



**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND PUBLIC SERVICE**

**Minutes of October 2019 Commission Meeting**

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (the Commission) held a meeting on October 16-17, 2019, at its offices in Arlington, VA. The entire meeting concerned 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 Allard
- Mr. Steve Barney
- The Honorable Dr. Janine Davidson (via phone as indicated)
- The Honorable Mark Gearan
- The Honorable Avril Haines (October 17 only)
- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck
- Ms. Jeanette James
- Mr. Alan Khazei
- Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
- Ms. Shawn Skelly
- The Honorable Debra Wada

Staff present:

- Paul Lekas, General Counsel
- Peter Morgan, Director of Operations
- Jill Rough, Director of Research and Analysis
- Sandy Scott, Director of Government Affairs and Public Engagement
- Other Commission staff

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October 16, 2019

**Business Meeting**

The Commission convened in Arlington at 0805 ET. All Commissioners were present, except for Ms. Haines and Mr. Allard; Mr. Allard arrived at 0820 ET. Dr. Davidson joined the meeting by telephone until approximately 1200 ET.

Chairman Heck moved to close this and other business meetings to occur on October 16-17, 2019, because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated. A motion was made and seconded, and all Commissioners present agreed.

Chairman Heck then moved to approve the internal minutes for the July 2019 meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the minutes subject to technical edits and clarifications.

Chairman Heck moved to approve the internal and external minutes for the September 2019 Commission meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to adopt both versions of the minutes subject to technical edits and clarifications.

Mr. Barney recommended that the Commission entertain a motion to close deliberation on recommendations. Chairman Heck stated that he would consider entertaining such a motion in January 2020. He further noted that the Commission considers the final report and recommendations pre-decisional and deliberative until the final report is ultimately released.

Review of Draft Final Report Text

Chairman Heck introduced deliberation on the draft text of the final report, which Commissioners had received ahead of the meeting. He requested that Commissioners offer high-level feedback, rather than line edits, as they work through the different sections.

*1. Introduction*

The session began with Dr. Davidson explaining her approach to the rewrite of the introduction. She explained that she sought to avoid discussion of polarization and crisis and instead to focus on what service does for the nation, with an emphasis on strong democracies and strong civil societies. She further explained that while she believed the moonshot construct to be important in the Commission's consideration of big ideas, she moved away from this metaphor and toward President Kennedy's call for Americans to serve their country in his 1961 inaugural address. She felt the moonshot metaphor would not resonate well with young people, that the Commission's vision is less targeted than a moonshot, and that the Commission does not intend to present its vision against the backdrop of an imminent peril as was the case with President Kennedy's moonshot.

Commissioners discussed several issues including the difficulty of language, words with a possible political bent, how positive the introduction should be, data on youth political knowledge, first-person pronouns, and the capitalization of "culture of service." They also considered edits offered by Ms. Haines. Commissioners recommended, following Ms. Haines

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suggestion, to use the phrase “spirit of service” to refer to the sense of service that has existed in the United States since its founding and continues today, with “culture of service” to refer to what the Commission proposes to develop, which would nurture, support, and promote the spirit of service by effectively building a stronger infrastructure for service across American society.

In the course of this discussion, Commissioners agreed to amendments to the draft introduction that would:

- ensure that the text matches a reading level closer to ninth grade without use of complicated words;
- reflect most of Ms. Haines’s edits except for her suggestion to capitalize “Culture of Service” and incorporate additional data points;
- create a callout box or boxes in different sections of the report to highlight the needs of the nation that service can address;
- enhance the discussion of how can meet the needs of the nation;
- reduce the use of the word “key”;
- in the third paragraph, delete from the word “unfortunately” at the end;
- delete the second paragraph and rework surrounding content to be less political;
- delete the word “tragic” from “tragic war”;
- edit the civic education paragraph to make it more consistent in length with the others;
- change “recruiters” to “recruiting” when discussing changes to military recruiting to show procedural changes rather than indicate a lack of support for individuals;
- move from the moonshot metaphor to President Kennedy’s call to service;
- change the target year for the Commission’s goals from 2032 to 2031, or 70 years from President Kennedy’s call to service;
- include the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) in the history of the Commission;
- ensure that Ms. Alice Falk, the final report copyeditor, receives Mr. Barney’s line edits; and
- delete the last sentence of the paragraph with the Washington quote on page 4.

