input the Commission is receiving from experts, highlighted the importance of hearing from "the common man." She has concern that the Commission may be missing the perspective of individuals not recognized as leaders or experts in a given area.

Dr. Rough noted the stakeholder meetings the Commission has held, adding that staff has held additional such meetings and would continue to do so. She also highlighted the discussion session that Mr. Kilgannon arranged with students from Wisconsin and said additional sessions like that would continue.

Dr. Rough explained that the Commission is also receiving public opinion data through research polls. The Institute of Politics at Harvard's Kennedy School is fielding questions now and has included questions relevant to the Commission's mandate. JAMRS fielded questions in the fall and should have results in May. She said staff would share the results of these polling efforts when they become available. Dr. Rough also noted her team's ongoing analysis of public comments.

Preparations for Commission Voting

Dr. Rough then addressed preparations for the Commission's voting "surge" scheduled for July 15-19, 2019. She explained that the research team has begun preparing deliberation material and that, prior to voting, Commissioners will receive a voting schedule, a set of memoranda on the policy alternatives that the Commission will vote on, and research on each topic. Proposals will be considered in two forms. First, for each topic—for example, public service—Commissioners will receive a set of bundled proposals. Bundled proposals are more discrete and/or tactical recommendations that have been pre-vetted by a work group that will be voted on as a single unit. Each bundle will include an executive summary and policy option memos on the bundled

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proposals. Second, Commissioners will receive a series of stand-alone decision memos for proposals. These proposals will be treated separately due to their impact, expense, or potentially sensitive nature and will likely require intensive deliberation by the Commission. Each of these will be five pages or fewer. In addition, Commissioners will receive a list of proposals that were considered and rejected by each work group, organized by topic.

As to timing for deliverables, Dr. Rough explained that the Commission will receive two sets of voting binders. The first set will be delivered by hand at the June meeting and will include proposals relating to military, national, and public service. The second set will be delivered by mail no later than July 3 and will include proposals relating to the SSS as well as proposals derived from the EWM work group. All material also will be available on SharePoint. Well in advance of receiving the voting bundles, Commissioners will receive draft summaries of the bundled and stand-alone proposals.

Chairman Heck spoke to the approach for Commissioners to provide feedback on the proposals ahead of the voting surge. If Commissioners see proposals in the draft bundle packages that warrant separate discussion, staff will extract those from the bundles. Commissioners will also be able to suggest amendments to any of the proposals—both bundled and stand-alone—once they receive the draft proposal memoranda. A final opportunity to suggest amendments will be available once the final voting binders are provided to Commissioners. Chairman Heck said that Commissioners can suggest amendments during that final period up to Wednesday, July 10. At that point, Dr. Rough and Mr. Lekas will coordinate review of the amendments and, with Chairman Heck, determine changes to be made to the proposals. Chairman Heck stated that during the July 15-19 voting period, he will not entertain amendments from the floor.

Commissioners then discussed the interplay of individual proposals with overarching thematic elements. Chairman Heck referred to the Commission's decision to hold early-morning meetings in April and June designed to address the overarching theme—the “moonshot”—so that the Commission has a sense for that structure before it begins the proposal voting effort in July.

Mr. Khazei outlined his vision for an integrated system, referring to the “cradle-to-grave” graphic that the Commission reviewed at its February meeting. He believes America needs a fundamentally new approach to service that literally starts in first grade and continues until the end of life. It would involve a restoration of civic education in schools, a service semester that every high school student undertakes, an expectation that everyone will commit to a year of service, a registration system to facilitate access to and awareness of opportunities, ongoing service opportunities for everyone, and service in retirement. Chairman Heck noted that these sorts of ideas are exactly the sort that the Commission will discuss in the two early-morning meetings. He asked staff to have the cradle-to-grave graphic available for those meetings.

