Military Family Readiness Council Meeting 08 Dec 2009
Executive Summary

On Tuesday, December 8, 2009 the second Military Family Readiness Council was held in the Pentagon Conference Center. The purpose of this forum was to vote on the substance of the Council’s first report to Congress. A secondary function of the meeting was to discuss other issues pertinent to military families.

A full transcript of the meeting is provided at Enclosure (1). Members, advisors, and public present during the meeting are listed in Enclosure (2). Materials used during the meeting are provided at Enclosure (3).

The meeting was opened by the Council’s Chairwoman, Mrs. Gail H. McGinn, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Plans), Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness). CDR Quinn Skinner USN, Designated Federal Officer, then reviewed rules and regulations governing Federal Advisory Committees.

Mr. Ed Kringer, the Director, Military Community and Family Policy State Liaison and Education Opportunities Office, followed CDR Skinner with a brief on the Interstate Compact on educational opportunity for military children. Mr. Kringer discussed the ability of DOD’s State Liaison Office to positively impact Military Family issues at a state level. The State Liaison Office focuses on ten key annually reviewed state-level issues for military members and their families. Mr. Kringer stated that his office’s function was to educate, not lobby, state policymakers and leaders on these issues. In addition, his office provides the states with examples of best practice legislation, expert testimony, and most importantly, family members, service members, commanders, and senior enlisted advisors to talk about the impact individual issues on service members and their families. Mr. Kringer discussed the “Top Ten” issues his office is pursuing for 2010, ranging from child custody to childcare, predatory lending, and unemployment compensation for military spouses. The key issue on which Mr. Kringer focused his brief was “minimizing school disruption for military children” as they move from state to state. Mr. Kringer discussed the ability of an “Interstate Compact,” established through his office and including 26 member states and DoDEA, to affect change on the issue of school disruption caused by military moves. The member states have put several guidelines into action to help ease this transition. These measures include easing school records transfers, course work compatibility between states and honors courses eligibility state to state. The 26 states who are members encompass 81 percent of the children in military families. Mr. Kringer concluded his brief stating that his office is continuing work on educating states and military families on the Interstate Compact and its strengths and limitations for assisting military families.

CDR Skinner then summarized assessment efforts that took place in 2009. Referencing Tabs P through U in the briefing binder provided (Enclosure (3)), CDR
Skinner discussed various studies conducted in 2009 assessing the state of military members, families and children.

Upon discussion of the various studies, GEN Chiarelli entered into a discussion of TRICARE benefits for Guard and Reserve Members and Families, specifically in regards to TRICARE Reserve Select. Ms. Nancy Boyda, DASD (RA) Manpower and Personnel, concluded the discussion with a statement of current TRICARE efforts to correct known problems as well as her intention to get Health Affairs involved.

The meeting was then turned over to Mr. Tommy Thomas, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. Mr. Thomas facilitated discussion about the substance of the Council’s report, based upon the preliminary recommendations generated at the last meeting. Participants were then directed to the draft report containing the 11 recommendations from the previous council meeting. Representatives were then directed that voting would take place on all 11. The 11 recommendations as well as voting results follow.

1. Incorporate metrics on the implementation of family care plans, to help address child custody issues.
   - The Council assessed that as overseas contingency operations have continued, the number of child custody cases has increased. The Council also assessed that custody issues are routinely resolved by Family Care Plans.
   - This recommendation is intended to measure Total Force compliance with having Family Care Plans in place prior to deployments, as a complement to [new or imminent] policy set forth in a [upcoming or new] Department of Defense instruction.

   Was changed to:
   1. Measure Total Force compliance with having Family Care Plans in place prior to deployments.
      - This recommendation is intended to measure Total Force compliance with having Family Care Plans in place prior to deployments, as a complement to [new or imminent] policy set forth in a [upcoming or new] Department of Defense instruction.

   Recommendation # 1, as re-written, was passed.

2. Consider using Military HOMEFRONT to communicate and clarify program access and eligibility to military family constituencies.
   - The Council assessed that many military families do not understand their eligibility for available programs. Providing an online resource with a concise summary or matrix may be an effective way of presenting this data to military families.
The Military HOMEFRONT website was proffered as a good venue for this summary, since this website is owned by DOD, and is not subject to the contractual restrictions on content inherent with many other resource websites.

Recommendation #2 was deferred until the next Council meeting so members could assess whether or not publishing the eligibility matrix on Military HOMEFRONT and then linking it on websites such as MilitaryOneSource was a sufficient solution. Representatives will also consider whether or not the recommendation requires Congressional oversight or could be accomplished without it.

3. Address the needs of medically retired severely injured service members as it relates to childcare needs.
   - The Council assesses there may be a program or policy gap in the provision of child care for medically retired severely injured service members.
   - This recommendation stemmed from the frequent need for respite childcare among military families supporting a severely injured service member who is unlikely to return to his or her prior physical capacity.

Recommendation #3 “address” was changed to “assess” and then passed by members.

4. Review reintegration programs in light of today’s operational tempo and dwell time realities.
   - There was substantial discussion among members of the Council on whether reintegration challenges were being addressed by present programs at the proper level, frequency, and milestones in the lives of military families.
   - The Council assesses that there is not a clear roadmap of care for members and families who need help. There are multiple service providers available, but the member/family may not have enough direction about where to go first.
   - DoD should consider developing a matrix or other decision aid to help achieve the clarity desired by military families.

Recommendation #4 was passed as is.

5. Explore empowering peer-based care to address the needs of families who are newly bereaved, capitalizing on existing strengths of military families.
   - The Council assesses that, while the Military Service casualty offices have done outstanding work in supporting military families suffering loss, DoD can build on this success by incorporating some of the successful practices of non-governmental organizations.
- This recommendation stems from the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors’ ongoing success in training the surviving spouses in counseling others who later experience bereavement.

**Recommendation #5 was passed as is.**

6. **Leverage existing technology to integrate the delivery of benefits at the point of casualty across all Federal agencies.**
   - The Council assesses that technology exists now to provide survivors with the benefits information from multiple federal agencies almost immediately after bereavement, and recommends this opportunity be explored and resourced, as appropriate.

**Recommendation #6 was passed as is, but later advised to be combined with recommendation #9.**

7. **Review instruction for and delivery of school-age, preschool and hourly childcare, in view of resources available “outside the gates” of installations.**
   - The Council assesses that DoD has a significant gap in meeting its constituents’ childcare needs, as this is a consistent theme in the feedback from military families.
   - The Council concurs with present efforts by DoD to expand the availability of nationally-accredited child care both on-and off-installations, and recommends this instruction review as a means of ensuring all the resources are considered.

**Was changed to:**

7. **Review instruction for and delivery of school-age, preschool and hourly childcare, both on and off installations in view of resources available both on-and off of installations.**
   - The Council assesses that DoD has a significant gap in meeting its constituents’ child care needs, as this is a consistent theme in the feedback from military families.
   - The Council concurs with present efforts by DoD to expand the availability of nationally-accredited child care both on-and off-installations, and recommends this instruction review as a means of ensuring all the resources are considered.

**Recommendation #7, as re-written was passed.**

8. **Ensure adequate transition services in light of unemployment rates and diverse needs of separating members, including those of wounded warriors.**
○ The Council assesses that many transition programs are generic, and not sufficiently stratified or tailored to meet the diverse needs of individual Service Members concluding their military service.
○ The Council will review the strategic action plan generated by the ODUSD (WWCTP) when promulgated.
○ The Council recommends that transition programs be made to be adaptable to the needs of individual Service Members and their Families.

Recommendation # 8 was changed to:

8. Ensure adequate transition services in light of diverse needs of separating members, including those of wounded warriors.
   ○ The Council assesses that many transition programs are generic, and not sufficiently stratified or tailored to meet the diverse needs of individual Service Members concluding their military service.
   ○ The Council will review the strategic action plan generated by the ODUSD (WWCTP) when promulgated.
   ○ The Council recommends that transition programs be made to be adaptable to the needs of individual Service Members and their Families.

Recommendation # 8 passed as re-written.

9. Leverage existing technology and social networking tools to pursue improved communication with families.
   ○ The Council assesses that websites provided by the Military Services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) have been instrumental in reaching constituents in the virtual realm. However, further use of the “new media” is needed to effectively communicate with the next generation of Service members and military families.

Recommendation # 9 was voted to be combined with Recommendation # 6.

10. Sustain current spouse employment programs and initiatives, including continued funding of the My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) program.
   ○ The Council assesses that military spouse employment, including the ability of these spouses to resume their careers after relocation, continues to be a significant contributor to the financial and psychological readiness of military families.
The Council recommends that current programs continue to be funded, including the “MyCAA” program, which provides funding for licensure and certification programs supporting careers that can be resumed without disruption after relocation.

**Recommendation #10 passed as is.**

11. Submit a Unified Legislative Budget (ULB) proposal to adjust travel policy and regulations to better accommodate participation of non-dependent family members and designated representatives at Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events.

- The Council assesses that the present travel policy and regulations contribute to mixed messages being provided to military families invited to Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) events. Unit Commanders often require their service members to attend, and encourage families to attend, but are unable in many cases to provide compensation for travel, lodging, and incidental expenses incurred by families during these events.

- Further, the social support networks of these returning warriors often extend outside enrolled dependents: e.g., parents, grandparents, and friends. This broader network is not afforded any compensation or incentive for their attendance at YRRP events.

- The Council concurs with the previous and ongoing assessments of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, and recommends that office submit a ULB proposal to effect changes in these regulations that would compensate or incentivize the attendance at YRRP events of extended family or other designees named by the Service Members involved.