Chairman Heck then called for a recess until 1000 ET.

2. Commissioner Letter

When the Commission reconvened, Mr. Barney asked Dr. Rough to ensure that mentions to the moonshot metaphor would be changed in the letter and throughout the rest of the report to match the new introduction. Commissioners discussed a separate acknowledgement section, which Dr. Rough stated would be included as an appendix. Commissioners then discussed particular words used in the letter and recommended further language to commend work already done. Ms. Skelly particularly liked the use of the word “revolution,” which she noted was used nowhere else in the final report.

3. Executive Summary

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Commissioners turned to the draft executive summary. They discussed several issues including development of the Commission’s vision without relying on the “moonshot” metaphor. The Commission considered examples of successful government programs separate from the moon landing, discussed the scope and definition of the word “American,” the phrase “the time is right” for selective service inclusion of women, and highlighting service as a rite of passage.

In the course of this discussion, Commissioners agreed to amendments to the draft executive summary that would:

- better incorporate the “spirit of service” and “culture of service” concepts;
- change the target year from 2032 to 2031;
- create a better descriptor of the Commission’s vision, to replace “A Service Moonshot”;
- include a reference in the early part of the text to the year of service concept;
- tighten the discussion of President Kennedy’s call to service and incorporate further examples of successful government projects to emphasize the scale of the Commission’s proposals;
- expand the discussion on selective service registration;
- ensure that the definition of “American” is explained in the text early on; and
- avoid callout boxes and any other break out text in the executive summary.

4. Main Text of Report

Chairman Heck reminded the Commission that all text would need to be locked by November 10. He then introduced discussion of the main text of the report, consisting on sections relating to civic education, cross-service initiatives, military service, national service, public service, selective service, and national mobilization. He noted that the Commission would consider a standalone chapter on extending registration to women on October 17.

In the course of this discussion, Commissioners agreed to amendments to the draft text that would:

- incorporate a standard way to describe jurisdictions of the United States to be inclusive of states, territories, insular and outlying areas, and tribal areas, particularly in the section on civic education;
- change “significant financial commitment” to “larger financial commitment” on page 5;
- avoid repetitive use of negative statements, such as the phrase “lack of...awareness” in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the military, national, and public service section;
- change “so-called military divide” to “frequently cited military divide”;
- permit split infinitives where such use better conveys the message;
- use the word “episodic” to help in differentiating national service from volunteerism, and further explain the difference with a callout box;
- enhance the discussion of needs of the nation—part of the case for service—through use of callout boxes, especially in the national service section (Ms. James specifically asked to review this content when ready);

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- change “will strengthen” to “to strengthen” on page 38;
- remove all usage of the word “balkanization” or “balkanized” and change to “fragmentation” or “fragmented”;
- balance the number of callout boxes among military, national, and public service to ensure a consistent look throughout the report;
- change “creation of culture of service” to “strengthening culture” on page 76 and change “every day” to “enduring requirement” at the end of the paragraph;
- rephrase sentences on registration compliance rates on page 83 (Jud Crane, Acting Deputy Director for Research, agreed to consult with Mr. Allard);
- ensure consistent headings throughout all sections, including selective service;
- change the phrasing of the Commission’s decision to maintain a draft contingency in paragraph 2 of page 84;
- simplify the sentences on voluntary alternatives on page 88;
- remove specificity and recommendations the Commission did not agree to from the language on deferments on page 82 in the third full paragraph by striking the details and moving directly to the recommendation; and
- make references to appendices and the implementation guide consistent throughout the report.

At 1220 ET, Chairman Heck then called for an hour-long recess.

**Business Meeting**

*Review of Recommendations and Implementation Guide*

The Commissioners reconvened at 1330 ET to review suggested changes and material issues involving the Commission’s recommendations and the implementation steps. Mr. Lekas led the discussion, using a draft of the annex with the issues highlighted to facilitate the conversation. Two overarching points made by the Commissioners were that they do not believe every recommendation requires bullets to detail implementation steps and they do not require staff to prepare legislative proposals for recommendations that seek appropriations without changes to law or new authorization from Congress.

Regarding recommendation 1b, Commissioners agreed with staff that the legislative proposal for the service-learning fund should replace the authorization for the Learn and Serve program, as that authorization has not been funded since 2010, and duplication in the U.S. Code of service learning, summer of service, and semester of service programs could generate confusion.

