

STATEMENT BY

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Introduction

Senator Akaka, Senator Voinovich, Distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the Civilian Personnel of our Army. Army Civilians provide vital support to Soldiers

and Families in this era of persistent conflict. They share full responsibility for mission accomplishment by delivering combat support and combat service support – at home, abroad, and on the battlefield. More than ever, Army Civilians are an absolutely essential component of readiness.

Today, the Army's Civilian Corps is over 287,000 strong with 5,600 currently serving in harm's way in the U.S. Central Command area of operations. My testimony today provides you my assessment of the challenges facing the Army Civilian Corps, the Human Capital Strategy and supporting actions the Army will undertake in the coming years to address these challenges. I will share some key data that reflects the scope of our recruitment challenges as well as some key performance metrics. Most importantly, I will share initiatives that the Army has taken to invigorate its outreach recruitment efforts for the civilian talent it requires.

Strategic Challenges

The Army's Civilian Human Resources (HR) community is challenged to meet the Army's increasing civilian labor requirements. Our strategic planning tools and means of approaching ensure that our efforts are grounded on factual information, mission requirements and cognizance of external environment influencers like the economy, employment trends, and the civilian labor force (CLF). A number of mission critical occupations are impacted by shortfalls in the civilian labor market. These occupations include Civil Engineers, Electronic Engineers, Environmental Engineers, Geologists, Statisticians, Education Services, Transportation Specialists, Environmental Protection Specialist, and IT Specialists. Based on our assessments we continue to develop and improve our human capital strategic planning efforts to stay ahead of the any potential shortfalls.

In 2008, the Department of Army Civilian HR professionals filled over 122,000 recruit actions; 48,000 of which were external hires new to the Army Civilian Workforce. To fill these positions, the Army opened 81,620 vacancy announcements. Almost 6.2 million applications were submitted and processed. This represents an average of 64 applications per vacancy. While there is rarely a vacancy that does not attract some applicants, there are critical hard-to-fill-jobs for which traditional recruiting methodologies do not produce a sufficient number

of well-qualified candidates. On the other end of the spectrum a vacancy announcement at one Army installation generated 2,634 applicants. The problem is how to focus on reducing the number of applicants to a list of the best qualified applicants using job-related criteria.

While we have been successful in growing the Army's civilian workforce over the last few years, we will significantly stress our capacity to meet known and projected hiring initiatives over the next few years. The Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) of 2005 will require the movement of over 23,000 positions to different geographical areas. Our analysis of past BRAC actions indicates that traditionally only 30% of the current work force will move with their current organization. This projection may move upward based upon today's economy. We project that over 56,000 additional BRAC recruitment actions must be filled between now and fiscal year (FY) 2011 to provide Commanders the talent needed to meet critical missions. This is on top of the 120,000 actions needed to sustain current operations. The Army projects hiring up to 4,000 employees as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and a significant number of new civilians as part of current in-sourcing initiatives.

Strategic Recruitment Planning Efforts

Our analytic and forecasting capabilities, as well as our approach to workforce planning, has helped the Army join the ranks as one of the best places to work in the federal government for 2007. This 2007 ranking was determined by the Partnership for Public Service and American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation. We are aggressively working to improve our human capital strategic planning capability and infuse our human capital initiatives with workforce analytics. Examples include our data warehouses which provide decades of data on key personnel attributes, demographics and transactions the Army uses to conduct trend analysis and track occupational changes across the Civilian Corps enterprise as well as by organizational unit. We regularly project approaching retirements and hiring needs with a significant degree of precision; these projections help target recruitment needs and serve as the basis for allocation of centrally-funded intern positions. Our occupational

hiring levels are tracked against the projected recruitment needs making adjustments as required. The Army's civilian occupational requirements are also evaluated against high demand occupations in the Civilian Labor Force so that we can develop future recruitment strategies ahead of potential shortages

Army civilian voluntary retirements are projected to remain stable for the next five to six years. Depending on economic trends we may face significant retirements beginning in FY15 as the number of retirement eligible employees under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) begins to increase. As this eligible population reaches the retirement window, the Army faces a contraction of the number of 33-45 year old workers in the civilian labor force which is a key target group of recruitment for the Army. The number of retirements of employees under FERS is more dependent on the performance of financial markets as this is a key component of employees' annuities. To date, we have not observed any notable differences in retirement patterns based on the current economic conditions although the housing market and unemployment levels have affected current employee's mobility, attrition, and the number of applicants. We will continue to closely track these patterns and determine appropriate strategies to mitigate any emerging challenges.