Discussion then turned to drafting of the final report. Dr. Rough provided a timeline. With a March 1, 2020 release date for planning purposes, the text would need to be finalized in November. She informed the Commission that alternate tables of contents are under development and will be shared with Commissioners for input in the coming months, prior to the July voting surge. Dr. Rough also noted that based on prior deliberation of the Commission,

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staff will be preparing a final report directed to the Congress and the President as the primary audiences.

Chairman Heck set out his expectation for the final report. In contrast with the interim report, he does not anticipate substantive amendments or concerns with the draft since the Commission will have already laid out its broader thematic and messaging approach and will have voted on policy alternatives. He said the Commission would bring on a professional copy editor to assist with the final report. The Commission will see a first draft sometime in September, provide input by a date to be determined, and then convene in October to do a “reading.” His hope is that any major issues are addressed electronically or telephonically prior to the October meeting. He asked Commissioners to hold September 19-20 and October 17-18 for possible meetings. Unless an urgent need arises, the Commission will not meet in August.

Vice Chair Gearan asked about the plan for reviewing graphics and layout. The Chairman said there would be an opportunity to review that content as with the interim report.

Mr. Lekas closed this session with an overview of the legislative drafting plan. He explained that the legal team has already begun mapping policy alternatives and preparing for a fulsome legislative drafting effort. He said the effort would continue through 2019 and the legislative volume to the final report would go the printer no later than the beginning of February 2020. Mr. Lekas and his team intend to work closely with counsel for appropriate congressional committees and key members on the proposals. He said those engagements would begin in earnest this summer following the July voting surge.

March 28, 2019

On March 28, 2019, the Commission convened the Commission convened at the Annenberg Conference Center at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX, for two public hearings on national service. Nine Commissioners participated in the public hearings; in addition to Mr. Allard, who did not attend the March meeting, Mr. Barney fell ill and could not attend.

Public Hearing: Improving Current National Service Policies and Processes

From 0900 to 1200 CT, Commissioners held a public hearing titled Improving Current National Service Policies and Processes. Panelists included AnnMaura Connolly, President of Voices for National Service and Chief Strategy Officer and Executive Vice President of City Year, Inc.; Chris Bugbee, Chief Operating Officer of the OneStar Foundation; Pierre Nguyen, Disaster Response Programs Manager for the Texas Conservation Corps of American YouthWorks; Michelle Brooks, Chief of Staff for the Peace Corps; and Barbara Stewart, Chief Executive Officer of CNCS. A live stream of the hearing is available on the Commission’s Facebook and YouTube pages.

Public Hearing: Creating More National Service Opportunities

From 1300 to 1600 CT, Commissioners held a public hearing titled Creating More National Service Opportunities. Panelists included Jaime Ernesto Uzeta, Chief Executive Officer of

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Public Allies; Shirley Sagawa, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Service Year Alliance; Natalye Paquin, President and Chief Executive Officer of Point of Light; Brian Larkin, Program Officer of Flint for the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; and Kaira Esgate, Chief Executive Officer of America's Service Commissions. A live stream of the hearing is available on the Commission's Facebook and YouTube pages.

March 29, 2019

Public Hearing Debrief

The Commission reconvened at 0830 CT in College Station, TX. Until 1000 CT, the Commission held a deliberation regarding the prior day's hearings on national service. The first portion of this session focused on logistical issues and the second portion on substance. All Commissioners except for Mr. Allard participated in the meeting.

Logistics Debrief

Vice Chair Wada requested that where possible, staff avoid relocating Commissioners in the middle of an ongoing discussion, referencing the movement that occurred part-way through the SSSWG's meeting on Tuesday, March 26.

Turning to the public hearings, Commissioners noted that they received compliments from panelists on the conduct and organization of the hearings. They made a few suggestions for future hearings: endorsing the layout of the Commission's dais used in these hearings, with tables turned in on both sides in an arc-shape; ensuring panelists have sufficient lighting; and recommending that each panelist have a microphone even if it means Commissioners sharing theirs. In addition, Chairman Heck advised Commissioners generally to target questions to a specific panelist during the April hearings on selective service rather than allowing all panelists to answer each question.