Regarding recommendation 8, the Commissioners discussed whether membership on the service platform should be open to all citizens and residents, should be more limited, or should be open to everyone. Mr. Kilgannon pointed out that there is already an age requirement, since most service opportunities require individuals to be an adult. Dr. Rough provided an example of a potential security concern, which might justify not permitting people who are neither residents nor citizens from joining the platform. Chairman Heck recommended that the organization

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building the platform should have the responsibility for determining what individuals should have access to the system, and this clarification was adopted.

Regarding recommendation 10b, Mr. Lekas explained that staff for the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) staff recommended that the ASVAB be offered online and in foreign languages. Chairman Heck opposed the foreign language version of the test, given that English comprehension is essential for military service. All Commissioners supported an online version.

Regarding recommendation 13a, Mr. Lekas explained that staff had prepared a draft resolution from Congress to encourage military secretaries to adopt certain personnel practices. Mr. Barney and Vice Chair Wada did not support this approach, and instead suggested that staff draft a simple directive saying that Secretaries must adopt the practices and then must report back to Congress on their progress. They believed legislation like this would more likely be successful than a resolution, which would likely be ignored. Similar direction was provided for the recommendation 24h, to create a public service program at the military service academies, and recommendation 25c, to adopt the Commission on Care's recommendations.

Regarding several recommendations, Mr. Lekas drew the Commissioners attention to the length of time that should be given to the President to report to Congress on the use of certain authorities. Ms. Skelly asked how many reports the Commission's recommendation require agencies to complete and suggested this is a question the Commission should be prepared to address next year.

Regarding recommendation 17b, Commissioners confirmed that they were comfortable with the definitions of opportunity youth and wraparound services that staff proposed. They sought clarification on the implementation language to ensure the recommendation addressed the correct sub-populations – opportunity youth, individuals in tribal areas, and individuals in rural areas.

Regarding recommendation 18a, Commissioners agreed that staff should develop the legislative proposal for a new national service fellowship proposal as replacing the ServeAmerica Fellowship program created by the Serve America Act. There followed a short debate about whether and how to name this new program. In the end, Commissioners agreed to use generic language—national service fellowship program—and leave a specific name to legislators or program administrators.

Regarding recommendation 23b, Mr. Lekas noted that the recommendation language would be updated to reflect that the extended NCE would be given to Returning Peace Corps Volunteers, since current employees already receive it for 36 months. Commissioners agreed to this change, and Ms. James asked that the abbreviation RPCV be added to the glossary of the final report.

Regarding recommendation 24a, Commissioners acknowledged and agreed that included the Federal Executive Boards in recruiting efforts targeting students and recent graduates, a suggestion from OMB, was wise.

Regarding recommendation 24b, Commissioners confirmed that their support of a recommendation to pay interns should be limited to the Executive Branch. They noted that extending this to congressional interns could harm prospects for passing the legislation.

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Regarding recommendation 24g, which calls for a revitalizing of the Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMFP), Mr. Lekas explained that as written, it would call for Congress to legislate on a program that was created by Executive Order. As a result, involving Congress means first creating the program in statute and then reorganizing it. He noted some support from staffers for the House Oversight and Reform Committee to consider legislation in this area. Chairman Heck suggested that the recommendation be revised to remove the role of Congress, and instead leave the reorganization of PMFP to the President. This approach was supported by the other Commissioners.

Regarding recommendation 27a, concerning the Cyber Talent Management System managed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Mr. Lekas noted that OPM has expressed skepticism about this program and encouraged the Commission not to emphasize it. Mr. Brian Collins shared his view that agencies would build on the DHS model, despite OPM's concerns, because it is the best system currently available. Commissioners did not recommend any changes to the recommendation.

Regarding recommendation 27c, Mr. Lekas pointed to a new proposed implementation step, added in response to an OPM concern, to permit cyber professionals to be transferred or detailed to other agencies in emergency situations. Chairman Heck noted that this would require more legal authority than OMB currently has, and several Commissioners raised administrative concerns. The consensus from the group was to drop the proposed language.

Regarding recommendation 28a, Commissioners agreed to a suggestion, raised by staff for the House Oversight and Reform Committee, to tie the cafeteria plan benefits to an inflation index. The argument in support of this approach is that it will make it easier for unions to support it. Mr. Barney suggested that a particular index does not need to be described in the legislation.