Recruitment Processes and Automated Staffing Tools

The Army civilian workforce relies on automated tools and technology to manage our hiring processes. We adopted a single resume format that can be used for any vacancy within the Army civilian workforce and their resume is on file, it is easy to self-nominate for any vacancy. We are exploring options today that will more specifically target candidate pools and data mine existing resume repositories to identify potential candidates that possess the competencies we need. While applicants are required to use a web-based resume builder to apply for positions, Army provides them real time access to an automated system that gives them the status of every position for which they have applied. They know when their application has been received and processed, whether they have been determined qualified and/or eligible, and whether they were referred to the selecting official. They are also able to quickly learn when a selection has been made. At any stage in the process, they are provided access to HR staff via an automated help desk that can address their questions regarding decisions that have been made in regards to their application.

It is often challenging for the HR professional to adequately use automated staffing tools/technology to identify from the candidates' resumes who are the best qualified. Often the HR specialist must manually intervene to ensure criteria used to rank applicants do not inadvertently filter out well qualified candidates, or conversely, put applicants on the referral list who do not meet the hiring official's requirements. This manual intervention can affect the length of time it issues a referral list and impact applicant's perceptions of the transparency of the process. In addition, the Army's civilian workforce is continuing to increase in the professional and administrative occupations requiring more skilled candidates in fields such as medical and acquisitions with mid-level experience which require more screening than unskilled labor.

Currently, the Army and other Department of Defense (DoD) services are working with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and vendors to pilot a replacement automated staffing tool that will meet the needs of the Army civilian workforce. We anticipate initiating a pilot of a new application soon to determine if we can improve the applicant experience, the quality of referral lists and streamline the current processes. In this regard, we have used the OPM model to establish an end-to-end hiring process that will satisfy customer expectations and mission demands.

Recruitment Strategies, Authorities, and Outreach Efforts

The Army regularly uses nine direct hire authorities to expedite hiring. For example, we utilize these authorities in 24 health care occupations, and in 5 engineer occupations that support recovery efforts in New Orleans from Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. We also use this tool for 82 medical positions to support Walter Reed's mission to care for our Nation's Wounded Warriors. We have also begun to use the Department of Defense Expedited Hiring Authority for Acquisition Positions. The Army believes this tool will be used extensively to fill our mid and senior level contracting positions.

The Army has also aggressively recruited for mental health care professionals and doctors, nurses, clinical psychologists and clinical social workers. Since March 2009, we participated in 11 jobs fairs in Baltimore, Md.; Los Angeles, Calif.; San Antonio, Texas; Chicago, Ill.; Columbus, Ohio; Houston,

Texas; New Orleans, La.; and New York City, N.Y.. Our recruitment efforts have resulted in 441 new employees to the Army.

Recruitment efforts for entry level positions are generally not problematic. We successfully used the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP) appointing authority and Student Career Experience Program to hire new workers to fill gaps in our mission critical occupations. As of December 2008, there were 4,088 employees under the Federal Career Intern Program. We have 1,728 centrally funded interns and project hiring 1,088 more this fiscal year. In addition, since 2001, Army made 4,907 Student Career Experience Program appointments and converted 58.7% of those students to permanent civil service positions. Agency managers at all levels are restructuring vacant positions and filling them at developmental levels.

To address hiring needs associated with the BRAC 2005 actions, a partnership between the Army and the local community was established in Fort Knox, Ky. Community representatives from nine counties in central Kentucky are promoting private sector involvement in the workforce investment system and serve as an advisory body to local education and training providers. The Fort Knox Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) and the local community collaborated early to help the region respond to growth opportunities. The parties collaborated to conduct a comprehensive workforce study that was used to educate the local community, employers, educators and Federal leaders in recruitment and outplacement activities. Federal hiring symposiums in the spring and summer of 2008 resulted in more than 1,000 potential job seekers. A community effort was launched to inform college students of future Army employment opportunities at Fort Knox. An aggressive publicity campaign as well as a recruitment video resulted in outreach to more than 1,200 students on 17 campuses.

A major recruitment effort at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. in February 2009 resulted in over 2,500 job applicants for the Army's Communications-Electronics Lifecycle Management Command and Team Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance. The event focused on recruiting mid to senior level job candidates for the participating organizations. The job fair was held in partnership with the Harford Community College, Susquehanna Workforce Network, and Harford County's

Economic Development. It was successful due to the large number of attendees and the professional processes used to both educate and manage the vast number of attendees. The command anticipates having 300 of these applicants added by the end of July 2009.