Content Debrief

Chairman Heck began this portion of the discussion by citing the panelists' mixed reactions to his question about a proposal for congress to charter a government foundation to raise funds for national service efforts. He asked Commissioners whether they had interest in pursuing this proposal and for their thoughts on the impact of testimony on other proposals that the Commission should or should not pursue.

Vice Chair Gearan noted the "be bold" mantra that Shirley Sagawa and other panelists conveyed in their testimony. He felt this affirming to the Commission in carrying out its responsibilities and an indication that people are watching the Commission and what it will recommend. He also noted that he was struck by the preparation that went into the testimony and the fact that panelists felt it sufficiently important to travel to College Station to testify. Chairman Heck concurred, noting the hearings served to reinforce the Commission's "moonshot" perspective and indicated how much the broader community is relying on the Commission to issue bold recommendations.

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Mr. Khazei noted the recurring theme about the linkage of military and civilian service. One panelist highlighted the Commission as the first time these streams of service were brought together. Mr. Khazei felt this was a powerful theme and one that the Commission should embrace.

Vice Chair Wada referred to her question about the highest priority in the national service space, noting that one panelist highlighted the military-civilian linkage and another raised non-competitive eligibility for national service participants. She asked how the Commission plans to build in recommendations developed during the hearings. Chairman Heck commended the point and suggested that, as the Commission moves forward, it seek to weave the strategic-level recommendations in with the many tactical recommendations under consideration. He noted panelists emphasis on ensuring a strong infrastructure to avoid participants having poor experiences.

Ms. James said it remains important to explore ways to enable people from rural, faith-based, and other communities with more inherent challenges to participation. This would require changes to infrastructure as well as rules and regulations. She expressed interest in the transformation initiative that CNCS has announced. Ms. Lowry noted that staff would share information on these initiatives. Ms. James recommended the Commission look at those initiatives to identify any that the Commission should emphasize in its report to add credibility to the Commission's recommendations and support CNCS' efforts.

Chairman Heck turned discussion to the educational stipend and living allowance for AmeriCorps members. He noted that the Commission has heard much about these benefits and that testimony in the previous day's hearing reinforced the view that both are inadequate. He asked Commissioners for views. He explained that the proposal to make the AmeriCorps education award non-taxable would require support of the Ways and Means Committee because it represents mandatory spending, noting that AnnMaura Connelly indicated that the proposal had significant support in the last congressional session.

Referring to the issue of the AmeriCorps stipend, Mr. Khazei expressed the concern as a "one-size-fits-all" problem, noting that a member in San Francisco receives the same stipend as a member in Columbia, SC, without a cost of living adjustment. He recommended that the stipend have a cost of living adjustment. Chairman Heck suggested modeling the stipend on the base allowance for housing (BAH) used by the U.S. military, since it is a cost of living adjustment already approved by the U.S. government.

Mr. Khazei also highlighted the panelists' emphasis on community pilots for universal service, suggesting the Commission explore demonstrations in ten communities with matching federal government grants as a way to begin the process of scaling national service. Several Commissioners supported the concept of supporting pilot projects. Ms. Haines suggested the Commission identify two communities from different sides of the political spectrum willing to pursue demonstration projects to promote universal service and announcing those communities alongside release of the final report. Vice Chair Wada recommended engaging the national service community on this issue for assistance in formulating the proposal and programs.

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Commissioners discussed who in the federal government would have responsibility for such a program. CNCS was suggested. Chairman Heck said that the type of appropriation would determine which agency had the lead. A pilot linked to workforce development, for example, would be run out of the Department of Labor. If for K-12 education, it would be the Department of Education. John Lira, Team Lead for National Service, explained that CNCS does have innovation and demonstration authority that could potentially be used to facilitate pilot programs.

Mr. Khazei praised the diversity of the panels across all dimensions, noting that the diversity helped to foster a robust discussion.