Regarding recommendation 32, which would clarify the purpose of the Selective Service System, Mr. Lekas raised two proposed wording changes. First, following a suggestion of SASC staff, would replace the phrase "armed strength" with "military strength," as the broader term helps support the overall message that conscription could be used to address multiple needs of the military. The Commission agreed to this change. Second, following a suggestion of Commission staff, would replace the phrase "to provide combat replacements" with "for combat arms positions." Commissioners discussed the accuracy of the proposed text, noting that only the Army and Marines would describe the positions as "combat arms." Commissioners also raised concerns about the messaging of this approach, and the importance of the "combat replacements" phrase in the historical Selective Service debate. In the end, the Commissioners supported retaining the terminology adopted during the July vote.

Regarding recommendation 41, Mr. Lekas highlighted that the staff proposed changing a recommendation to be directed to Congress, instead of the President, to require interagency mobilization exercises every five years. Mr. Allard asked why the timeline is every five years, and noted a concern that this might skip some administrations. Mr. Crane noted that the exercises would likely not involve political leadership, but that there was no problem changing the timeline to four years. Mr. Allard said that change to four years was not necessary.

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Regarding recommendation 38, Ms. James raised a concern that the implementation steps provided background and context at odds with the approach taken for other recommendations. Mr. Lekas noted the same; he described it as an anomaly and said it would be edited out.

Regarding recommendation 44, a new recommendation, the Commission opted to postpone consideration until October 17, 2019, to allow Ms. Haines to opine on staff's proposed formulation.

Chairman Heck moved to approve all changes to the recommendations discussed in this session. The motion was seconded and the Commission adopted all changes by voice vote.

At 1450 ET, the Commissioners took a 10-minute break.

*Discussion of Final Report Title and Cover*

From 1500 to 1550 ET, the Commission discussed potential titles and cover images. Dr. Rough initiated the conversation by explaining how the staff had developed the options presented to the Commissioners. Staff developed dozens of title options using key words highlighted previously by Commissioners and avoiding terms that were noted as being too controversial. The titles were then vetted by staff for messaging, audience, visual, and legal concerns. She noted that the goal was to develop titles that cover both parts of the mandate, tie into the introduction themes, and is short, punchy, memorable and inspiring. The five finalists presented were:

- Strengthening America Through Service
- Service: A National Priority
- United in Service
- Answer the Call
- Final Report of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (with no other title).

Commissioners brainstormed other options and discussed the pros and cons of the above list. The only new addition that gained support from Commissioners was "Inspired and Eager to Serve," derived from the Commission's original vision statement. Some Commissioners and staff noted this proposal would not connect well to the final report's discussion of draft registration or conscription.

Mr. Scott asked each Commissioner to address three questions: do they want a title or not, is there a title presented they cannot support, and is there a modification they want for a title. Most supported having a title. The titles "United in Service" and "Answering the Call" received minimal support. Mr. Scott noted that as a next step, he would consulting with experts on the following three options: (1) "Inspired and Eager to Serve"; (2) "Strengthening America Through Service"; and (3) "Service: A National Priority" (or, potentially, "...Imperative," "...Resource," or "...Tradition").

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Dr. Rough then turned the Commissioners attention to the three cover images that were developed by the graphics specialist, keeping the Commissioner's color scheme in mind. She again noted that many other options were developed and vetted by staff. The covers displayed:

- Several blue hands being raised,
- A blue field with an American flag in the background and a red stripe, and
- An American flag on the left with another flag out of focus in the middle.

Commissioners discussed initial impressions and immediately discarded the first option. Vice Chair Wada suggested a word cloud option, which the staff had prepared and was shared with the Commissioners. In the end, this option was not supported. Commissioners shared input on specific features of the remaining two options.

Chairman Heck stated that staff would prepare six cover models for the Commission to review at the November meeting: two versions with each of the three potential titles.

*Guidance to Staff*

From 1600 to 1700 ET, Commissioners split into small groups and met with Commission staff to discuss job search questions and postemployment plans. The Commission then recessed until the next morning.

**October 17, 2019**

**Business Meeting**

*Final Report Discussion*

The Commission reconvened at 0807 ET at its offices. All Commissioners were present. Dr. Davidson joined by telephone until approximately 0915 ET.