**Recommendation #11 was passed as is.**

An additional agenda item was added to the agenda for the next meeting based on a discussion about standard metrics across the services for Military Family Programs. The additional agenda item for next meeting will look to develop common metrics to measure the success of Military Family Readiness Programs.

A brief discussion among participants ensued surrounding the Exceptional Family Member Program and the current initiatives surrounding it.

Mrs. Sheila Casey, Special Advisor to the Council, discussed the continued need for quality affordable childcare and workers to staff them, as well as an agreement that Service Members and their Families need one central website to go to for information.

Ms. Gail McGinn, DUSD(Plans), and Performing the Duties of the USD(P&R) made closing remarks and adjourned the meeting.
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY FAMILY READINESS COUNCIL

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2009
1:00 P.M. to 2:42 P.M.

PENTAGON CONFERENCE CENTER
ROOM B6
PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIRPERSON GAIL H. McGINN

Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Plans), Performing the
Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness)

CDR QUINN SKINNER, USN

Designated Federal Officer

TOMMY T. THOMAS, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Military
Community and Family Policy)

MS. BONNIE CARROLL

(Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors/Member)

MS. KELLY HRUSKA

(National Military Family Association/Member)

MR. MICHAEL LANDERS

(Armed Services YMCA/Non-Voting Rep for RADM Gallo)

USA:

GEN PETER CHIARELLI

(Member)

SGM JOHN HEINRICHES

(Non-Voting Rep for SMA Preston)

USMC:

MS. SHERYL MURRAY

(Non-Voting Rep for Gen Amos)

SGTMAJ RONALD GREEN

(Non-Voting Rep for SgtMajMC)

USN:

ADM JONATHAN GREENERT

(Member)

MCPON WEST

USAF:

GEN CARROLL H. "HOWIE" CHANDLER

(Member)

CMSAF JAMES ROY

(Member, Joining by VTC)

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PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):

MILITARY FAMILY READINESS COUNCIL ADVISORS:

MRS. SHEILA CASEY

MR. ARTHUR J. MYERS, Principal Director, Military Community and Family Policy

NANCY BOYDA, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs, Manpower and Personnel)

COL CORY LYMAN, OASD(Reserve Affairs)

JACKIE GARRICK, Principal Director, Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy

VEE PENROD,

Principal Director, Military Personnel Policy

DR. GARY MATTeson, M.D., ODASD(Health Affairs)

Director, Clinical and Program Policy Integration

MR. ALEX BAIRD, National Guard Bureau

BG WALTER GOLDEN, DEPUTY J1, THE JOINT STAFF

MS. SHERRI WARD, ODUSD(Civilian Personnel Policy)

ALSO PARTICIPATING:

MR. ED KRINGER

Director, State Liaison and Voluntary Education Office

CDR QUINN SKINNER, Designated Federal Officer
1. Welcome and Introductions
   By Ms. Gail McGinn, DUSD (Plans), Performing the Duties of the USD (P&R)
2. Federal Advisory Committee Act Rules and Restrictions
   By CDR Quinn Skinner, USN, Designated Federal Officer
3. Brief: Interstate Compact
   Briefer: Mr. Ed Kringer, Director State Liaison and Voluntary Education Office
4. Brief on Data from Council
   Briefer: Representative from the Office of the DUSD (MC&FP)
5. Review of and Voting on Council's DRAFT Annual Report
   By Mr. Tommy T. Thomas, DUSD(MC&FP) Facilitator
6. Discussion: Consistency of Family Support Across Services
   By Council
7. Discussion: Service Exceptional Family Member Programs
   By Council
8. Discussion of Other Items
   By Council
9. Closing Remarks
   By Ms. Gail H. McGinn

Enclosure (1)
P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(1:00 P.M.)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Welcome. I think we need to go ahead and get started. I assume our other members will be joining us. If our other members don't join us, we may have an issue with a quorum here.

Right, Commander Skinner?

(Commander Skinner moving head up and down.)

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: So, let's see how it plays out as we go along.

But welcome to the second meeting of the Military Family Readiness Council. It's our opportunity to build on what we did at the first meeting and move forward.

I would also like to welcome the members of the public with us today. Your engagement and interest on behalf of military families remains the foundation, their support.

Hopefully, we will be joined by Chief Roy, who is at Al Udeid Airbase in Qatar. Hopefully, he...
will be on screen here with us shortly.

Our purpose here today is to vote on the substance of our first report to Congress. The draft of this document was provided to your staffs a few weeks ago, and I hope you've had the opportunity to review it and prepare your thoughts. Everything else in today's agenda, at Tab A in your binders, is secondary to that principal objective.

There are some discussion topics after the voting, and I anticipate discussion of these topics will continue on in future meetings. So it's not absolutely critical that we conclude them today.

So I'm going to turn it over now to Commander Skinner for some reminders of our ground rules.

FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

CDR SKINNER: Thank you, ma'am. Just a couple of administrative remarks first. Especially since we had the VTC today, we ask that you use your microphone, otherwise Chief Roy will not hear you.

Also, there are some current limitations. We have to
share microphones today. And, finally, only three of
them can be on at a time otherwise the world comes to
an end.

(General laughter.)

CDR SKINNER: To that end, we may gently
prompt you for not using your microphone. Those at
the council table representing their voting member may
discuss but not vote. Our senior advisors away from
the council table may share facts or opinions when
called upon by any of those at the council table.

For this meeting, we also have a
transcription team. They will be making an audio
recording, but it will not be published. It is
strictly for records verification purposes and will be
destroyed after the transcript is verified.

As always, please be sure that all emails
that relate to the Council's deliberations, that you
cc myself and the chairwoman because it becomes a part
of the record. That doesn't mean anything on these
topics has to be cc'd on us, but when it comes down to
discussing the Council's recommendations that has to
become part of the public record.
In your binder, we prolifically added to the contents we had at our last meeting. Is this microphone working, or is it cutting off?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Mm-hmm.

CDR SKINNER: So we will essentially be starting at Tab Oscar and we're going through Tabs Oscar through Uniform prior to the voting on the report on Tab Victor.

Also, the National Military Family Association has a new entry in Tab Gulf, an executive summary of a Rand report on the experience of children from military families that was just released yesterday. We will not be briefing this, but it is available there for your reference after the meeting.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Thank you, Commander Skinner.

At our last meeting, we agreed that we needed a brief on the Interstate Compact on educational opportunity for military children, and I would like to introduce Mr. Ed Kringer, who is the Director of Military Community and Family Policy State Liaison and Education Opportunities Office.
Mr. Kringer, please.

BRIEF: INTERSTATE COMPACT

MR. KRINGER:  Good afternoon. As she said, I'm Ed Kringer. My purpose today is to update you on the Interstate Compact and Educational Opportunity for Military Children, but to do that I want to put it in context, the larger context of what our office does and the other issues we work. Because although this is probably the issue most people know, it is not the only one that we do work.

The DoD state liaison function, this function started in 2004. Dr. Chu, who was then P&R, had a list of quality of life initiatives that he wanted to work with service members and their families, and as he started to work those he found that all of those were not necessarily federal issues. Some of them could best be worked by the states, but there was no organization that he could reach out and touch that worked with states governments. Therefore, he started the Department of Defense State Liaison Office in 2004 to accomplish this for him and to provide the Department a seat at
the table in working with state governments on quality
of life issues.

Our focus is on 10 key state-level, and I
underlined the word "state-level," issues for military
members and their families. I do that because almost
any time I show the list of 10 issues somebody will
say, "Well, I can think of two or three or four that
are more important." There probably are but they are
also probably federal-level issues, not state issues.

We review these annually. In fact, we just
completed our review of the ten key issues to go into
2010. We worked very closely with the Services and
our other partners like MOA and NMFA to go out and
find out what are the problems or issues facing our
families that are state-level issues.

We then analyze those, we rank and staff
them, and then work with the states to coordinate on
which ten we ought the focus on for the next year.
That then goes up through our leadership and is
approved and signed off by the P&R.

I'm going a little fast there.

What do we do? We educate. We educate
state policymakers and leaders on these issues. I have eleven liaisons out across the country, two in each of the areas you see on the map, and then one overall senior liaison who works with them. These are the people who are out there educating our state policymakers and leaders. As they do this, they develop relationships with them. And then those people, when they want to work on one of our issues, ask us for assistance, which we can provide.

We can provide them with examples of best practice legislation, and we can provide them with people to come and testify, provide expert testimony. But also, this is key, we can provide them family members, service members, commanders, senior enlisted advisors who can come and talk about the impact of that issue on service members and their families.

We have been told repeatedly by legislators having someone in uniform to describe the impact of a problem is worth its weight in gold in passing legislation.

What we don’t do is we do not lobby, and
that is key. We do not do any kind of grassroots organizing. We don't go out and do letter writing campaigns; telephone campaigns; we don't push for the passage of a specific piece of legislation; we educate on the issues.

Next slide.

Next, we do 10. These are our 10 issues for 2010. It ranges, everything from child custody to childcare, predatory lending, unemployment compensation for trailing military spouses. It's a wide variety of issues.

The one that's most famous or most known is number four, the one I'm here to talk about today, that's minimizing school disruption for military children as they move from school district to school district.

Next slide.

As you know as good or better than I do, as families move, children move, that disrupts the education pattern. Our goal is to have states participate in an Interstate Compact which is designed so that all the states follow the same kind of
guidelines, have a uniform policy, on how to resolve transition issues that children face.

As a background, we started this in 2006. We contracted with the Council of State Governments because they are the recognized experts in Interstate Compact. There are currently over 200 active Interstate Compacts in the United States, some with as little as two or three states and some are broad like this one and cover all of the states.