Chairman Heck noted the importance of presenting information on the potential fiscal impact of the Commission's recommendations. He asked if staff could conduct analyses on some proposals. For example, what is the impact of making the Segal education award non-taxable? What about applying a cost of living adjustment like BAH to the living stipend? Or increasing the education award to the average cost of in-state tuition? Dr. Davidson agreed with this approach and noted that elevating respect for civilian service in part by investing more in civilian-oriented programs ultimately is "budget dust" compared to the exponentially higher investment that the nation has in the military.

Mr. Kilgannon spoke to the choice between improving the current infrastructure and expanding opportunities. If he had to choose between these two options, he would support further investment in current infrastructure. First, he said this would be a show of support for and a tribute to all those who are already doing wonderful things, an indication that the nation values their service. Second, he noted that several people have told the Commission about the importance of shoring up the infrastructure and he has some concern this could get lost. Third, improving the infrastructure helps to improve that all-critical first experience. Fourth, expanding service opportunities in the future would be easier if concerns with the current programs are addressed up front.

Ms. Skelly connected Mr. Kilgannon's input with the pilot project approach. She feels the future can be demonstrated to the nation at large through pilots, and that pilots can help to point the direction for a paradigm shift.

Ms. James emphasized the importance of having a quality first service experience in order to encourage a lifetime of service. She feels that it is critical to invest in what is already established to shore up the infrastructure. She also supports expansion into areas that currently cannot undertake service programs, in part, because of barriers arising out of the infrastructure (such as onerous grant requirements).

Commissioners endorsed the idea of examining already-existing government cost of living adjustments to find an appropriate metric for adjusting the stipend. Ms. James expressed some caution about relying on the BAH because it has been under fire for the past several years and Congress has decreased it.

Vice Chair Gearan described his view of the Commission's task as giving a vision for the next generation. He explained that resourcing is critical and scaling-up will require stepping stones.

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He suggested that proposals such as a change to the living stipend should be viewed as stepping stones – as foundational steps to address deficiencies with the current system. Mr. Barney concurred in the view that the base must be made sound before expanding the number of opportunities. He believes the Commission should have a strong focus on fixing the foundation and that the improved foundation will become the basis for growth.

Ms. Haines articulated the emerging consensus among Commissioners as follows: All Commissioners agree in the need to strengthen the current system. By doing that, opportunities will expand to some extent because it will become possible for those who are propensed but cannot currently serve because of barriers. In addition, to move towards a universal expectation of service, Commissioners support pilot projects that would help to build out the infrastructure in an incremental way and, hopefully, allow access to communities that cannot currently participate. This approach will also help to demonstrate the financial and resourcing needs both to fix the current system and to expand opportunities.

Vice Chair Wada added that the Commission could propose an end-state goal, which could be, for example, to have one million people serving by a certain year.

Ms. James returned to the pilot concept. The Commission should ensure that within those pilots there is authority and capability to test the theories about what is needed to expand participation. For example, she noted, we do not know for sure if addressing the stipend or educational award issues will address the problems. The pilot projects should include the authority to explore other changes that will address the problems as they are identified at the local level. Moreover, she noted, there is value in the pilots testing multiple theories and it may bear out that different theories work better in different places. Several Commissioners agreed with Ms. James' approach. They referred to hearing testimony from Mr. Larkin and others that focused on developing "place-based" approaches to service. Ms. Haines added that universities can be critical partners in analyzing the data coming out of pilot projects. Chairman Heck added that different communities can also explore different approaches to funding future growth. Vice Chair Gearan recommended that with respect to the place-based approach, staff look at collective impact theory and specifically an initiative in Cincinnati; he said the initiative was featured in an article published in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

Mr. Khazei turned to the topic of scaling national service. He noted that Ms. Sagawa testified that if one were designing a national service system from scratch today, it would be different than the AmeriCorps model. Mr. Khazei feels that the AmeriCorps model has become too bureaucratic and the design of the future needs to be much different. It should include, for example, more people serving locally. It should include fellowships that allow for expansion without too much bureaucracy. He commended the idea of pilot projects that can explore innovative and potentially less expensive ways to build service. Asked to describe the fellowship program, Mr. Khazei analogized it to Pell Grants and explained that any community-based non-profit could be certified to run a fellowship: the non-profit would provide supervision, training, supplies, and materials, and the individual—it could be a single individual—would bring their stipend. All those individuals on fellowships would be part of a broader cohort in their community, county, or state.

