

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

SAUL / ZILKHA ROOM

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF PERSISTENT MILITARY SPOUSE UNEMPLOYMENT?

Washington, D.C.

Monday, October 21, 2019

PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction:

MICHAEL E. O'HANLON
Senior Fellow
The Brookings Institution

Panel:

HOLLY PETRAEUS, Moderator
Former Assistant Director for Servicemember Affairs
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

MARCUS BEAUREGARD
Director, State Liaison Office
U.S. Department of Defense

JEN DAVIS
Deputy Director, Government Relations
National Military Family Association

MIKE HAYNIE
Vice Chancellor, Strategic Initiatives & Innovation
Executive Director, Institute for Veterans & Military Families,
Syracuse University

ELIZABETH O'BRIEN
Senior Director, Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Program
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning everyone. And welcome to Brookings. Thank you for coming. I'm Mike O'Hanlon with the Foreign Policy program.

And I have the honor today of just introducing and kicking off an event that Holly Petraeus will then direct as Moderator, with a remarkable panel that she'll introduce in just a moment.

Let me just a brief word about the subject we're here to discuss today. A brief about good friend Holly Petraeus, and then I'll turn the baton and podium over to her for the discussion, and we'll go. I think Holly will have a conversation up here with the panelists for about half our time, and then go to you, roughly for the for the other half with Q&A.

As you know, we are going to discuss *Military Spouse Unemployment* today. And by way of broad background, Holly has got an excellent introduction that she'll provide in just a moment. But let me just say that as I started to learn issues of defense budget and economics, and military family, morale and well-being over the years, one of the things I was gratified to see, as I got into this field in the 1980s and '90s, is that military compensation was actually pretty strong, relative to the same age, education cohort in the private sector in the United States.

And that was a result largely of the Reagan buildup, and general commitment to the all-volunteer military that was sustained thereafter by both parties, and virtually all Presidents. But of course that general truth obscured a lot of challenges that remain.

One was clearly, how we were asking of our men in uniform, especially after the 9/11 attacks, and the big wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But also of course, in today's economy, where most families, or at least many families require two spouses to be working, if they're fortunate enough to have two spouses in the same family, for their financial wellbeing, it's harder a military family where one of the persons is not in the military, and has to sort of follow the other around, and see what jobs they might be able to obtain, at whatever facility, whatever posting the military deems to provide their husband or wife.

And of course the military doesn't always worry about where the spouse can get a job, or where the family might prefer to go in making these assignments.

And so as a result of the realities of military life, we have a high military spouse

unemployment and underemployment problem, which means that even if compensation looks pretty good in one sense, for individual servicemen and women, it may not be as strong across the force, which raises issues of fairness and equity, it also raises issues and challenges for recruiting and retention.

So that's the general motivation, which I think probably all of you, intuitively get, which is part of why you're here today, so let me say no further word about that.

And just a brief word about my good friend, Holly Petraeus, whose commitment as a member of her family to the U.S. Army, makes her husband, Dave's commitment, look like sort of Johnny-come-lately by comparison. She can date roots with the U.S. Military back to the Revolutionary War. I told her in the Green Room that I had an impression, or maybe it was a misperception that a Knowlton family member had actually fought and died in the battle of Manhattan in the Revolution.

She told me I might not have had all my details right, but she appreciated the spirit of my comment, and it wasn't too far off. I also think of her as growing up as the daughter of the Superintendent at West Point who did so much to help preserve and protect, and save, really, the Army as institution, in the aftermath of some of the most difficult periods, at the end of and immediately after the Vietnam War.

Never wanting to go far from her Army Green she then went to Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, not too far away from the Army War College, and was a military wife, and spouse, and mother for many years before then becoming the Assistant Director for Military Families at the Consumer Financial Protection Board, where she worked on the financial wellbeing and protection of men and women in uniform for six years, before retiring in 2017.

I'll also say one final word, which is, many of the members of this panel, as she'll say in a moment, that they have various affiliations today, one from the Department of Defense, one from Syracuse, so on and so forth, but many of them have Air Force background, coincidentally.