We worked with them to develop this Interstate Compact. It was not just what we wanted in it. We got input from 18 different stakeholder organizations -- everything from a couple of state superintendents of education, we got the state school board association, the National PTA.

A lot of input came in to developing this Interstate Compact. By November 2007, it was fully developed and coordinated, and we were ready to start working with the states in 2008 to get them to pass it.

This Interstate Compact develops guidelines in four areas: enrollment, eligibility, placement, and
graduation. A key point is this is a legislative process. The Compact has to be passed through both houses of the state legislature, go to the governor, the governor signs it, enacts it into law. Once enacted into law, it is a binding contract among the states that have agreed to the Compact. It has the force of law.

Our own internal goal was it was going to take 10 states to activate the Compact. We achieved 10 states in the summer of 2008. The states then, once it's activated, come together in the form of an interstate commission. Each state gets one vote on that commission. The purpose of the commission is to oversee the enactment of the Compact and to run it and make sure everybody is complying with it.

If you look at the map, the darker green of the states are the states that passed it, the 11 states that passed the Compact or adopted it in 2008. The lighter green states are those that passed it this year. The red states are those that have not yet passed the Compact.

The two yellow states with a green star are
two states where we still have active legislation; they are still in session; and there is still a chance that they could do it this calendar year, a very small chance. However, both states have rollovers, and we have been assured by both states that if they don’t get it in December, it will probably happen in January. But this is where we are now.

A key point: no state has ever voted down the Interstate Compact. Some have failed to adopt, some have passed other legislation similar to but not exactly the same as, but no state has looked at and just failed to adopt the interstate compact.

The key bullets on the bottom, we now have 26 member states covering 81 percent of our children. I am very proud of that fact, especially in the context of when the Council of State Governments back in 2008 looking at this, they said, "By the end of this year, we will probably have 10 states.

So, we have far exceeded. I would like to think that’s all because I’ve got some great people working for me, which I do, but it’s also because the states recognize this is a win/win situation. There
just really is no negative to the Interstate Compact.
Next slide.
Okay. So, now what? That's where we are.
So, what's our way ahead? Well, we're not satisfied
with 26 states. We would like to get all the rest of
the states and get 24 more.
However, because of limited budget, we are
not going to go out and actively target every state.
I simply cannot go out and send people to assist in
all the states like Vermont with 60 children.
These are the states I have here that we are
actively targeting this year. That does not mean if
Vermont holds up their hand and says "Hey, we'd like
to do the Compact, will you help," we will help. We
will provide them information, et cetera, but we won't
send someone there to testify.
The states are currently forming their state
councils in educating the school districts below them.
This is a relatively slow process. One thing that we
found as we started implementing this, we stepped
back, is every state has to have a state council and
by the Compact there are certain members that have to
be part of that council.

The state can then have other people, but they've got to have a certain core. One of those core members is a military representative. We are now in the process of working with the Office of General Counsel to define exactly what the duties and responsibilities of that military representative can be. Once they approve a set of guidelines, we will get that to the interstate commission, so they can get that out to all of the states on exactly what these people can do.

The work of the Interstate Commission is ongoing. They had their first meeting in October of '08. They just completed their second meeting about three weeks ago.

What they do in these meetings is basically they go through the Compact and they look at the various rules and they clarify things that may be confusing or unsure about different states. They also look at commission procedures. One thing they can't do is they cannot take the compact in a way it was never directed to go. They can only operate within the
framework of the Compact.

The Department of Defense is not a member of
the Interstate Compact, not a voting member; we are,
however, an ex-officio member. My office to date has
been that ex-officio member because we work the
Compact with the Department.

However, I fully expect in the next couple
of years we will no longer be involved in the Compact.
The long-term ex-officio member will be DoDEA. In
fact, in this last meeting both my office and DoDEA
went to that Interstate Commission and so we're
handing it off to DoDEA.

I mentioned that we are going to target
certain states for this next year. Long-term, it will
be up to the Commission to round up the smaller
states, the ones we don't get this year.

Next slide.

"Way Ahead: Educate, Educate, Educate."

We've got to manage expectations of both the schools
but especially of our families. My real concern is a
lot of family members will think the Compact addresses
things it was never intended to address, or they will
think, "It should be fully operational. It was passed into law yesterday. Why isn't it working perfectly today?" So, we've got to manage those expectations.

We have written articles which have been published. We have built briefings. We have briefed all of the school liaison officers for the various services. We have provided them with a briefing that they can use in the schools so that parents fully understand the Compact, what it does and doesn't do and also the fact that it is a work in progress.

Our two main points: The compact is designed to handle administrative transfer issues, not education quality issues. If a family member is not satisfied with a teacher or with a curriculum, that's not part of the Compact. It's the transfer issues that the Compact handles.

Also, we want to make sure that they are aware that it is going to be a work in progress.

There are going to be schools, especially schools with only a few military families in them. It's going to take a long time before they fully are aware of the Compact in their program. It is a work in progress.
That's it. The compact is not a panacea.
It is not a cure-all for everything that our families
don't like about education as they move. I really do
believe it's a valuable tool that will help our
families.

This picture was taken down in Virginia when
Virginia toured the Compact. That's our most populous
state. It was quite a show. We had a room full of
people who were there. The Wing Commander from
Langley brought his family there for the signing
ceremony, and it was a wonderful ceremony.

With that, I am open to your questions.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Can you give us a sense of
the things that are covered by the Compact, some
eamples?

MR. KRINGER: Yes, ma'am. A couple, there's a
large number of things, but a couple of the major ones
to me, one is just simply the transfer of records.
That's one of the biggest complaints is records may
take three, four, five months to transfer from one
school system to the next school system and the
gaining school systems frequently won't take a lot of
actions until they get the records.

Under the Compact, all the schools agree that they will give the family a photostatic copy of the parts of the records they need to take with them. The gaining school districts agree to take actions based on that copy. Also, the losing schools agree to send the official record document within 10 days of it being requested.

Another example is if you have a child who is in an honors program or a baccalaureate program in one school district, they transfer to another state, frequently that state says, "Well, I'm just not sure that their qualifications are the same as our qualifications, so we'll let you sit out until we get your records, until we can test you," et cetera.

We have the states who have joined the Compact agree to change that paradigm and say, "If you are in an honors program in State X, you are probably qualified for our honors program. Let's put you in it, then we still can test you. If we find out you're not qualified, then we can easily remove you."

That's a couple of big ones. But also one
of the things we're trying to do is have the states when a child transfers, if they've had a basic history or a basic science or a math course in one state, they come to the next state and the nomenclature of the course is not exactly the same. The content may be only 95 percent the same. We would ask the state to look at the content, see if it's not acceptable, so the child doesn't have the take the basic course again. So, they can go ahead and start taking the advance courses.

State history, how many state histories does a child need? So you have state history in one, in another state, so they've had one state history. Accept that as your state history and let that child have the opportunity to take an advanced math or an advanced science course. So, that's some of them, but there are a lot.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Admiral Greenert, did you have --

ADM GREENERT: I did. Thank you.

When it comes to standards, will DODEA in your view or do you know intend to say, "We would like
to use our standards?" It could be anywhere from the
standardized testing to what we desire for graduation
so that when kids go out of or in DoDEA and then go
back into the state school there is that continuation.
How will that work?

MR. KRINGER: If you mean, I don’t want to
speak for DoDEA, but if you mean get the states to
change standards, no, sir. If you mean make sure that
they, DoDEA, are being treated as a state.

Even though we are not voting members of the
Compact, DoDEA has agreed to abide by everything
that’s in the Compact and the other states who are a
part of the Compact have agreed to work with DoDEA
just as though they are a state.

So if you found that a child was leaving a
DoD school in Europe and transferring to a school in a
Compact state in the United States and they did not
have because DoDEA did not require it, they did not
have a certain course for graduation or there wasn’t
time for that child to get that course, then the state
should do two things.

One is look and say, "Do I really have to
have that requirement?" If they can waive it, then please do so. If they can't because something really is critical to what they conceive of as a high school diploma, then work with the sending school, in this case DoDEA, to give them a DoDEA diploma so that they can graduate on time.

Does that answer it?

ADM GREENERT: I think so. I think so. In other words, DoDEA is the 51st state in this regard?

MR. KLINGER: It's the 51st state except that we don't have any voting right in the Interstate Commission.

ADM GREENERT: All right.

MR. KRINGER: We are not voting and we are also not contributing money anymore to that, but we have agreed to let Mr. Thomas sign the letter to the Interstate Commission when they say that DoDEA would become the ex-officio member, "And, oh, by the way, we agree that we will follow the rules of the Compact."

ADM GREENERT: Who is the advocate for the individual family such that a family goes from State 1 to State 2, they have two children? Just for a
vignette, according to the Compact this should be seamless because State 2, if they are a member of this, accepts what State 1 had. But I think you mentioned earlier history, state history, and there may be others where you say, “Well, how many of this, you know, what do you need?” It’s open for debate maybe. So, who debates on behalf of the family? Who is the advocate for this for the family? 

MR. KRINGER: Each Service can do it differently, but basically our thought on this is at that level it will be the school liaison officer. When we work with school liaison officers -- I’ve personally worked with the Maryland Task Force, because the first year Maryland did not pass the Compact. They referred it to a Task Force to restudy it.

I was part of that Task Force, and there were two school liaison officers there. As we discussed it, one of the things we said to them is “This gives you another tool. As you are working and advocating for families, you now have a tool of rules so everything that happens to a child that’s covered
by the Compact doesn’t have to be worked case by case.
You’ve got an agreement that says 'This is how it
should work.'"