Chairman Heck introduced the review of the chapter on including women in the selective service system.

Dr. Rough explained that staff had taken the drafts prepared by Ms. Haines and Mr. Kilgannon and had merged them to match voices and format while endeavoring not to remove substance from either draft. Ms. Haines praised the effort to combine the drafts and identified key sentences omitted from the combined draft that she asked to be reintroduced.

Overall, Ms. James felt that the new version was a significant improvement on the previous version but was still concerned about long sentences. She expressed concern about various trigger words, such as "passionate," being used to describe advocates supporting the extension of registration but not supporting those who opposed extension. Ms. James raised additional issues, including overly long and complicated sentences and a need for detail regarding selective service court cases. Vice Chair Wada agreed with including more details about the selective service

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cases and noted that she felt this needed to remain in the main text and not moved to the footnotes.

Vice Chair Gearan addressed the balancing of the arguments in the chapter. He expressed some concern for the order of the chapter – addressing the con arguments, then the pro arguments, then setting out the Commission’s recommendation. He asked whether the approach taken in the chapter differed markedly to the approach taken in other parts of the report and felt that the length of this chapter could appear discordant given the Commission’s charge. Vice Chair Gearan requested Commissioner thoughts on whether the chapter as presented would be helpful to Congress, particularly in its attempt to balance the two sides of the argument.

Ms. Haines noted the unusual approach taken to this issue when compared with other issues addressed by the Commission. She asked whether this approach, without alternative views, would strengthen the report and its reception with Congress and others.

Mr. Khazei felt that the chapter read like a debate and suggested including a more fulsome discussion of the Commission’s recommendation up front, to be followed with a note about the Commission’s approach to this important issue and its interest in laying out all views on both sides. Vice Chair Wada concurred.

Ms. James agreed with putting a strong recommendation up front. She supported keeping the discussion of the “con” argument in the body of the report rather than fleshing it out in alternative views. She felt that the alternative view approach would make it seem as if the Commission were burying the issue. She noted that the Commission had heard from several people opposing the inclusion of women in the SSS and that they would want to see their views represented. Separately, Ms. James requested including a paragraph addressing the views of those who had spoken out against the draft and the SSS more broadly, notwithstanding the women registration issue. Dr. Rough said that is in the main text and offered to send it to Ms. James later. Vice Chair Gearan agreed with Ms. James about the importance of this paragraph.

Mr. Barney addressed the question posed by Vice Chair Gearan about whether the approach under consideration would be helpful to Congress and congressional staff. He felt that presenting both sides would be more helpful than presenting only the side supporting the Commission’s recommendation. He noted that the Commission’s position is unlikely to change the minds of those on the Hill supportive of the status quo, adding that those persons could be more inclined to oppose other changes recommended by the Commission if the status quo position is not presented in the report.

Vice Chair Gearan agreed that these voices need to be lifted up and represented but expressed concern about the sense of parity presented in the current draft of this chapter. He wondered if Congress would view the Commission as having spent three years and \$15 million only to arrive at the same place Congress left the debate. He noted that typically a dissenting opinion will follow a majority opinion and will differ in terms of length, optics, and sequencing, and felt the Hill would prefer more clarity on this issue.

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As to the suggestion that the Commission leaves Congress in the place as before, Mr. Barney noted that the Commission's report will show that there are no new arguments to either side and will demonstrate that the Commission was thoughtful and thorough about its review of those arguments in reaching its recommendation.

Ms. Haines suggested a variation on the approach taken in the current draft of the chapter, one that would include a more fulsome discussion of the Commission's recommendation up front, then provide the views in support of the decision, then address the views in support of the status quo as something of a "dissent" but without alternative views.

Chairman Heck stated that his goal in working through this issue is to avoid a situation requiring alternative views in an appendix. He felt that would not give enough credit and respect to those who shared their opinions with the Commission and would show a schism in the Commission. While he did not think that the current version left any arguments out, he supported including a stronger bottom line up front, as Mr. Khazei had suggested.

The Commission discussed further potential reactions on the Hill to presenting the recommendation on this issue and the discussions for and against in different manners.

Ms. James felt, as a former staffer, that the current version was the most helpful and she was opposed to a version that weaved in counterarguments. She did not oppose the pro and con order being flipped but she did not want to label the views opposing the Commission's recommendation as "dissenting."