Holly, in addition to having that Army green in her blood, about as profoundly as anybody I know, is also an Honorary Chief Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy, I just learned. So it turns out we have all three Military departments represented here today. And of course the Marines represented through Holly with her Navy affiliation.

So, without further ado, please join me in welcoming the great panel to Brookings.

(Applause)

MS. PETRAEUS: Good morning everybody. I think I'm going to stand up just for this bit since I'm somewhat vertically challenged, and you might want to actually be able to see me. So, here I am.

And thank you Dr. Mike, for that kind introduction. No, he didn't die in the battle of Manhattan, just saying. But I do have a lot of military in my family, and like my husband who is the son of a Dutch Sea Captain, who ended up on in the U.S. when Holland was invaded during World War II. So, the Military really is all on my side.

I was delighted to be asked by Dr. O'Hanlon to moderate this panel, which as you know, is going to take a look at military spouse unemployment, and its impact on the military families. So, I hope to take sort of a macro look at that.

Certainly there's been a lot of attention I think this year, on military spouse unemployment, the fact that it is far higher than the national average by most measures and seems to be stubbornly stuck at about 25 percent which is obviously not what we'd like to see.

And there are a lot of good minds address themselves to the issue, and we're fortunate to have four true experts here with us today, from a variety of sectors, government industry, and academia, and non-profit. So I'm really excited to hear from them. You may have had a chance to read their bios, but I want to tell you a little bit about them myself.

First, on the far end there, we have Marcus Beauregard, the Director of the Department of Defense State Liaison Office. I won't say he's been a fixture at the Pentagon, but he does come pretty close. He's been there for 20 years. I first met him in 2004 when he had just swapped his Air Force uniform for a civilian suit and tie.

And he's been faithfully working all this time to address issues that affect the quality of life of service members and their families. Specifically, now state licensing issues, which we'll get into more later, but he also has a very broad perspective on this, and a historical perspective, about what's been accomplished over the years, and what still needs to be done, both at the state and the DoD level, and I very much look forward to hearing from him.

Second, we have someone else I've known since he was in uniform, and that is Dr. Mike Haynie, who created and is the Executive Director of Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families.

I remember when he first went to Syracuse to tell them about his idea for a research effort focusing on the military and their families, and I guess he's done okay up there, because he's now not just the Director of the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, but he's a Vice Chancellor, and a named University Professor, that's in capitals, which is apparently a title that they very rarely give out. So, not bad.

And not bad for the Military and their families either, because they're now the beneficiaries of what is recognized as a leading academic voice studying, publishing, and speaking out about the issues. So, welcome, Mike.

Next up, from the Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Chamber, we have Liz O'Brien, who Heads up the Military Spouse portion of their successful, Hiring Our Heroes Program. She joined Hiring Our Heroes in 2014 and has really expanded the impact and focus of the spouse program. It's not just about including them and hiring fairs anymore, it's much more than that. She Co-Chairs the Military Spouse Employment Advisory Council, which is a coalition of companies looking to bring innovative ideas to military spouse recruitment and retention. And she's launched the Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zones, which I'm really interested to hear more about.

I should add, that a whole lot of people tell me that I really need to get Liz O'Brien for this panel, so she has a lot of fans out there.

And finally, last but not least, let me introduce Jen Davis, who is the Government Relations Deputy Director at the National Military Family Association which, by the way, is celebrating its 50th year of serving as a leading non-profit voice speaking out on behalf of military families. She is an Air Force Vet, yes, we have three of them up here, as Dr. O'Hanlon said, and she's also a military spouse in 15 years. So we are getting a two-for with her.

And luckily for us her focus at NMFA includes spouse employment and financial literacy. And I look forward to learning what she's hearing from military spouses on the topics we're discussing

today. NMFA does give educational scholarships to military spouses and that application process includes a survey so there's good first-hand data there, and I look forward to hearing from her.

And I should say she's a bit emblematic of what we're going to talk about today, because she is living and working here in D.C. while her Air Force husband is assigned elsewhere, so, a perfect example of a modern military family.

So, before we go to the first kind of question that we're going to discuss up here, I thought I would kick things off by talking a little bit about my own employment, or should I say unemployment experience as a military spouse, through 37 years of active duty, and 24 moves.