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Dr. Davidson and Ms. Haines responded to the idea of emphasizing service in one's own community, both noting the tension between helping one's own community and developing a common American experience through meeting people in different communities. Ms. Haines recommended that the Commission support both strengthening local communities and service within those communities as well as recognizing the social compact with the country and helping each other. Mr. Khazei agreed that there need not be a one-size-fits-all approach. He supports a variety of opportunities with common themes. Vice Chair Gearan describe this as a "not *either/or* but *and*" approach.

Mr. Kilgannon said his answer to the question of "Why?" is need: when people see the need in their community, they come out and serve. We want that first community experience to be a quality experience so they may serve again, perhaps in a different community. To Mr. Kilgannon, this indicates the importance of local and state, and to that end he recommended considering the audience of the final report to include the nation's governors. Several Commissioners supported the notion of including the nation's governors along with the Congress and the President as the intended audience of the report.

Chairman Heck referred to the fellowship idea set out by Mr. Khazei and supported the idea of funds following the individual rather than the program, suggesting perhaps that each state could have a certain number of vouchers or fellowships and all fellows in a particular region—a state, perhaps—come together for a pre-service training before deploying to their respective communities. Ms. Haines supported this concept as well, viewing it as similar to ideas like an emergency fund that the Commission has discussed. She noted, though, that a program like this would not be uncomplicated. She also emphasized the value in having people serve in different parts of the country.

Ms. James encouraged Commissioners to recall the continuum of service and ensure that opportunities remain available at different stages of life, noting that those who are older may not be willing to relocate as much as those in the 18-30-year-old range.

Several Commissioners recommended endorsing a flexible approach that would involve both local service opportunities and opportunities to serve in different communities or different parts of the country, depending on the circumstances of each individual.

Commissioners then held a discussion about the comparative value of different streams of service, focusing mainly on military service and national service.

Mr. Kilgannon spoke to how the Commission should frame its position on elevating national service with respect to its framing of military service. He noted sensitives around presenting national service as an equal to military service. He indicated that he does not support comparing national and military service as the same and equal. In contrast, he would be more supportive of a perspective that more Americans should be involved in serving the country in some way without comparing or equating national service to military service.

Ms. Skelly developed the notion that national service and military service represent different ways for individuals to serve their country. She noted the importance of endorsing different

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manners in which individuals serve and recognizing the differences among those. Military service, she noted, comes with a certain set of consequences and risk. Great care is given to adequately compensating and caring for those folks who take on that burden and responsibility (even if there may be inadequacies in such compensation and care). She also views national service as a way for individuals to contribute to the country. Even with her experience in the military, an experience in which she lost many friends, she believes that those involved in national service are contributing to the same country the military seeks to protect and in their own way are helping to make America better. She views individuals engaged in different streams of service as all working towards the same big and very noble goal in their own ways. Nevertheless, she noted, it remains important to refine how the Commission speaks about the value of different types of service to avoid the suggestion that the Commission is equating national service and military service and the risk that, in so doing, some people will tune out the Commission's message.

Several other Commissioners provided input on this topic. Ms. James noted the fine line between respecting those who have served in the military and fetishizing them. She also expressed a view that elevating what civilians are doing is consistent with respect for and support of the military since civilian service represents the very thing that the military is defending – this nation's robust democratic society.

Chairman Heck felt the topic important and one that will affect the drafting of the final report. He asked what it means to "elevate" national service. Does it mean to place national service on the same level as military service, or to increase benefits for those involved in national service, or somehow generate more value and respect for what national service participants do?