Mr. Barney preferred keeping both sides of the argument in the main body. As to the Hill, he felt that the report provided additional information, as well as cover, for members of Congress to pursue changes in the law if they are inclined to do so.

Vice Chair Gearan then asked if the Commission would share which Commissioners voted which way. Chairman Heck said the Commission would not do that but that any individual Commissioner could choose to share their vote. If asked, Chairman Heck intends to respond that the Commission needed eight votes to adopt a recommendation and they had the requisite number for this recommendation.

Chairman Heck also emphasized that he believed the Commission was providing a lot of important research and context for Congress, even if "no new arguments were heard."

Mr. Kilgannon described the Commission's work as another step in the process in Congress' consideration of the issue. He explained that if Congress decided to extend registration to women, that would be the first of many decisions to be made, including how women will be added to the Selective Service System and how inductions and deferments would be processed. He said that he felt it essential to convey the seriousness of a decision to extend registration and identify the far-reaching impacts of such a decision on society at large. Mr. Kilgannon explained notwithstanding the approach taken in the body of the final report, he continues to feel strongly about submitting an additional view on the topic. He expressed interest, in particular, in writing separately to address the views of combat veterans with whom he has spoken. He also expressed interest in going on record with his position on the topic.

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Vice Chair Gearan reiterated his concern about the optics of the presentation of this topic and how the recommendation would be received because of the evenhanded approach to both sides of this issue. He noted that the text suggests the Commission recommended extending registration to women by a close margin rather than with a clear supermajority favoring the recommendation.

Ms. Haines emphasized that an overwhelming majority of the Commission supporting the recommendation to extend registration to women. She explained that the draft reflected a considerably toned-down version of her own position in an effort to avoid alternative views, noting that if any other Commission opted to submit alternative views, she, too, would submit a statement to convey her position on the issue. Ms. Haines then suggested that the chapter be revised to convey the Commission's decision, followed by the reasons supporting the Commission's decision, followed by a discussion of views heard in opposition. She noted that this approach would ensure presentation of both sides in the body of the final report without a need for statements of alternative views.

Dr. Davidson said she agreed with Ms. Haines' recommended approach for the chapter. She further recommended that the chapter be revised to make it more accessible to the reader, including by shortening the background discussion and using bold text for headers. As to alternative views, Dr. Davidson did not express a strong position one way or the other, noting that she did not believe their inclusion would hurt the Commission's report.

Chairman Heck asked Mr. Kilgannon for clarification on what he would propose to include in an alternative view statement. Mr. Kilgannon expressed interest in conveying the views of certain combat veterans with whom he has spoken – views that he said did not come before the Commission in its meetings or hearings. Vice Chair Wada noted that personal assessment of some combat veterans would not match the data-driven standard the Commission has applied to its research in this chapter and other parts of the report.

Ms. James, reflecting on the topic of personal assessments, noted that the report does not currently indicate that a majority of people who spoke on this topic to the Commission—a population, she acknowledged, is self-selected—felt that the time is right to extend registration to women, anecdotal evidence that further supports the Commission's decision. Mr. Khazei also highlighted that it was very rare that people would disagree with including women at all when the Commission heard from views around the country.

Returning to the issue of combat veteran views, Mr. Allard said that Mr. Kilgannon's concerns resonated with him. He explained that his struggles about whether to extend registration to women were rooted in the challenges of combat, and he offered to work with Mr. Kilgannon to prepare text to reflect this position.

Chairman Heck felt it appropriate for the report to include anecdotal information on this topic, even if not statistically significant, because it reflected what the Commission heard and many people around the country have argued this issue based on opinion rather than fact. He asked Mr. Kilgannon if incorporating his anecdotal evidence in the report would obviate the need for an alternate view section. Mr. Kilgannon said that this approach would address part of his

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concern but that he wanted to be on record with his position – either in an alternative view or in some other fashion. Mr. Khazei expressed support for Mr. Kilgannon having the space needed to express his views on this topic.

Chairman Heck summarized the consensus approach as follows: the chapter would be reordered to begin with a BLUF, followed by a discussion of arguments supporting the Commission’s position, followed by a discussion of the arguments against the Commission’s position. In addition, Commissioners would be afforded the opportunity to submit alternative view statements on this topic. Several Commissioners indicated interest in submitting alternative views.