I started as a GS-3 Clerk Typist, with my college degree in hand, at the little post overseas where we were first stationed, because that's all that was available. When we moved back to the States, I discovered that three years of working for the U.S. Government in Italy did not count at all in the civil service system at that time. It was what was called excepted service. So I had to start again from the outside.

And once again, the only way I could get in was a GS-3 level job. This time it was something called a Machine Operator. Do you all remember the overhead transparencies that we used to use? Well, my job was to make those. It was a very stinky process with a lot of ammonia as I recall. So not something I wish to do as a career, shall we say.

And there were career openings at Fort Stewart in the GS-7, 9, 11 career path, but there was a real stumbling point for me which was that they all required a mobility agreement, you had to sign something saying you were willing to move if the government could not place you where you were.

And I didn't feel I could sign that in good conscience, so that really limited my options. When I left Fort Stewart I'd finally made it to GS-7 in a track called Management Assistant, but at that point I gave up my not so stellar government career and became a stay-at-home mom, like many fellow military spouses, and I did that for 22 years.

Like many of those spouses I think especially of my generation, but many still today, I turned my energies to volunteering as we continued to move from post, to post, to post. And in that process kind of developed a lot of job skills, I think it's important to say that volunteering actually does

develop job skills, many that translate very well to the business world, as I found later.

So I didn't have a paid job again, let alone a career, until I was in my 50s. During the first year of the Iraq war I ended up in a fairly visible, unofficial position representing families in 101st Airborne Division during that year of deployment. And in that role I got to know a lot of business leaders in the local area, including the Head of the Better Business Bureau of Nashville Tennessee.

And that led to my being offered a job running a National Military Program for them, and I will be eternally grateful to them for thinking outside the box and ignoring my unusual resume. In fact, they didn't even ask me for a résumé until after I started working. The HR Director came by and said: Do you have a résumé? And I said, you usually ask people that before you hire them.

I could write you one. And she said, would you please, just for the files. So I wrote a résumé, a lot of blank spaces there, as you can imagine, but I had a wonderful six years there. And that led to my being offered the job to be the first Head of the Office of Servicemember Affairs at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

So I look at military spouse unemployment obviously through my own personal lens, some things have certainly changed for the better for military spouses since 1974, I think of the possibility to be able to telework, to work remotely, there's greater public support and awareness of military families than there was back in the '70s, that's for sure.

But unfortunately, there are some things that haven't changed. There are still employers who look at your résumé with all the multiple moves and the blank spaces and think, nope, nope, not worth it. And don't hire you.

And there's also, frankly, still the challenge of finding any career that's going to thrive through 20-plus moves, very, very challenging whether you're self-employed or you have an employer.

And I want to mention, I think there's one thing that's changed for the worse since my days, and that is family economics. The question has to be asked: Can military families today make it on just one income? The problem is not inflation, as Dr. O'Hanlon mentioned, you know, military salaries have kept pace with that, but it's the cost of a number of big-ticket items in your life that have vastly outstripped inflation.

I did a little -- very unofficial looking around on the web and read an estimate that since 1970 inflation has amounted to about 350 percent, but education and housing have both gone up over 900 percent. So it's a vastly bigger chunk of that budget.

You know, I sometimes hear people talk about how they worked their way through college when they were young, that's not achievable now, you know, what you could do maybe with 14 hours a week working, now you would have to work about 35 hours a week to actually make enough money for it to be an impact. So, and think about the cost of cars which has vastly outstripped inflation as well, and frankly, many military families are entering the military already in the hole with a significant student loan debt.

And sadly even with the GI Bill possibility of the assignment of benefits, and some of the other programs, it's still a budget killer. And I cringe when I see people piling up debt that is going to impact their entire lives.

So again, can the single-income family really still do it anymore? And if they can't that leads me to the first question that I want our panelists all to talk about which is: Given the need for two incomes and military families and the challenges that presents to military spouses, is this changing the very nature of today's military family?

And by that I mean, do spouses and children still see themselves as a military family first? Or do they see themselves as a two-career family with one member who has a job that requires them to be gone a lot? Are families choosing not to move with the military member and therefore not living in a military community at all? And if so, what is the incentive for them to identify themselves positively with the military, and to see continued military service as a positive for their family?