Now, what they are building and what has
come out of this last meeting is a whole system for
how do you resolve things. If something should happen
according to the Compact and it’s not resolved at the
local level, it goes up to the state council.

If it’s between school districts, this, this
school district, should go back to the losing school
district, say, it’s something, they didn’t send the
records on time, and try to work it.

If you see a pattern of it not happening as
opposed to a one-time thing, it goes up, and
ultimately it goes to the Interstate Commission and
the Interstate Commission can direct that state to
follow the rules of the Compact. But at the lowest
level should be the school counselor and it should be
the school liaison officer.

ADM GREENERT: In the, if you will, losing
school, the one that should be the advocate and
negotiator for the family which is departing that
school; correct?

MR. KRINGER: It should be the same.

ADM GREENERT: No. But again, sorry,

forgive me for hijacking the microphone. I'm not

necessarily troubled, but this is all well and good as

I see it. I'm leaving and I say, "Well, Mr. Greenert,

I see that Bobby and Suzy will be leaving here. The

good news is they are going to Virginia. See, we're

part of the Compact. So all these math and all these

records, we're going to take care of it. We're in

the Compact. But I'm not sure. Now, when you get to

Virginia, Mr. Greenert, you will have to go ask about

this history course." You know, I don't know, pick a

topic.

So, I get there and I go in. Do I go see

the guidance counselor? I don't know. I check in and

they say, "I'm not sure what you're talking about

Mr. Greenert. We all take Virginia history. It's

important."

So now, who is my advocate? Am I on my own,

which is, you know, I just need to know. Therefore,

we need to tell our people. Do we say, "No, call
1-800-Compact," or what? How do we do this?

MR. KRINGER: I'm thinking that that's a
great question, and that's what I was alluding to and
didn't specify because of time. In our education of
the family members, you do two things. One is work
through the liaison officer. They are your
"professional advocate."

But the other part of that is it's not going
to be perfect immediately. It is going to take
several years before this really gets -- we had a
state school district in Maryland just the other day
tell a parent that, "Well, the Compact doesn't apply
to us." Well, they just hadn't gotten the word yet.

ADM GREENERT: Right.

MR. KRINGER: What we tell parents to do is
make the Compact itself very accessible. Tell them
the Web sites. If you get that kind of push-back,
talk to your school liaison officer, but also go in
there, they may just not be aware, and say, "Look,
here's the Compact. You are a part of it."

Push it because it's going to take that for
a while before some schools, especially those with
very small military populations, do become aware and push it back up. But the state council should then educate them.

There is also in addition to the state council, every state is required to have a military liaison. This is a person who is part, normally part the department of education for the state but whose focus is making sure the Compact operates.

So, are there going to be those cases people say, "Well, we haven't heard about that," or "We don't know," or "We don't think that's right"? Yes, there will. The parents should work with the school liaison officers. They should work with the counselors in there. They should take a copy of the Compact and say, "Oh, yeah, it is," and push it back up the chain into the Council.

If it's not working, the Interstate Commission should get involved. We have also told, put the word out there to the slows, that if they see something, let us know about it. We are not going to be the long-term people who work this. But at least right now we know there are going to be glitches and
we have asked to be kept informed.

BRIEF ON DATA FROM COUNCIL

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: I just asked Ms. Hruska the degree to which NMFA has heard anything about this issue, and she has agreed to give us an update.

MS. HRUSKA: We are, just as Mr. Kringer said, hearing families know about it and so they really are pushing the issue up. You know, the Council has met the Commission has met. They are slowly getting everything together to start pushing the information down to the school districts. But families really are pushing this information up saying, "This has been passed" and, you know, asking the individual school districts, "now what are you going to do about it?"

So it's happening and we're getting contacted about it and doing the same thing, referring people to the school liaison offices.

ADM GREENERT: Thank you.

MR. KRINGER: It's just going to take a while before it's fully operative like it should be.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Thank you.
Other questions for Ed?

(No verbal response.)

CHAIRPERSON MCGINN: All right. Thank you very much.

I'm going to turn back to Commander Skinner for a minute, and he is going to run through for you some things that we consider, say, program assessments that have occurred in the year 2009, just so you get a sense of that activity and what some of the outcomes have been.

Commander Skinner.

CDR SKINNER: Thank you, ma'am.

Good afternoon again, ladies and gentlemen.

The intent of these next few slides is to briefly summarize what assessment efforts took place in 2009. We have provided a lot of material for reading to your staffs a few weeks ago.

However, we wanted to provide you an opportunity to ask questions for clarification in the event that you desire to use materials from these assessments to adjust your previous recommendations or create new ones.
I will leave each slide up briefly to afford you to time to read it, and if there are no questions on a given slide, I will immediately move on.

I invite your attention to Tab Pi in your briefing binder. Since Mr. Thomas' arrival, he has conducted a number of installation visits worldwide. At each location he has polled commanders, military members, and families of service providers for their concerns. Displayed here is a brief summary of the major theme from those visits.

The next tab is Tab Quebec. In the last Council meeting, we mentioned briefly nationwide listening sessions. These are being conducted through contacts at Land Grant University at various installations.

We have also begun virtual listening sessions where participants are asked the same questions online. We hope to reach a broader audience as we combine these two approaches, installation visits and online. These are ongoing but have really just started. They have not yet encompassed all the services.

Themes shown here are only from a few Navy
installations. However, in your briefing binder, the Army has also conducted a survey of geographically dispersed soldiers and families, the summary of which is on Slide 24 of that same tab.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: On this one, I asked what the barriers to access meant, and I think the answer I got was it's really kind of barriers to healthcare, access to healthcare, that people are talking about; right?

CDR SKINNER: Yes, ma'am, and then there's also some cultural things with the behavioral health, seeking help for the stigma associated with behavioral health.

GEN CHIARELLI: I would second that. I was trying to get myself organized, and we swung by Tab Papa. I guess I would agree that behavioral health is getting an emphasis, but I think there is much, much more that needs to be done. There are some real issues that we as well as everyone else are having in trying to deliver those services. There is a nationwide shortage of behavioral health folks. I think we have to look for
out-of-the-box ways to do this. But I think it's fair
to say that, although it has our attention, it needs
much, much more.

CDR SKINNER: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: "Individual
Augmentees," is that the issue of this being a new way
of doing business for the Navy and Navy support
structures needing to be adjusted for that? Is that
what that is?

CDR SKINNER: Yes, ma'am.

MCPON WEST: Yes, it is. It's a process
within a bigger, a larger, process of unit deployment
and an infrastructure and a hierarchy of support for a
unit versus individual augmentees, ensuring that they
don't get lost or are not recognized as a key and
critical element.

GEN CHIARELLI: But that's just not a Navy
issue, that's an issue across the Force. I mean,
we've got tens of thousands of individual augmentees
and there are no welcome home parades or events for
them. They literally put you off at the airport, take
a couple of weeks leave, and go back to work.
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Chief Roy, is that you joining us?

(No verbal response.)

CDR SKINNER: It sounds like you can hear us, but we can't hear you.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: There you go.

CHIEF ROY: Are you there?

CDR SKINNER: Yes, I'm here.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Great. We're on slide, how would we describe it?

CDR SKINNER: Slide 14 that says "Tab Quebec" on the bottom right-hand corner, Chief.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Thank you for joining us.

CDR SKINNER: Moving on to Tab Romeo now, this is an overview of survey results from the Defense Manpower Data Center, both from military members and spouses, Active and Reserve component.

Slide 26 of this presentation is displayed here, providing a summary of take-away messages. In addition, at the bottom of the slide there is brief summary of what DMDC feels we do not know enough
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: This slide doesn’t show it, and I’m trying to remember if we get to it later on. But we happen to know, we monitor the health of the Force and we happen to know that the members, the family members, particularly children who are receiving mental health counseling who are in need of in-house mental health treatment has been increasing and is a matter of some concern, going back to what General Chiarelli said that we need to deal with and that we are starting -- we are focusing on trying to understand more about that phenomenon.

GUARD AND RESERVE TASK FORCE

CDR SKINNER: Let’s move on to Tab Sierra. The Guard/Reserve Task Force, which was a conference, was convened in May 2009. We brought together service providers and policy staff serving Reserve, Guard, and Active-Duty Service members and families to highlight the challenges of the geographically dispersed and also to strengthen the relationship between the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and the Joint Family Support Assistance Program.
Displayed on this slide are some of the broad areas addressed, the status of concrete actions completed or in progress appear on the bottom half of the page in Tab Sierra. You will see some more detail about the program eligibility.

JOINT FAMILY READINESS CONFERENCE 2009

Moving, I will now invite your attention to Tab Tango. This is the Joint Family Readiness Conference that was held in Chicago in September of 2009. The conference brought together 1,500 service providers from around the nation. One of the focus of the conference was allowing service providers across all components and opportunity to share best practices.

Focus groups among these service providers were also conducted. This slide shows the five major areas of concern highlighted by these providers.

PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMIT ON MILITARY FAMILIES

Lastly, I invite your attention to Tab Uniform. I have several slides here. Now, we convened the Summit on Military Families last month to
close the first round of this ongoing assessment
effort. This was a joint effort among DoD, USDA, and
the University of Maryland, the latter representing our
collaboration with Land Grant Universities.

Besides highlighting this new collaboration,
the distinction of this conference was to identify not
only issues, but also recommended goals and an action
plan. Before we summarize those recommendations that
stems from this summit, there is a brief disclaimer.