Mr. Khazei referred to input from the hearing panelists on this issue, noting that no panelist viewed national service as the same as military service. Members of the military, justifiably in Mr. Khazei's view, receive more benefits than do national service members which is reflective of the higher level of commitment and sacrifice they make. He feels that there is opportunity, however, for the 70% of individuals unable to serve in the military to have the opportunity to participate on national service. Dr. Davidson endorsed the latter, recommending that young people told by military recruiters that they do not qualify should be advised that they can serve their country in another way through national service. This is one way to build bridges across those two communities.

Commissioners addressed the manner in which military and national service are discussed, cognizant of the challenging nature of conveying the importance of both streams of service without implying an equivalence between the two. Ms. James captured the consensus, that the Commission must speak to elevating all streams of service without comparing them to one another and making linkages between them without comparisons.

Commissioners talked about how the overall approach of the American public has changed remarkably from the Vietnam and post-Vietnam eras. Ms. James felt the visceral reaction to discussing military and national service at the same time seems in part a concern that gains made by the military since that time and the current level of respect the American public has for the

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military will erode. Vice Chair Wada said the Commission needs to communicate to both generations in a way that is productive. She noted that linking (without comparing) different streams of service has in the past benefited the military, such as in the 1970s and 1980s when the U.S. government leveraged benefits to federal employees to enact pay raises for the military.

Ms. Haines identified another tension that the Commission has seen in the context of military recruitment related to geography, noting that the nature of the civil-military divide is not uniform across the country. She also noted the importance of not treating all non-military service as the same. At the CIA, for example, many folks are risking their lives and do not have many of the privileges and benefits that are provided to the military. While it is natural to compare different forms of service in the context of identifying and evaluating the different benefits, she stressed not calling attention to that and instead talking about the continuum of service and promoting how each type of service along that continuum plays an important role in society.

Dr. Davidson reminded the Commission not to disregard civilian public service in this discussion. It is essential to promote respect for them to draw awareness to the robust careers that one may pursue in civilian public service and the amazing things that public servants do for our nation and communities. She suggested that the Commission can put more light on different forms of service without drawing comparisons and, drawing on testimony from the prior day's hearings, should look to develop linkages between the streams of service, as she had noted above.

Vice Chair Wada articulated this aspect of the Commission's message as follows: Service to our nation is part of our obligations to our democracy and should be elevated. Each type of service is associated with different risks, commitments, and benefits. Individuals should make their own decision about how they will serve.

Dr. Davidson concurred, but cautioned against rationalizing the current state of resourcing based on the differences among streams of service. For example, she finds it unacceptable that some AmeriCorps members require food stamps to survive.

Chairman Heck summarized the themes arising from this discussion as follows: First, strengthen the foundation of national service. This includes proposals to include a local adjustment for the living stipend and making the education award more valuable by removing the tax or indexing it (for example, to a year of in-state tuition). Second, build opportunities primarily through targeted pilot projects that are proof of concepts. He requested that Commissioners consider whether they would want to be specific about potential pilot projects or recommend an appropriation of a certain amount to a CNCS innovation fund. Third, elevate all streams of service without comparing them to one another, noting that a rising tide lifts all proverbial boats. Fourth, set concrete goals for the "moonshot."

Ms. Haines recommended that the Commission also work towards identifying actual communities ready to sign up to develop pilot projects and experiment with their own ideas. Chairman Heck asked how prescriptive the Commission should be. Dr. Rough noted that the fellowship concept that Mr. Khazei mentioned is already authorized and could be a vehicle for pursuing pilot projects, although resourcing remains an issue, as there is no appropriation for that

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program. Several Commissioners addressed the legislative aspect of this, with Ms. James suggesting, from her experience with DoD pilot programs, that there could be a forcing function benefit in re-introducing an authority even if it already exists. Vice Chair Wada advised to create legislative vehicles with sufficient flexibility so they will endure.