So, I'm really interested to hear what our great panelists have to say, they don't need to do -- get up here like I did, because they're taller than I am. But why don't we start -- get started, and we'll start at the end with Marcus and work our way down.

So, Marcus, over to you?

MR. BEAUREGARD: It's a very interesting question. I'd like to start just by asking: How many military spouses do we have in the audience? I suspected so you.

MS. PETRAEUS: Hellos, spouses.

MR. BEAUREGARD: So, you could tell us really what this amounts to, more than I think we can tell you. We know that it's certainly a decision process in terms of staying in the military, it's a family decision, you know, I think that that is -- it's almost an axiom now. You know, we recruit the service member, we retain the family.

But I think the last statistic I saw was something like 65 percent of families make that determination around the kitchen table. And that's a determination of, what are we going to do next. And so I think if there is a desire, I've never heard other than that, but the determinations are such that we're a family unit, we got to make decisions.

So I think the Department is very cognizant of that and sees that as a very important part of the strategy to maintain lethality, having the military family are a part and parcel of that, part of the Department's strategy.

The Secretary made a statement basically saying, we're going to add to the National Defense Strategy, and I'm putting on to it, taking care of military families because it is essential. So, I'll turn it over.

MR. HAYNIE: Thanks for the intimidating. You know, all those -- all those hands. I'm not a military spouse. That said, I am thrilled to be here. We should be having more conversations like this. I think when we talk about the issues of military-connected families broadly, other members of those families have natural constituents, the veterans have the VA, service members have the DoD.

This is a community that doesn't necessarily have that bylaw constituency, if you will. And I think as a consequence very often the issues and concerns that impact this community as critical as those impacting a service member or a veteran are often left less discussed. You know, I do think the question that -- that teed us off, when you look at the data, you know, over the course of the last decade or so, it is true that today military families are more and more less likely to recommend the Military Service to their children, than they were as recently as five years ago.

That should tell us something, and it should scare us. It should bother us that about one-third of military spouses do not live in the household with their -- with their spouse who is serving, they are

somewhere living apart. There's not enough research that's being done as to the issues, questions, concerns impacting this community. Certainly from an economic perspective, undoubtedly, we're in a position where our military families are -- the stability and the health of those families is compromised as a function of the economic situation that they face today.

Not only is underemployment for spouses significantly higher than their non-military connected peers and in the workforce, underemployment is also significantly higher, it's clear from the data, multiple studies military spouses earn less, controlling for education, industry, et cetera, earn even - more less -- that's not great English coming from the academic on the panel -- in that in that first year after transition.

And I think if we have to -- my view is if we're going to get this right we have to shift the mindset about military spouses and families more broadly to understand that they are always in transition.

There's a constant transition that is happening and must be navigated largely a burden shouldered by the military spouse, and the extent to which there are resources and support positioned around the spouse, I would argue, we have a long way to go. So maybe I'll just stop at that.

MS. O'BRIEN: I think you hit it on the head. We have a long way to go. Several weeks ago I was digging through archives and the internet, and I stumbled upon a document from 1985, you know, it was in the -- in the purple copy that our photocopies used to be, and then I thought, oh well, this is fascinating military spouses are unemployed at 30 percent it was in 1985.

And so we keep coming back to, if we have all of these great institutions, companies, non-profits, organizations that are aligning to combat military spouse unemployment, why is the needle not moving in 2011 and '10, and '09, when we when we were looking at historic levels of unemployment for veterans?

The country rallied together, and they said we're going to knock this down. And now we're at historic lows of veteran unemployment, but for some reason we're not able to rally the country around military spouse unemployment. And when the reality is, is that many of our challenges are the same as our civilian counterparts that are women, we're 92 percent female, we have a lot of struggles that our civilian counterparts have when you start looking at childcare, when you start looking about re-

entry to the workforce.

And so if there is a concerted effort, if we can convince companies and organizations that aren't in this bubble to come to the table and start to be part of that solution, we are then creating solutions for the rest of Americans that are facing those same challenges.

One of the things we did several years ago at Hiring Our Heroes, because we have the flexibility and everything we do is in compliment of our partners at DoD, at the Federal Government, we're there to supplement, we're never there -- we're always there to walk hand-in-hand with them, but we do have that flexibility.