These are recommendations of summit
participants, specifically a group of 10 panels of
8 to 15 people. Their presentation here does not
constitute a DoD commitment to these actions. These
remain under discussion both internally in the Office
of Military and Community Family Policy; among the
services; and last, but not least, certainly the new
Under Secretary for Personnel should be confirmed soon.

There are various read-aheads and they are
summarized here for your consideration, but these are
not set in stone, not agreed upon, and remain the
recommendations of the summit participants.

Next slide.
Displayed on this slide are the critical issues highlighted by summit participants. I think you will find the themes here are common to our other assessments.

This next slide shows the top five goals recommended by some of the participants. Next, we move on to the summit’s recommended actions. There are three slides here. These slides highlight the recommended actions. They were collated from recommendations of the 10 multidisciplinary panels.

The first two slides show three broad actions, and the last slide has more narrow, specific actions.

The first two are here, creation of a strategic map franchise programs tied to metrics specifically centered on readiness, recruiting and retention, and a review of behavioral health services both to identify issues early and continue to reduce stigma.

This next slide is the third broad recommendation which is tied to a strategic communications plan with the subordinate objectives highlighted here, reaching the Guard and the Reserve
being the foremost of those.

This last slide has recommended actions that
are more narrow in scope. The first two deal with the
strategic communications plan itself. The third deals
with identifying and funding joint core family support
services.

GEN CHIARELLI: Hi. I've seen kind of the
theme through this about Guard and Reserve access to
medical care, and we've gone a long way with the TRS,
but the availability of TRS, "TRICARE Reserve Select,"
depends on the viability of the network and the
network for TRS is nowhere near as robust as it is for
TRICARE.

You would think that a doctor who has
qualified to provide services under TRICARE Prime or
Select would be able to do so under TRS, but that's
not always the case.

So in states where you don't have large
active component populations, the availability of TRS,
although it is a benefit paid for by members of the
Guard and Reserve, where you don't have a robust
network it's like offering a service without any way
to deliver it.

I would argue that I think what we could really do is look at ways to try to expand that network so that where we are offering TRS there are doctors available to, in fact, provide the necessary medical treatment that are members and providers in the TRS system.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Let me ask, Dr. Matteson, do you have any comment on that from Health Affairs' perspective?

DR. MATTeson: The only comment that I would have is that we work with the TRICARE contractors to expand the networks and make them more available in those areas. But granted there are areas where there is little penetration of our network, and we need to work on that.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay. You can take that back. Good point.

Ms. Boyda.

MS. BOYDA: In Reserve Affairs, we are actually mapping out where our Reserved and Guard are located physically and working with the TROs to try to
develop the networks, specifically area by area
instead of just a global "Let's try to get better."
We're trying to target some areas as well.

It is my understanding, too, that at least
with TriWest, if you submit a bill, then you become a
provider, so they are really trying to break down some
of the barriers to becoming providers. Unfortunately,
a lot of providers don't even know that. So in
Reserve Affairs, it's one of the goals that we have
taken on as a P&R goal is to try to significantly work
with the TROs to increase the provider network.

GEN CHIARELLI: So, do you know how that is
going? Have you been at it long enough to be able to
tell?

MS. BOYDA: TriWest now has 168,000 actual
providers. The others are kind of in their limbo, and
I'm not quite sure where they are. So, they have
taken a stronger west of the Mississippi. When the
contracts are finalized and we know what's going on,
we will be working with obviously the contractors and
the TROs and TMA.

I really appreciate your comment of making
it clear because it's a huge problem if you have a
Service -- only 7 percent of TRICARE. 7 percent of
those who can use it or are eligible for it only use
it. So, it's one of the main reasons that they don't.
So, thank you for bringing it up.

GEN CHIARELLI: You would think that if you
were qualified to provide under TRICARE Prime or
Select that it would be a no-brainer that you could
provide under TRS.

MS. BOYDA: Yes.

GEN CHIARELLI: I don't pretend to
understand all of the credentialing rules. But
although that seems like a no-brainer, it's not.
There are certain situations where you must reapply in
order to provide care under TRS. I have not heard of
"Provide a bill and TRICARE will pay it." I thought
you had to be a licensed provider in order to. That
would be good to get out to folks at least in the West
if that is, in fact, the case.

MS. BOYDA: I think that is, that's the
case. Again, I think the work is cut out for the
other TRICARE providers, the other contractors, once

Enclosure (1)
the dust settles, and that has to be happening soon.
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: I appreciate you
bringing it up.
MS. BOYDA: Yes.
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: I think it's something
that we need to work on.
MS. BOYDA: Yes.
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: So we'll get health
affairs engaged. Thank you.
CDR SKINNER: Ma'am, that concludes my brief
pending any other comments or questions.
(No verbal response.)
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Thank you very much.
I'm now going to turn the meeting over to
Mr. Tommy Thomas who is going to talk about the
substance of the Council's report based upon our
recommendations at the last meeting and how we go
forward from here, so, Mr. Thomas.
Oh, just a reminder, Commander Skinner would
want me to remind you that only those whether are
council members are allowed to vote. So if you're
sitting in proxy for someone, we appreciate you being
here, but you can't raise your hand I guess is the
rule. So, thanks.

Mr. Thomas.

REVIEW OF AND VOTING ON COUNCIL'S
DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Thank you, Gail.

What we've done is we've put together a
draft report. If you look at Tab 5, you should have
that draft report in there. We are at the point now
in the meeting where we would go over the
11 recommendations from the previous council meeting
and we will vote on the 11 recommendations. We have
included all the recommendations in the report with
some added comments at Tab 5.

CDR SKINNER: Tab Victor, sir.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Tab V, I'm sorry. I was
thinking Roman numbers there. Tab V, Victor.

Okay. If you're at Tab V, the first
recommendation from the Council at the last Council
was we wanted to incorporate metrics on the
implementation of family care programs to help address
child custody issues. We provided, if you look at the
slide, we provided the added comments there.

I'm not going to read the entire slide, but just give you the essence of what the Council voted on at the last meeting. If the Council is okay with the wording, we will vote and we will move on. That will be the rules of engagement. We are on number one, the number one recommendation.

MS. HRUSKA: I just have one comment. I thought at the last meeting we just discussed to incorporate metrics on the implementation of family care plans, and child custody was just one reason why we should be doing it. Because there are many, many reasons in addition to child custody why we should be strengthening family care plans. I just hate to put something in that is so narrow.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: I agree and I think that I don't know if we can say "the number of child custody cases has increased" because I don't know that we know that. We could say that "may have increased." I don't know if we can be definitive about "has increased" at this point.

GEN CHANDLER: I offer one thought. It may
be that the second sub-bullet is what we were really after here. If there is a way to take the recommendation and turn that on its side so that the second bullet is really number one.

Number one is the sub-bullet. And if we want to use custody as an example, maybe that's part of the sub-bullet. I'm not trying to rewrite this or throw wrenches in the recommendations, but I agree that this is a little narrow. The first question that comes to mind is, "Well, what metrics are we going to use to measure this?" We're going to have to give some careful thought to that, I think.

ADM GREENE: We are looking for, I assume, DoD metrics, so we go from base to base. As we establish joint bases, it becomes easier to integrate anything from childcare to the family service center. We're talking about the output metrics. We do a lot of input, a lot of activity, but I think we're trying to get to the bottom line. Are we improving, how do we measure that, what's the basis -- therefore, the metric.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: We are doing a separate...
study of child custody, so I don't know that it needs
to be highlighted here. I like the idea of putting
the second bullet up first.

GEN CHANDLER: I think that makes sense.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. We've revamped it, so
let's take a look at it now. Measure Total Force
compliance with having Family Care Plans in place
prior to deployments.

GEN CHANDLER: That one is pretty easy to
measure. You can get some pretty good metrics in on
whys and why nots and maybe something jumps out at us
as to why people are having a hard time with Family
Care Plans. I think that's the objective here; right?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Mm-hmm.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. So?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: But we wanted to change
the bullets. We didn't want that first bullet to be
the first bullet.

MR. THOMAS: We would like now for everyone
to vote, the voting members. All in favor of
recommendation one?
(A show of hands. Seven members voted.)

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. We move to recommendation two. Recommendation two was to consider using Military HOMEFRONT to communicate and clarify program access and eligibility to military family constituencies.

GEN CHIARELLI: I like the word "consider." Because I just hate after what we've done with Military OneSource, and it isn't Santa Claus or kind of known throughout the military, that we would all of a sudden change the one place that family members and service members go to gain information, if we can work with the security people to maybe somewhere along there put that protected information or the information that can only go to those individuals who are in the service behind some kind of a firewall or something. But I just hate now we end up with another Web site and have to begin all over again.

GEN CHANDLER: I agree with Pete. We've put a fair amount of effort in our "Year of the Family" to try to consolidate and boil down where you go get
data. Part of this has been some rather painful things to do with some of the Web sites that we have because different people like different Web sites.

And so while I'm not trying to pretend that we can tell people which Web site to like, I think One Source is a pretty good driver for us here. It doesn't mean we can't link. But I think we're going to be guilty of one of the things we're trying to solve, and that's clarify where people go to get information, if we're not real careful.

CHAIRPERSON MCGINN: Why did we want this in the first place? Who advocated for this?

MS. HRUSKA: Well, I think it started because there was a matrix that was presented at the last meeting that laid out the eligibility.

CDR SKINNER: Use your microphone, ma'am.

MS. HRUSKA: We asked that is just be posted on Military HOMEFRONT. I think that's where it came from. I don't think that we were advocating that, you know, we use just one venue.

I think we wanted the matrix that was presented that included all the DoD programs and then
the different branches, retirees. We said, "Well, this is great. Why isn't it posted on Military HOMEFRONT?" So I think that's where it came from.