Further to the pilot project approach, Commissioners recommended creating top-level guidelines for how such projects would work. Vice Chair Wada also recommended highlighting pilots that have proven successful. Chairman Heck and Ms. Haines recommended pursuing collaborative agreements with localities and institutions of higher education to assess output. Vice Chair Wada and Mr. Khazei suggested a competition along the lines of the Race to the Top, so long as it does not disadvantage rural areas. Chairman Heck suggested the competition be among different state service commissions.

Engagement Strategy and Final Report Release

Commission reconvened at 1014 CT for one hour, during which Ms. Lowry led a discussion that began with the Commission's engagement strategy and turned to planning for the final report release.

Engagement Strategy

Ms. Lowry explained that for the 2018-19 period, staff has focused on a three-tiered strategy to build awareness about the Commission; seek feedback and collect data on issues within the Commission's mandate; and build relationships with outside organizations. Moving forward in 2019 and into 2020, staff will be working in addition to build a coalition to influence policy development as the Commission releases its recommendations.

Ms. James recommended building partners in Congress before release of the final report, well before any effort to apply political pressure. She advised staff to ensure that staff in both houses of Congress are aware of what the Commission plans to release and suggested that December would be a good time to interface. Mr. Lekas noted that the effort to bring along Hill staffers on proposal development would begin earlier, likely in August. Ms. James also advised that the Commission will need to float its big ideas well in advance to allow time for tweaking and avoid surprises.

Chairman Heck informed Commissioners that Ms. Lowry's team has been connecting with the relevant committees to start building relationships that the Commission can tap into moving forward. In addition to these, he recommended that staff reach out to the National Service Caucus to request an opportunity for the Commission to present to them in September or October.

Mr. Khazei suggested thinking of the Commission as a mobilization body. He noted that the Commission will need to identify the successor to Senator McCain on the Republican side, someone who can serve as the counterpart to Senator Reed. He identified Senator Romney as a candidate given his long history with service. Chairman Heck indicated that he will speak first to Senator Reed for suggestions. In similar vein, Commissioners talked about activating their relationships on the Hill in support of a broader congressional outreach strategy focused on the

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period beginning in September 2019. Ms. Lowry indicated that her team is doing an evaluation of those members expected to have influence on the issues in the Commission's mandate. Ms. James also asked staff to identify those members likely to be opposed to Commission recommendations. Once Ms. Lowry's team develops the list of key members, Commissioners should identify those members and staff they know. Staff will maintain a spreadsheet and help to coordinate outreach by Commissioners.

Commissioners spoke about organizing a conference with service organizations from all streams of service after the final report is released. The organizations could help to amplify the Commission's recommendations and encourage members of Congress to support them.

Mr. Lekas informed the Commission that the legal team would examine restrictions on Commission engagement and outreach efforts under the Anti-Lobbying Act and the Hatch Act and would provide guidance to the Commission at the next meeting. He noted that the Anti-Lobbying Act does not restrict how the Commission may engage directly with Congress but does limit the Commission's ability to encourage third parties to lobby members of Congress.

Vice Chair Gearan asked about the Commission's approach to the Administration and whether the White House is tracking the Commission. Ms. Lowry stated that the National Security Council (NSC) staff has been a key partner and has made introductions with the Domestic Policy Counsel, although Commission staff has not engaged with the latter since it recently changed leadership. Her sense is that the NSC staff and the Office of Management and Budget have been supportive but thus far there has not been communications with senior staff of those bodies. Ms. James asked about communications with Vice President Pence's office. Mr. Abernathy stated that timing is the key issue and that he would want the Commission's guidance on what message to convey to the Vice President at the right time.

Ms. Haines noted that the Commission will need to have different phases for its congressional engagement. She requested that Commissioners be kept aware of conversations with members and committees so the efforts can be coordinated. She also requested feedback and timelines for different sorts of engagement. She asked staff to prepare talking points with the message that Commissioners should deliver in their conversations. Ms. Lowry said her team would put together this information. Chairman Heck said a priority target list will be developed. He also noted that there may be an opportunity for Commissioners to engage in September. He said after the July voting period staff will develop talking points for those conversations.