And for us we said, well what is a military spouse, because we kept ending up with spouses at our door that were looking for unemployment but couldn't qualify and access programs on the Federal side. And so for us because we have that flexibility, a military spouse, as anyone who feels their career has been impacted by a service member's commitment to this country.

So it allows us to serve active duty, reserve, National Guard, divorced spouses. I mean we were encountering spouses who had moved 8, 9, 10 times in 13 years, ended up divorced and had no résumé, and no way to find a point of entry into the workforce.

And so we are trying very hard to build a very big tent, we don't view ourselves as a one-size-fits-all solution. If we can't serve them we're handing them off to NMFA, we're redirecting them to DoD. But the reality is, it's that dual income families are part American life and we need that same access and opportunity.

If we intend to keep our best and brightest service members in the Military, and have those conversations at home around the kitchen table like we do very often in my own house, we have to provide an opportunity for military families to have economic stability. We have to provide opportunity for spouses who are carrying student debt, the majority of folks now come out with student debt and we drop them in Fort Polk, Louisiana. I'm Army, I don't know anything else.

But I know Fort Polk, Louisiana, and Fort Irwin are not on our places that we're going, because we're dropping folks there, and then what the ramifications of that are, we now have to live separately because I have to pay my student debt back, I don't want to go into default.

Several years ago the Joint Spouses brought myself and our President, Eric Eversole, over to talk about how they could better reach into the communities because spouses are no longer volunteering, because they're living, geographically separated, because they're remaining connected to their hometowns through social media, and they're never integrating into the community that they're a part of.

And it was really eye-opening that folks at the highest level were having the same struggles and concerns that we're having about connectivity. We know about 70 percent of families are living off installation now, and spouses don't feel connected to the military, and they don't feel connected to their community.

And so if we don't have an opportunity to put them in the pipeline to go to work we're talking about serious issues of isolationism as well. And it could just go down the line, but end of the day we have to find ways to put military spouses to work so that our families, not only are we retaining them, but when the service member transitions, we are not going from two-salary to one-salary, and not going from one salary to zero salary; because those impacts on the transitioning service member of taking that first available job and then leaving halfway through in the first year, are astronomical, so. I could go on all day.

MS. DAVIS: I agree with a lot of what Liz was and that's -- I'm going to say some of the same things, but this question is pretty interesting. One of the things that I did was -- at first I started thinking about this question from my own perspective, in my own experiences, and then I thought, NMFA has over 75 percent of our -- of my colleagues are military spouses.

And we are fortunate to have jobs, obviously, at this point but most of us have had moments of unemployment. So I asked: How do you identify? How did you identify? Did that take some time to kind of switch over to the military mindset? And most of them said, we identify as a military family right away, you know, always have, no matter if I've had employment or not, that's just who we are, and the military kind of demands that, our lifestyle demands that, in effect, it's more than just a job.

For some others it was, that's my spouse's job, and I have my own identity, and I have my own career and, you know, it affects our life, sure, but we, you know, kind of keep that separate. And

then for others it takes time. One of one of the spouses I talked to, she said, you know, I had my own identity, I had my own career, until we were forced to move where I had no job, and all I had was the Army. So then she really embraced it, and the family really embraced it.

But unemployment has a massive impact on spouses and families, and it's definitely not just the spouse, it always trickles down and ripples -- you know, ripple effects. But, you know, definitely there are physical, emotional and psychological elements that affect us, and it's not just, you know, related to deployments and frequent moves, but definitely employment.

Employment or unemployment can cause massive stress, and affect the mental health of the spouse who desires to work. Or as Liz was talking about, you know, has a student loan debt, that's significant especially nowadays, I feel like that's getting bigger and, you know, the numbers of spouses geo-batching (phonetic), or families geo-batching, I'm an example up here. But as I've been in this, I've been doing this for 36 months out of hopefully only 48.

Hopefully we've got one year left of geo-batching but I've come around and met so many other families who have done this, and I think it's just so important to consider, especially for the DoD to look at that and other, you know, companies and organizations that take surveys look at geo-batching and how it does and possibly will continue to affect retention and recruitment.