GEN CHIARELLI: I may be misinformed. It happens all the time. But my understanding is it's a security issue, to provide the information to more people. There was certain information that wasn't available to non-service members or direct relations to a spouse that is on Military OneSource that could not be provided to everyone. That was my understanding. The idea was to come up with a Web site that would be available to folks who may not be able to have access to Military OneSource. That was my understanding, but I could be wrong as people have informed me.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: As I remember --

A PARTICIPANT: I did say that.

GEN CHIARELLI: No, I --

MS. HRUSKA: I mean, I can see that where -- I mean, Military OneSource, you need to log on to get certain information, so HOMEFRONT. But I think that's why we recommended this matrix.
My recollection was we were just discussing
this matrix that's referenced on the slide, that it be
posted on HOMEFRONT because it is accessible.
Military HOMEFRONT is accessible to everyone, and you
don't need to have a secure log-on to access it.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Mr. Myers?

MR. MYERS: Military HOMEFRONT is the site,
you know, for policies, and so forth. It is being
used by all of the military services.

CDR SKINNER: Turn on your microphone, sir.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: He commented that it is
a site to policy, et cetera. It is being used by all
the military services. So really this issue was about
that matrix which clarified who is eligible for what,
yeah, and putting that on Military HOMEFRONT. I'm
remembering that now that way.

ADM GREENERT: Step one, is that folks --
well, then we have to link, ask everyone to link their
favorite Web site to Military HOMEFRONT, therefore
everyone has access. That's what I understand.
The idea is to give everybody access; right?

So you have one or two choices, I think, if I'm
understanding right. Put the matrix on Military HOMEFRONT.

Now you've got to get everybody to Military HOMEFRONT, and they have to know it exists. If they go to their favorite Web site they are already habitually visiting and they see a link to Military HOMEFRONT, they go to it, then we've connected that's on the same source. Publish it there and then everybody will link to Military HOMEFRONT.

MS. HRUSKA: No, I see what you're saying. Because Military HOMEFRONT, I automatically if I'm looking for policy go to Military HOMEFRONT, but I've been trained that way. So I can see where you're saying that if you go to Navy Knowledge Online all the time, you don't necessarily know that Military HOMEFRONT exists.

just asking all the services to provide a link on their, so it's a matter of like, Crossroads, Navy Knowledge Online and just say, "You know, for policy information go to." Simple enough. Is that something we can -- can we update that?

A PARTICIPANT: We can.
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: I'm still not clear about this one, what we're trying to do. We're trying to get that matrix of eligibility onto Military HOMEFRONT; right?

ADM GREENERT: Right.

MS. HRUSKA: So, why don't we just say, "Publish the matrix of military eligibility on Military HOMEFRONT," period, and then ask the services to link to Military HOMEFRONT?

ADM GREENERT: Now you've got it. It's there. Now it is up to us to take back and have, you know, our Web sites link to that one.

MS. HRUSKA: Okay.

ADM GREENERT: So that then our constituency gets to the matrix.

MS. HRUSKA: Well, is this something that really needs -- I mean, can't we just do it? Does it require -- maybe I'm being naive. But do we really need to -- is this something really needs to be included in the report to Congress?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: It doesn't seem to rise to that level to me.
GEN CHANDLER: Only from the perspective of everyone of the survey things seem to indicate that people had a hard time navigating through the system. So you may answer this question one way or the other. This may be the way to do it or maybe not. You're right, this is a bit of disturbia, but everybody seems to be asking this question.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Maybe we should defer this and look at that bigger issue, and ask about it when everybody comes back, and talk about it at the next meeting so we get it right.

ADM GREENERT: Maybe we should defer it. If we do it, we’ve got to do it completely. So, maybe we need to think about it.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Anybody opposed to deferring it? Is anybody opposed to deferring it, and we will work on it some more for the next meeting?

(No verbal response.)

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay. Next?

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Number three. This one addressed the needs of medically retired severely
injured service members related to childcare.

GEN CHANDLER: Do we know the magnitude of this problem? Maybe we talked about that the last time, and I forgot about it.

MR. THOMAS: We talked about it, but we didn't really get into the magnitude of it. Again, I'm a nonvoting member.

GEN CHANDLER: No, but the only reason I ask the question is, again, childcare is an issue on everyone of the reports, the tabs that we saw. This isn't an effort to block giving someone childcare. If we're going to try to describe what the gap is in childcare, this could be a big gap or it could be a small gap, and I don't know.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Jackie, do you think you have any sense?

MS. GARRICK: Yes, I was just looking at that. My sense is that since the VA doesn't pick up on this issue at all that there is probably a disconnect when these folks medically retire and there have been DoD-supported programs but not VA-supported programs, that it becomes a black hole for their
families.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: We just don't know how
-- what the magnitude of it would be.
Art, do you have any sense?

MR. MYERS: I think it's something we have
to assess. I think there is a need out there.

CDR SKINNER: Microphone, sir.

MR. MYERS: We're going to have to
ascertain, you know, what the gap is. I believe there
is a gap from working with the Air Force Authority.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Commander Skinner,
what's our process? After we write up the report, do
we send it back to the council members for review and
coordination?

CDR SKINNER: Ma'am, the intention was to
just move this one up to the General Counsel and
Legislative Affairs. So if we want to -- I'd
recommend if we are going to defer one, that we delete
it for this report and consider it for the next one
because otherwise the odds of getting it coordinated
prior to the 1 February deadline starts shrinking.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: I'm sensing a desire to
get a judgment of the size of this issue before we
press on; is that right?

GEN CHIARELLI: I would argue that no matter
what the size, it is probably something we ought to be
looking at. I mean, I know that we, the Army, have
many who have been medically retired. When a spouse
has to return to work because you make it through a
certain period, the need for childcare is a real need.
So to me this is something we ought to really be
looking at regardless of the population, and I think
the population may be fairly large.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: What if we changed the
recommendation from "address the needs" to "assess the
needs"?

GEN CHANDLER: Yeah, but I think there is a
need here. There is no doubt about that. But
eventually this should translate into asking for
resources to solve some of these problems. So we're
going to have to answer this question sooner or later.
Whether we write this in a way that we can move on or
-- an assessment may be the way to do that.

MS. GARRICK: I think we need to coordinate
with the MC Family Programs and do sort of a needs
assessment, because I don't know that we really
capture that data. I don't know that there is that
data in terms of how many families of the severely
injured are there with young children that don't have
the -- and I recognize there are a lot of challenges.

If you're taking care of a severely injured
service member at home, it's very hard to take care of
other children at home as well, whether you are, you
know, a mom with other minor children and it's been
your son that's injured or if it's your husband that's
injured and you've got, you know, toddlers at home and
so now you're juggling those needs.

I think we need to get a better sense of
what the level of the need is and work from -- you
know, just work off of those numbers and then figure
out what exactly -- what kind of plans do we need to
maybe look at the impact.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Does anyone object to
changing the recommendation to "assess the needs"?

A PARTICIPANT: No objections?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Any of the members?
CDR SKINNER: Please use your microphone.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Oh, sorry. I was asking if anybody objected to changing the recommendation from "address the needs" to "assess the needs," which doesn't mean having assessed them, we don't have to wait for another council meeting to do anything about it.

GEN CHANDLER: It's not going to be a perfect answer, either. We probably shouldn't strive for a perfect, perfect number here.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay. You can move on.

MR. THOMAS: Number four.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Do we need to vote?

MR. THOMAS: Yes. I was just going to again ask was there anybody opposed to using the word "assess."

CDR SKINNER: Okay.

MR. THOMAS: There was a consensus that there was no objection, so we can move to number four. Review reintegration programs in light of today's operational tempo and dwell time realities.

ADM GREENERT: Can we review what
"reintegration" means in this context, please? I've forgotten.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Well, this was Admiral Gallow. I think it had to do with member returning from deployments, understanding what resources were there and having a clear sense of who they could turn to.

MS. HRUSKA: We mentioned it as well. We mentioned it, the National Military Family Association mentioned it, in the context of there seems to be some inconsistencies with reintegration programs, and that we need to rethink the way we deliver services for reintegration not just, you know, two weeks before the service member returns home, but, you know, we need to be thinking of it post-, you know, predeployment and be talking about it all the way through the deployment process.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: This recommendation does say "review," so it doesn't chart a course of action at this point.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. All in favor of recommendation four?
(There was a show of hands with five members voting.)

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Recommendation five. Explore empowering peer-based care to address of families who are newly bereaved, capitalizing on existing strengths of military families.

Any opposition?

(No verbal response.)

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Next: Leverage existing technology to integrate the delivery of benefits at the point of casualty across all Federal agencies.

Opposition?

GEN CHANDLER: Discussion.

MR. THOMAS: Discussion. There is never any opposition.

(General laughter.)

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Discussion?

MR. THOMAS: Discussion?

(No verbal response.)

MR. THOMAS: Okay.
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Yes?

MS. HRUSKA: There is a word missing. It says "benefits information from multiple Federal" almost immediately after "bereavement."

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: After "agencies." Yes, good catch.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Number seven.

Discussion? "Review instruction for and delivery of school-age, preschool and hourly childcare, in view of resources available 'outside the gates' of installations."

Any discussion?

MS. HRUSKA: I have a question. Was this the discussion that came up about the joint basing?

At the end of the last meeting, we had discussed joint basing and the subsidies provided, that the services provide subsidies at different levels? Is this what this one was?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: No.

MR. THOMAS: No.