In April 2009, Fort Riley, Kansas held its second Hiring Heroes Career Fair. More than 400 Wounded Warriors, their spouses, and family members who serve as care providers, local active duty soldiers, veterans, and their spouses attended this well publicized event. Seventy-eight private industry and DoD vendors participated. During the six-hour event, 299 interviews were conducted and 24 Army civilian personnel job offers were extended throughout the day. Seventy-nine potential additional job offers were reported by vendors via exit surveys.

The U.S. Army Medical Command conducted a series of recent job fairs and outreach efforts to attract candidates for physician, nurses, and mental health professionals. Fairs conducted in April 2009 include: National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, San Antonio, Texas; Nurse Week Career Fair, Seattle, Wash.; Society for Social Work Leadership and Healthcare, New Orleans, La.; American Society of Addiction Medicine, New Orleans, La.

These job fairs and recruiting efforts are just a few examples of hundreds of similar events conducted across the Army. At the command and activity level, managers, with the support of the HR professionals, are investing in more effective targeted recruitment strategies to fill the ranks of their organizations. In many cases, the traditional practice of passively posting vacancy announcements does not work. The conduct of targeted recruitment and job fairs is an investment in time and resources that managers have gradually accepted as necessary. We continue to aggressively work with DOD and OPM to provide managers the tools and authorities needed to effectively compete in local, regional or national labor markets.

In 2008, Army spent \$21.5M on civilian recruitment incentives, \$13.7M on relocation incentives and approximately \$15.M on retention incentives. This \$50.2M investment was primarily used to attract and retain engineers, medical professionals, and research scientists. The authority to repay student loans is becoming more widely used by managers to attract the civilian talent they need

in critical mission occupations. Since 2001, the Army has disbursed \$11M to repay student loans for our civilian employees. In 2008, the total disbursement for this program was \$4.2M, indicating that its use is accelerating.

We are partnering with DoD, OPM, and the Partnership for Public Service to establish a pipeline for employees of companies downsized in the current recession to access Army and DoD vacancies which match their career fields. In partnership with our military recruiters, we are also including material on civilian employment to promote a continuum of service with the Army and include outreach to candidates that may not meet the requirements for military service but are highly qualified to serve in civilian opportunities.

In 2007, the Army proposed a new noncompetitive appointment authority for the spouses of military members who were killed or totally disabled in the line of duty. These military spouses are being called upon to be the chief source of income for their families, but without current federal employment status, have no entry to federal jobs absent the current competitive examination process. This initiative resulted in the Publication of Executive Order (EO) 13473, signed on September 25, 2008 by the President.

The Army's Wounded Warrior Program works with the Army's Civilian HR professionals to match severely wounded, medically retired soldiers for Army civilian job vacancies to match the wounded warrior's job skills and geographic preferences. The Army has employed over 100 wounded warriors and over 700 are employed across the Federal Government.

To take full advantage of our civilian workforce's potential, the Army continues to work with OSD to refine and eventually implement a comprehensive civilian competency management system (CMS). The CMS will establish competency-based career paths and guides for use by supervisors and employees in determining training and developmental needs for individual career planning.

Hiring new employees is only one component of the human resources life cycle management process. The Army is making significant investments into leader development initiatives at all grade levels to provide employees the competencies they need to be successful.

The Army recognizes that it must invest in its civilian human resources community. In the last year, several hundred new HR professionals were hired to meet expanding workload requirements and to fill the void created by retirements and voluntary losses.

The civilian human resource community is effectively partnering with the Army's Accessions Command and Human Resources Command to leverage the capabilities of that network in marketing civilian job opportunities to provide veterans who leave the Army information on how to apply for civilian positions and utilize their veteran's preference. Currently 48% of new civilian Army hires are former military.

Summary

Army leaders at all levels recognize the strategic value of human capital planning and view civilians as strategic investments. We have improved our recruitment of qualified talent and much more is underway. We have human capital data that spans decades and are improving our capability to utilize it more effectively in the overall management of the Army and will continue to aggressively expand our outreach and recruiting programs.

The Army considers the Department of Defense, its sister services and the Office of Personnel Management key strategic partners and we engage on a daily basis to address recruitment challenges.

We employ a dedicated cadre of civilian human resource professionals, which like much of the Army's uniform workforce, is stressed by the significant demands placed on them the last few years. These dedicated public servants understand the importance of the work and continue to deliver impressive measurable results. We are committed to continual improvement of our existing processes for managers, employees and applicants.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you here today. I look forward to addressing your questions and concerns.