So, yeah, it's a it's a big thing I think identity I think it comes and goes but I think you can't get around what the military lifestyle demands of you. And yeah, military families are still military families.

MS. PETRAEUS: I think as you can see from our various perspectives here certainly not an easy topic to address, but again one that I think we need to be thinking about, and I was very struck by Dr. Haynie's point that families are not recommending military service to their kids anymore. So that's the ripple effect that we were talking about.

Also I was struck by, in this instance, social media is really not helping to create that sense of military community, it's the opposite. There, social media is tying them to back home, even though they're not physically there. And I have read a number of comments from military spouses that often say I don't -- I don't know anybody here.

There's nobody who can help me, and my family can't come and do it, and I thought, it's

maddening for DoD and everybody else when there are so many resources out there, and yet spouses are not being connected to them, and not seeing themselves as somebody who should even be looking for that.

So, lots of food for thought there. But now I get the fun part of asking our wonderful panelists: So what is being done? You know, what is your organization specifically doing to provide more opportunities for meaningful, sustained military spouse employment and how it's working?

And I'm going to start again with Marcus. And I will mention that his focus for some years now has been on the 50 states, and one issue that hadn't even occurred to me is how many jobs now require you to have a license to do that job. And it's not just the obvious ones, like lawyers or teachers, but florists, hairdressers, all sorts of ones that wouldn't occur to you, and yet to get a new license in that new state you've got to -- you've got to dig up the money to pay for it, and sometimes there are more requirements in that.

So Marcus has been working on that for many years along with other state issues, and also of course, he is aware of the Department of Defense's spouse employment effort too. So Marcus, over to you.

MR. BEAUREGARD: Thank you. Yes, the number is 34 percent of military spouses are in licensed professions I'll talk some about the issue of Licensing. I could talk for hours about that but I'll limit my comments.

I'll start with what the Department's doing as far as employment, and it is robust. I'll say that now. There's something called the Spouse Education Career Opportunities, SECO is the acronym.

How many out there have heard of SECO? Great. That's probably one of our biggest issues is the communication requirements and getting spouses to know that this resource is available. It's something that we constantly remind ourselves, is that we're not just working to educate one constituency, and once we tell them they'll know.

Because 250,000 leave and another 250,000 come in, and we have to start that process again, and we have to get the attention of young people who have many things on their plate. And so this idea that you all know about SECO is tremendous. Please tell anybody and everybody you know.

So, SECO what is it? It has four elements. There's a website, it's called MySECO, it has lots of resources on it, you can do chats on it, there's a career counseling center attached to it, so you can phone the center, they will walk you through a résumé, they will give you career coaching, they will give you an interest battery to determine what you would like to be involved in. Essentially they take an individual from wherever they are in that process and help them. They'll help them understand licensure issues.

Then there's MyCAA, which is My Career Advancement Account, it's available to military spouses E1 through E5, W1 and W2s, and then O1s and O2s. And it's a \$4,000-scholarship towards education. So another opportunity to get spouses engaged, and get them moving towards something that will be valuable to them.

And then finally there's the Military Spouse Employment Partnership, MSEP, has over 400 corporations involved, they've hooked up military spouse, almost 140,000 military spouse jobs through this process.

In fact, this Thursday, the 24th, they have another induction ceremony for more corporations who are engaging in this process, they're also looking to get the partners who are engaged in this to start figuring out what can we do about overseas employment, a huge problem.

That's one of the things, you know, the 24 percent unemployment, if you start cutting it different ways you'll find that, yeah, there are certain sectors that have a much higher concern, obviously overseas would be much higher, that contributes to that 24 percent.

Folks who have just arrived at an installation, they take the survey too they have a much higher incident of unemployment. Families with small children, obviously, that that also impacts their opportunity.

So that's probably the cornerstone of what the Department is doing. Obviously there is a lot of stuff that the Military departments are doing in addition to that, and so it's a matter of partnering up all those efforts that are happening at the installation level with these national-level resources so that the military spouse can take best advantage of all the small business opportunities along -- around the military installation, as well as these large corporations that may be able to provide them a job that is

transferable, a job that can transcend one installation because of the footprint of that corporation, or the group of corporations.