MS. HRUSKA: No? Okay.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: I think this was
Admiral Gallow, again, trying to make sure that the
guidance we have out there appropriately allows us to
consider all the resources that are available outside
the gate.

MS. HRUSKA: Oh, okay.

GEN CHANDLER: Well, the point is a good one
in that this is larger than outside the gates. This
is on base. This is family daycare. This is probably
what's available outside the gates.

I don't know if this is worth rewriting this
into something that includes outside the gate, but to
me this is maybe a little focus for what we're really
trying to get at.

MR. THOMAS: We could change it to "both on
and off installations." That would probably be the
fix.

GEN CHANDLER: I mean, again, eventually
we're going to be asked to go back and look at it.

MR. THOMAS: All of it.

GEN CHANDLER: It's proven, I think, to be a
problem. This just helps guide us, I think, a little
bit.
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: DoD is going to be looking at this year anyway because Congress asked in the 2010 NDAA that they do a review of the childcare, especially outside the gate, provide a report to Congress.

MR. THOMAS: So what we’ve added here is "both on and off installations in view of resources available outside the gates." I think we can take "outside of the gates" and I think just cut it off probably to "both on and off installations."

GEN CHANDLER: Yeah, I think that’s that I would do.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Any more discussion on seven?

(No verbal response.)

MR. THOMAS: All in favor?

(A show of hands of three voting members.)

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Seven is done.

Recommendation 8: "Ensure adequate transition services in light of unemployment rates and diverse needs of separating service members, including those of wounded warriors."
CHAIRPERSON McGINN: This one was to make sure that our transition programs targeted people, didn't assume everybody was the same and were designed to target people with different needs at different times and different services.

MR. THOMAS: Any discussion?

ADM GREENERT: I guess I don't know why the "unemployment rates," I mean, that is a factor, that it tends to complicate the statement. I think the statement is pretty straightforward without complicating it.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Right, I agree, mm-hmm.

ADM GREENERT: I think I heard you say Tommy or Gail the diversity of our employers should accommodate that.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Yes.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. All in favor of number eight?

(A show of hands of four voting members.)

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Recommendation 9: "Leverage existing technology and social networking tools to pursue improved communication with families."
GEN CHANDLER: Can I recommend we defer this one and roll it up with number six?

MR. THOMAS: The technology, number six?

GEN CHANDLER: Just as a followup; okay.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: All right.

MR. THOMAS: We will defer and roll up six; okay. Number 10: "Sustain current spouse employment programs and initiatives, including continued funding of the My Career Advancement Account program."

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Without objection?

GEN CHANDLER: Well, let me ask a question.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Yes, sir.

GEN CHANDLER: I'm assuming there are other opportunities other than My Career Advancement Account? There are other ways to get at this? The only reason I ask is, Are we too focused on one way of doing this, or should we just talk about sustaining employment programs and initiatives? That's the only reason I ask the question.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Or, might you want to say "sustain and enhance current spouse employment programs and initiatives"?
MS. HRUSKA: The MyCAA accounts have been huge, extremely popular among spouses, I think. How many have applied now?

MR. MYERS: About 100,000.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: One hundred thousand now.

MR. MYERS: This is a $6,000 account for spouses for their education, certifications, and so forth. This year it is proposed that that account be cut in half and spouses take advantage of the new GI Bill.

In order to transfer to your spouse, I believe you have to have six years in service. So, all these young families will not be able to take advantage until six years in service. You know, that's a concern, and it also insinuates that the military member not use it for themselves but use it for their spouse. I don't think that's the intent.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: We have been asked to deconflict this program from the Webb GI Bill, so that's work that we still have ahead of us.

MCPON WEST: Excuse me. Have we defined the
success rate? I understand we have a hundred thousand personnel who have taken advantage of it. But what is the success rate there? Do we know?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Art, do you know?

MR. MYERS: We have 100,000 who have accounts, and I would say probably around 35,000 or 40,000 are actually pursuing degrees, certifications, and so forth, at this time.

It's really good for military members whose spouses have certifications in one state. To go PCS, you have to get certifications in the next state, and so forth. So, in my opinion, the program is new and I think it is very, very successful.

MS. Hruska: Well, and I think what we're hearing from the spouses is that the flexibility of the program is really the key, that it is not a "one size fits all." You can use it for certification or education.

Education isn't necessarily like a bachelor's degree or a master's degree. You can use it for any accredited program that the accreditation is accepted by the Department of Defense. The
flexibility, I think, is really key here for spouses.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Any more discussion on Recommendation 10?

(No verbal response.)

MR. THOMAS: All in favor?

(A show of hands of four voting members.)

MR. THOMAS: Recommendation 11: Submit a Unified Legislative Budget ("ULB") proposal to adjust travel policy and regulations to better accommodate participation of non-dependent family members and designated representatives at Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events.

CDR SKINNER: There are two slides with this recommendation.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: This action is actually already moving forward outside the ULB process; isn't that right? I'm going to ask Ms. Boyda to comment.

MS. BOYDA: We've worked as much as we can inside the ULB process and beyond. But it's pretty much a done deal at this time. We appreciate the support of this Council.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Those are the 11. All
in favor of this, number 11?

(A show of hands of six voting members.)

MR. THOMAS: Those are all the 11 recommendations. So the only ones we rolled up were six and, was it nine?

A PARTICIPANT: Nine.

MR. THOMAS: Six and nine, we're asking that those be deferred or roll it into one?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Roll it into one.

MR. THOMAS: You want to roll it into one.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: And we'll have one deferred.

MR. THOMAS: And one deferred.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: I think we've left this slide blank in case anybody has any late recommendations that they would like to make to be included in the report.

DISCUSSION:

CONSISTENCY OF FAMILY SUPPORT ACROSS SERVICES

ADM GREENERT: I have a question. Depending on the answer, I may have a suggestion. Are we comfortable that we have a common set of metrics and
standards for output for our DoD Family Readiness Programs?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: I think not. I mean, there are a set of metrics that we track in Personnel and Readiness, but I don't think they get to the outcomes, outcome-based deliberations that you're talking about.

ADM GREENERT: Well, the metrics, for example, I think childcare is pretty straightforward. I think we are all seeking the same standard, and we are using a metric, number of children, how many, you know, you can reach.

There are a host of programs. If the services are pursuing different metrics with different standards, again, if we don't have common metrics so we're measuring the same stuff to a certain level, then when we joint base, when we look across and we want to share best practices, I'm not even sure we're speaking the same language.

So, I would propose we consider having our group work on that so that even when we program, budget, talk to ourselves, talk among ourselves, and
talk to you we're using the same metrics and
standards. Now, we can debate the standards, that's
fine, but we're all on the same page. Then, we can
work on sharing best practices, and again we're
talking the same language.

GEN CHIARELLI: We have a little bit of a
problem with that. We have made a commitment with the
Army Family Covenant to provide a certain level of
service to our families.

On those joint installations where we are
not the senior partner and can't provide it, we have
agreed in all of our MOUs that we will provide, the
Army will provide, to that level. At this time
because of joint basing to fall off of that if, in
fact, the lead service does not want to provide that,
that's just something we can't do.

ADM GREENERT: Then, first up is, What is it
that you use to measure whatever that entitlement is,
Step 1. Then, the debate can be, and you're certainly
welcome because of your Title 10 commitment to your
soldiers, it would be fine in my view. But if we
can't even talk on the same metric, I don't know how
we could ever get resolution.

GEN CHIARELLI: That's fine. I just don't want that metric or that standard or whatever to be binding to the point where it would in somehow impact on that.

ADM GREENEERT: All right. My suggestion would be, Step 1, let's determine what the metrics would be, again, so we can have -- I couldn't even have the debate with you now if I were the senior service or you were because, who knows, we would be searching for common ground.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Your recommendation No. 12 would be to develop common metrics to measure the success of Military Family Readiness Programs?

ADM GREENEERT: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Mr. Myers.

MR. MYERS: As part of the joint basing effort, all of the services agreed on standards for all programs, and I believe they were signed by the vice chief of staffs of each service.

GEN CHIARELLI: I'm the vice and in every one of our MOUs we are upholding the Army Family
Covenant standards, and we said that in the MOUs. I am not in any way saying that this isn't a very, very important initiative. I just want to go on record, since we're taking notes, that the Army Family Covenant is something the Army continues to provide regardless.

GEN CHANDLER: Did we ever run into a scenario where some of the standards were higher than the covenant, than those that we elected? I think in the COPs we took the highest. But I don't know, you can back me up on this. That was all negotiated with the MOUs.

GEN CHIARELLI: I can't give you -- no, I can't.

GEN CHANDLER: But, I mean, the danger in that would be -- and I don't disagree with you. You guys have put a lot of effort into the covenant. But there may actually be some things that would help up the ante for your folks, maybe. That's why I would look at it.

ADM GREENERT: I would have no problem with that.
GEN CHIARELLI: I would have no problem in
upping the ante, increasing the covenant up. I just
don't want to be in a situation where if there is a
disparity between a metric, so much childcare, so to
speak, and we have promised something else over time
before the joint basing idea, that we, in fact, end up
following off of that in order to meet a common
standard, if you understand what I'm saying.

GEN CHANDLER: Well, we would be interested
in applying your metric if we found it to be better
for the folks. That's how I feel.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: So what do "metrics"
mean here?

ADM GREENERT: Well, for example, childcare,
and I'll get it exactly wrong, but, you know, you
measure the number of children within the population
of the base or whatever, I think. So it's children
served. You say, okay, well, that's your metric for
childcare.

Next, this is your family service center.
You know, what do we measure? Families? Service
provided? How many centers you have? I don't know.
If somebody says, "Ah, that's all out there Greenert."