Chairman Heck asked if Commissioners had interest in writing separately on any other topic. Ms. Skelly said she had considered writing separately on the need for an enduring, pre-mobilization registration system but agreed to defer.

The Commission clarified that in following the approach set out by Chairman Heck, the discussion of arguments in support of the Commission’s position would be framed as “the Commission’s view” rather than as “proponents argue,” and the arguments against extending registration to women would be framed as what the Commission heard rather than as the position of a minority of Commissioners.

The Commission addressed where additional views would appear and agreed that they would appear at the end of the chapter as the first appendix. Chairman Heck said that any alternative views would be subject to a word limit. Commissioners expressed interest in responding to others’ alternative views before finalizing their own. Dr. Rough said that she would work with Chairman Heck to figure out a word count and a timeline for alternate views.

Vice Chair Gearan sought input from staff about how the chapter would be received by the Hill. Mr. Lekas addressed input from SASC staff suggesting an expectation that the Commission make bold recommendations on the Selective Service System, which may include extending registration to women, and supported further clarity in expressing the Commission’s position. Mr. Scott concurred. Several Commissioners indicated that they felt the chapter, as restructured, would be sufficiently strong and would provide members of Congress on either side of this topic enough information to rely on for their own purposes. Ms. Haines expressed her preference to include counterarguments in the chapter but noted that other Commissioners may not agree.

The Commission then spoke briefly about whether to release the vote tally on this topic or others. Chairman Heck said that any Commission could express their vote but the current position is for the Commission not to release votes.

Chairman Heck then called for a recess until 1015 ET.

*Update on Government Affairs and Public Engagement*

From 1015 to 1055 ET, the Commissioners were briefed on the progress made by the Government Affairs and Public Engagement (GPE) staff in the past month, as well as their future plans for congressional engagement and speaking events.

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1. Congressional Engagements

Mr. Jeff McNichols, Deputy Director of GPE, began by reviewing recent meetings and upcoming meetings with Committee staff, individual members, and Executive Branch agencies. Mr. McNichols discussed staff's current efforts to provide technical assistance to individual members of Congress to develop and introduce bills relevant to issues under consideration by the Commission and to continue to work through key congressional committees towards including Commission recommendations in calendar year 2020 legislation.

The GPE team discussed its focus on identifying Republican champions, the most prominent choice being Senator Mitt Romney due to his strong legacy of service. Additional options include Senators Young, Tillis, Ernst, Sullivan, Hawley, Portman, Cotton, and Rubio. Mr. Barney inquired about whether any Republican staff had weighed in on the identification of a Republican Champion. Mr. McNichols replied that he had talked to SASC majority staff, in order to avoid stepping on Chairman Inhofe's toes, and they are aiding the Commission in reaching out to potential Republican champions. Mr. Khazei suggested that another good source would be Senator Bill Cassidy. Vice Chair Gearan asked the team if they had spoken to Max Stier, from the Partnership for Public Service, about identifying Republican champions, noting that the Partnership has artfully navigated a communication on the benefits of federal service. Mr. Khazei also recommended engaging Rep. David Price, and Mr. Allard added that he is well acquainted with Rep. Price.

Mr. Scott asked whether there are other congressional members the Commissioners recommend engaging or with whom they have a connection. Mr. Khazei proposed Senators Jean Shaheen and Kirsten Gillibrand. Mr. Barney agreed, emphasizing that Sen. Gillibrand has a strong network and is skilled at moving bipartisan legislation.

Vice Chair Wada concluded this discussion by noting that the major question is whether or not the Commission is looking towards Romney to assist in coordinating the entirety of the congressional outreach. Mr. Khazei suggested that Senator Romney needed to be asked if he is willing to do so. Chairman Heck proposed meeting with him on November 15, around the next Commission meeting, to pose this question.

2. Speaking Engagements

Ms. Morgan Levey, External Relations Officer, began by reviewing four recent events, and then describing some of the upcoming engagement opportunities. With regard to the recent events, Chairman Heck said that he recently gave a speech at the Reserve Officer Association. He said his speech was well received. He noted that all of the attendees had been older white men, but also that they expressed overwhelming support for mandatory service. Chairman Heck also participated on a panel on national service hosted by the Brookings Institution.