Ms. Haines also suggested including high-level staffers along with members as part of the engagement plan and recommended that Commissioners generate lists of the individual they know. Chairman Heck felt that staff outreach has been good thus far and thinks the focus after July should be on discussions with members. Mr. Khazei and Dr. Davidson requested detail on congressional outreach that has already occurred.

Commissioners then discussed third party organizations that the Commission should connect with prior to issuing the final report that are not currently on the Commission's radar. Several Commissioners talked about connecting further with the business community, potentially

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through the Business Roundtable. Vice Chair Gearan also suggested connecting with higher education organizations. Dr. Davidson suggested college student government associations.

Final Report Release Event

Ms. Lowry then turned to the final report release in March 2020. She circulated ahead of time a handout with preliminary thinking on the primary release event and stated her objective is to understand the Commission's goals and plans so that staff can begin to execute on them.

Ms. Haines suggested that each Commissioner return to the organizations where they have spoken—using the American Bar Association as an example—to brief the organizations on the Commission's recommendations. Commissioners seemed supportive of this idea.

Mr. Khazei recommended multiple events around the report. He mentioned Rhode Island and Flint, MI, as two locations where the Commission could hold events. In those places, the Commission could report not only on its proposals but also on the good local work that is being done.

Ms. James supported holding one big event with all Commissioners present followed by events around the country with smaller groups of Commissioners. She also recommended revisiting the locations where the Commission has gathered information, for example during the visits of 2018.

Vice Chair Gearan recommended that locations be tied to the Commission's legislative strategy. For example, it could make more sense to visit Springfield, MA, the home of the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, instead of returning to Nashua, NH, which is nearby.

Mr. Khazei recommended exploring ways to break through with the American public in a large-scale way such as holding a town hall on CNN. He also supported Mr. Kilgannon's recommendation to focus on states and recommended attending meetings of the National Governors Association and the United States Conference of Mayors. Noting that GEN McChrystal announced his national service platform at the Aspen Ideas Festival, he said he could arrange for the Commission to be invited there to speak as well. Vice Chair Wada suggested the SXSW Conference.

Vice Chair Wada had connected Ms. Lowry with Dan Solomon, an individual who had offered to prepare a public-service announcement. Ms. Lowry said she spoke to him and he will need a one-quarter lead time.

This led to a broader, albeit brief, discussion about how the Commission weaves in offers from outside entities to assist in the Commission's outreach efforts.

Commissioners then returned to the final report release event. Mr. Kilgannon recommended the Press Club, if the event occurs in Washington, DC, or a presidential library, if it occurs elsewhere. While he was comfortable with the Commission participating in conferences following the final report release, he felt strongly that the main event should be the Commission's and not part of any other organization's programming. Mr. Khazei suggested two events, one at a Democratic presidential library, the other at a Republican presidential library.

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Ms. James recommended holding the main event in Washington because the Congress and the President are the primary audiences and it will be critical not to lose that focus.

Ms. Skelly asked the Commission to consider what it values the most: the symbolism of a venue, the people in the room, and/or the press coverage potential. Others agreed with this framing of the question. Vice Chair Gearan noted that the press corps is in Washington. Commissioners concurred in holding the main event in Washington and then branching out to hold events elsewhere.

As for venues beyond Washington, Commissioners suggested the McCain Institute, the Kennedy Presidential Library, the Reagan Presidential Library, a military academy, and the locations of the pilot projects that the Commission hopes to announce. Commissioners generally agreed that following an initial event in Washington, the Commission would identify three other locations, one for each stream of service, with the Kennedy Presidential Library, the McCain Institute, and the Naval Academy as the early front-runners.

Executive Session

Beginning at 1120 CT, Commissioners held an executive session outside the presence of staff, after which they concluded the Commission's March meeting.

Prepared by Paul Lekas, General Counsel

Adopted by the Commission on April 24, 2019