I'd say, "Just point me to the book. I'll go look at it." That way I know how to talk to it in my service. And if I walk down to see Pete Chiarelli or Howie Chandler and, you know, say, "I want your get best practice," I am at least talking the same metric. That's all. That's what I'm pursuing first.

GEN CHANDLER: See, I think I agree with Pete here to the point where it might be good to take, if the issue is are we uniformly providing a service across the Force, which is what I think you're asking.

ADM GREENERT: No.

GEN CHANDLER: That's not what you're asking?

ADM GREENERT: I'm not asking if we're uniform yet. I'm just asking if whatever the service is we're providing, by whatever means we measure our acceptance or satisfaction within that service, that somehow it's interrelated between us.

So that if I were going to have a constituency go to your base or our base, we'd say,
"And the model is," or "The measure of service is,"
and then similarly when we prepare programs and
budgets.

GEN CHANDLER: All right. You know, I would
submit the first step is we compare what we each do in
the areas that we're interested in, and then maybe we
go after metrics, just as a thought, John.

ADM GREENERT: By whatever means, just so
that there can be an understanding. I sense we have,
you know, we call this -- we have Navy Safe Harbor,
the Army Covenant; is that right? I say, "Okay, well,
that's the cover."

GEN CHANDLER: Sure, right.

ADM GREENERT: And then you start turning
from the window and say, "Well, how do you do this?"
Because we're going to have to -- I think we need to
share best practices. I'd love to do that.

GEN CHANDLER: If there are some specific
areas that we want to dig into, I'd be interested in
seeing a three-column or a four-column or whatever is
appropriate on what we each do in that area.

ADM GREENERT: I really think that would be
the start.

GEN CHANDLER: Because there are going to be
some whys and wherefores for why the Army does what it
does and why you do what you do.

ADM GREENERT: Sure.

GEN CHANDLER: I just don't know what areas
you're interested in.

GEN CHIARELLI: I think that's a great idea.

ADM GREENERT: Family, I'm interested in the
family, the Military Family Readiness Programs.

Whether there are this (indicating) many or two hands
and my feet, I don't know.

GEN CHANDLER: Yes.

ADM GREENERT: Because right now, I'm not
sure I could tell you.

GEN CHANDLER: Well, I doubt it any of us
will agree on how many there are to start.

(General laughter.)

ADM GREENERT: Well, I think we've got to
declare it because we testified to it.

GEN CHANDLER: Yeah. No, I understand. I
wasn't there for that testimony. But I don't disagree
with what you're saying about trying to get our arms
around the programs themselves because that's part of
the finding and the summaries we still have to do.

SGTMAJ GREEN: Right here, right around the
Capital region, we just want joint base. The only
joint base that the Marine Corps has is right here
with Myer and Henderson Hall.

We kept our programs separate. We do visit
the programs to see best practices, but the programs
are kept separate. The Marine Corps and Army wanted
to do that for a purpose.

It was just like you said, sir. You know,
because we have specific -- you know, not necessarily
different family needs but service needs, and we share
those. Whatever the best practices are, we do share
it, share among each other, but we have separate. And
that's in the MOU. Yeah, we have that.

CHAIRPERSON McCINN: So maybe the
sub-bullets to this recommendation begin with that the
first step is to assess current metrics used in each
of the military services?

ADM GREENERT: That's a great idea. How
about each of the services bring forth what they
consider their military family readiness programs,
plural. That would be interesting, to make sure that
we all consider what they are, and then what their
metrics are for each. How do you measure? And then
we can worry about levels. I'm not sure we need to
worry about that. Then, we can share best practices
and look and say, "How do you do that? Why is it
that?" I think I'm very interested in what the Army
is doing. They've been doing it for a while.

CHAIRPERSON MCGINN: That might be a good
topic for the next meeting.

Commander Skinner, you're looking like you
want to say something, jumping up and down.

CDR SKINNER: Just a little history on the
last report to Congress, not for the Council but for
DoD. We had working groups with all four services on
the metrics. Metrics do exist, but none of them are
the same.

(General laughter.)

CDR SKINNER: Just, I mean, understanding,
sir, we have assessed the metrics that are out there,
but they are not common across DoD and so that's why some of the parts that were reported to Congress were a little thin in the bill's metrics area because there are only very few that are common across the services.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: So can I suggest that rather a recommendation we make that an agenda item for the next meeting?

ADM GREENERT: I'm fine. I just think that in order for us to get a common DoD constituency understanding of what we do and to share best practices, we're going to have to decide the language we're going to speak in a topical area among ourselves.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay.

GEN CHANDLER: If we could task each of our service representatives to just get in a room with a butcher of paper until we've solved this, that might work for us.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay.

Mr. Myers?

ADM GREENERT: Not a "butcher knife," a butcher of paper.
GEN CHANDLER: Paper.

(General laughter.)

MR. MYERS: Right now, we have an initiative and we have been working with the services to develop standards for Family Readiness Programs and we're working with the Council on Accreditation. I think once we get the standards, from there we can talk metrics, and so forth.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Good.

ADM GREENERT: I'm sorry, Gail, I'm not sure I can agree with that. I don't know how if I don't have a metric, you know, what water fills the glass that's ounces? What level do you fill? I need metrics to get to a standard? A standard without metrics? How in the heck do I do that? So, you will have to explain that to me.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay. We'll tee this up for the next Council meeting, so we can have a more considered recommendation for the next time around.

Is that okay? Does that work?

(No verbal response.)

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay.
MR. THOMAS: Okay. We have two more slides, Gail. Basically, what those slides are, again, is more or less outlining the time frames and when we need to have things submitted to Congress. This report is in February and the statistics for the next meeting is next.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: So we'll add this last item to that list; okay.

Next slide.

MR. THOMAS: We've already had that.

(General laughter.)

DISCUSSION:

SERVICE EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAMS

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: The next slide is Exceptional Family Member Programs. The Congress has been very interested in or development of the Exceptional Family Member Programs.

The NDAA has directed that we establish an office for support to families with special-needs children -- well, I'm summarizing that, that's not the exact title -- that would report to the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness.
Folks thought that there might be some
desire to have some discussion about that at this
point. If there is, we can; and if not, we will move
on.

(No verbal response.)

MS. HRUSKA: Ms. McGinn, I just wanted to
publicly commend DoD for all the work that they have
been putting into the Exceptional Family Member
Program. I was privileged to have attended the joint
training, and it was very heartening. There are just
a lot of committed people to the program, committed to
getting the services to our families. So, I just
wanted to publicly put that on the record.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Well, thank you very
much. I know a lot of people are working hard on it,
and there is a lot of work to be done on it. This
office will be a key player in doing that. If nothing
else on Exceptional --

MAJ MURRAY: Gail, can I say something?

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Yes, Sheryl.

MAJ MURRAY: General Amos would reach out
and slap me if I didn't comment for the Marine Corps
the emphasis that the commandant and the ACMC have put on this particular program.

I'm sure this is going on across all services, but we have in the Marine Corps have had a significant growth in enrollment, which in the past as we all know there is some stigma to even enrolling in it because of the emphasis that they've taken.

Respit care, monthly respit care, money for the families of exceptional family members so they don't have to use their ECHO benefits. Under TRICARE for this, they get monthly respit care that's funded for by the Marine Corps.

This has been a tremendous incentive for our special families, our exceptional family members, to enroll in the program. It has resulted in a growth of significant numbers since we implemented that. In addition, we have assigned a family caseworker to each of our families.

So there are lots of initiatives. I know the other services have done that as well. But this has been something the Marine Corps has really put a huge emphasis on in the last couple of years.
DISCUSSION OF OTHER ITEMS

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Great. Thank you very much.

If nothing else on this topic, I'd just like to turn for a moment to our Special Advisor, Mrs. Casey, and see if she has any words that she would like to add to our discussion today.

MRS. CASEY: One of the things when we talked about this last part with the sharing of the best practices there is a part of me that kind of had to chuckle, because on the family side we managed to share our best practices without having a matrix because we live it every day, you know.

So, I think that that's really kind of an important group to really listen to about what really are the best practices because the number of childcares is not going to tell you how well the service is being delivered.

You know, we have an issue on a lot of posts in the Army that we have lots of childcare space; we don't have the workers, you know. It's pretty hard to get Congress to dictate people to come to work. You
know, some of that is an issue, an issue for us.

I want to agree with Pete Chiarelli on, you know, the computer issue and more programs to go to.

I mean, it's so complicated right now. We need one place.

You know, Private Smith's wife doesn't care about the policy. She just cares about "What's there and how do I get it and how do I get it quickly. And, oh, by the way, can I get it the same way at Fort Hood as I can at Fort Polk." So, I think that those are the kinds of things we need to really think about instead of just "Let's create another portal."

MRS. CASEY: It's having something that all of us can go to and just get the information quickly.

You know, I know when I go on Web sites, if I can't get the answer pretty quickly, I'm out of there. We have a lot of stuff available, but it's very cumbersome to get to it. We really have to work on that.

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Thank you.

Okay. Any other comments from the council members?
CLOSING REMARKS

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Okay. Let me look at my closing remarks and see what Commander Skinner wants me to say here.

(General laughter.)

CHAIRPERSON McGINN: Oh, yes. As a reminder again, all of our deliberations are required to be transparent to the public, so if there are any further exchanges among you on our recommendations and concerns discussed today, make sure that you cc me and Commander Skinner on any email or correspondence that you might have on that related to the Council. So, he runs a tight ship.

Thank you. So, thank you all very much.

See you next time.

Thanks, Commander Skinner.

(Whereupon, at 2:42 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.)

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