Vice Chair Gearan inquired about the upcoming business roundtable in the area of Arkansas, and noted that he is acquainted with Josh Bolten, President and CEO of Business Roundtable. When asked if that is the same organization as the speaker at the Commission's launch, Ms. Levey

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clarified that it was not, but assured the Commissioners that there has been and will continue to be communication with the organizations we have hosted in the past or who have hosted us.

The Commissioners then asked how many events they should anticipate participating in each month. Staff noted that there will be greater clarity in November, but the goal is to have 4-6 events a month until March, and then to increase to 8-12 events a month from March until the end of June.

Mr. Allard added that the Library of Congress holds monthly meetings for members and staff. He recommended that the Commission attempt to sync with that schedule. Other suggestions raised by Commissioners included the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the United Way conference, the Points of Light conference, and VFW and American Legion events. Vice Chair Gearan added that if the Commission can get the attention of speakers at these events, they may incorporate our concepts into their presentations.

Mr. Scott pointed out that the Commissioners can mention their work even in a personal capacity, and Mr. Lekas cautioned that it is possible to convert personal activities into official ones and to take care depending on the nature of the personal activity.

*Administrative Issues*

For approximately twenty-five minutes, the Commissions discussed a few final details with the staff.

Mr. Lekas gave an update on the Fifth Circuit appeal involving a challenge to male-only registration. He circulated a summary of the brief filed by appellees (lower court plaintiffs). He reiterated that the key issue is whether or not the *Rostker* case is considered binding precedent notwithstanding a change in the underlying facts.

Chairman Heck requested input on recommendation 44, which the Commission endorsed in concept at the September meeting, to designate a lead national mobilization official within the staff of the National Security Council. Ms. Haines endorsed the draft of the proposed recommendation and stated that she believed the White House would be the right location for an interagency national mobilization coordinator. Mr. Crane noted that DoD officials also supported this approach as a way to avoid a turf war. Chairman Heck moved to adopt the recommendation, which was seconded. The Commission adopted the recommendation by voice vote.

Chairman Heck revisited the issue of additional views. He informed Commissioners that they would have until the opening of business on November 4 to provide additional views to staff and that staff would compile the additional views and circulate them along with a reworked gender chapter to the Commission by close of business on November 4. The Commission would then discuss the additional views and the reworked chapter at its meeting on Friday, November 15. He said that no extensions would be offered, and that he and Dr. Rough had decided on a 550-word limit for each additional view.

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Ms. Haines turned the Commission's attention to the draft introduction that the Commission reviewed, in her absence, on October 16. She requested clarification on how the report would address the needs of the nation. She explained the importance of this topic to the overall theory of the case. She stressed that without addressing the topic, the report would lack a clear rationale for funding the recommended programs and increasing overall participation in service. Ms. Haines outlined what she described as three key arguments that the report should include:

- Improving the recruiting and diversity of the military permits the nation to address the civilian/military divide while also making us more competitive against other nations;
- Growing national service will help address many community needs; and
- Investing in the best talent for public service positions will ensure we will be the most effect in servicing the country and will not fall behind other nations.

Dr. Rough recounted the discussion from the October 16 meeting. She noted concerns and raised the option of addressing this line of argument in a lengthy call-out box in the introduction. Mr. Kilgannon noted that the Commission had not objected to the substance of the argument but did feel that the proposed text could be too detailed for the introduction. After further discussion, the Commission decided to keep the introduction focused on overarching justifications for the Commission's proposals, with more detailed information on needs of the nation in a call-out box in the section of the report dealing with national service, and additional content as needed in other sections of the report..

**Executive Session**

At 1120 ET, Commissioners held an executive session outside the presence of staff for approximately forty minutes. During the executive session, Commissioners discussed an approach to the gender chapter discussed during the business meeting. It was decided that the Commission would endeavor to issue its report without alternative views. In lieu of this, the Commission agreed to include in the gender chapter (a) text addressing views of combat veterans opposed to extending registration to women, which would be drafted by Mr. Kilgannon and Mr. Allard, along with (b) text addressing views of combat veterans in favor of extending registration, which would be drafted by Vice Chair Wada and Ms. Haines. Mr. Kilgannon agreed to confirm his position on submitting an alternative view no later than Monday, October 21. In addition, the Commission decided that the gender chapter should indicate that the Commission's vote was not unanimous on the proposal to extend registration to women.

They then adjourned until their next meeting on November 14, 2019.

Prepared by Paul Lekas, General Counsel

Adopted by the Commission on November 14, 2019