Because now they're starting to work and saying, hey, I've got a great person in IT or communications who will be perfect for your corporation. So they're starting to trade ideas, and trade information.

Also the one other thing about MSEP, it's one of the few opportunities where a military spouse can put their résumé, to post their résumé, and corporations can go to that site and search through that and find the right person without that person even, you know, selecting, I'd like to work for this corporation. So there's as much communication as possible in this in this environment.

As far as overseas employment, the Department of Defense civilian personnel system is doing as much as they can to support military spouse employment, and the best way they can do it is to make it's much flexibility in the hiring process.

So I was talking to Holly before, and gave an example of how difficult it was for her to get a job overseas, and that she just could not get into the system, she had to take a very low-paying job. Well, now the Department of Defense has worked its hiring system to where hiring officials get three bites, or three opportunities, three different ways to hire military spouse.

Through the competitive system, there's the military spouse preference, if that competitive system is open to everybody outside of the military, then they can select that military spouse if they're qualified equally to anybody else. You know, it's almost like mandatory they pick that individual. And then through the non-competitive system which is basically oriented towards picking veterans, military spouses are at that level now, so that they have an opportunity to be considered as well.

And of course the administration has very, very much positioned itself to support military spouse employment. The President established an Executive Order in 2018 to direct all Federal agencies to hire military spouses, and the Office of the Second Lady has been out working with employers, working with States, working with anybody that she can find to impress upon them the importance of this issue.

A couple of things I want to tell you about -- how much time do I have by the way?

MS. PETRAEUS: A couple more minutes.

MR. BEAUREGARD: A couple more minutes? Okay. Let me just talk about licensure.

The Department has been working on this for a while, since it's about 2011 we've been working with states to improve licensure for military spouses, and 2011 through 2016 we went through and, look, 47 states to put something on the books specifically for military spouses. We thought, okay, we got it. You know, it was either endorsement, temporary licensure, or expedited application processes. Then we had the University of Minnesota go and study it, because we kept on hearing, things aren't getting any better.

We found out that lots of the states weren't implementing those policies, and the demons are always in the details. So the things we found in the fine print on those things it's like an endorsement. We'll give you an endorsement, which means we'll give you a license for your license if it's substantially equivalent.

That sounds reasonable, except that substantial equivalency meant that the Board needed transcripts, practicum hours, test scores, all sorts of verifying documents which take time, take a lot of time, and energy, and money. And I see headshake saying, yes.

So we saw that as problematic. So there's sort of a sea change in because the Military Department Secretary said, spouse employment is important enough that we're going to make mission basing decisions partly on that, and that got the attention to the states, and states have continued now to improve upon those policies.

And so we're going to take advantage of that, we're going to give them, sort of, a mark in the sand. I'm not sure how it's going to work, but looking at some of the best practices we've seen, we're going to marry up some best practices so that states should be able to get a spouse a license in about 30 days.

It could be temporary, it could be permanent, but we also want to make sure that -- and we've seen states do that, there's lots of states are doing that, but they're doing it on that full application that requires all the verifying documents it takes about three months to pull together.

So we're going to go back and say, if you can do that but do it on an affidavit that says everything is true, accurate, and I will get you these documents, let me have the temporary license. So

that the military spouse can then get to work quickly, fulfill all the requirements of the state, because the state still has their responsibilities for public safety and insurance of the quality of the people that they allow in the state.

So we're saying that, okay, do that, but put them to work fast, or give them the opportunity to go find a job and they'll get all that documentation together. And of course the quid pro quo is that the military spouse must do that, otherwise they're not going to be able to go to work. They must get those documents together, they must take care of the requirements, but it gets them that opportunity to do it quickly.

One last thing and I'll get off the stage. Our long-term solution for this whole process is something called an Interstate Compacts for Occupations, because we see that this is a system that is the closest thing to what people have been talking about, reciprocity.

Essentially, a spouse gets to have one license in a home state, and then to use that license in all other member states without any other licensing requirements, nurses are doing that, physical therapists are doing that. We are starting with the audiology and speech pathology occupation, get that compact on the road.

So, we're seeing more of these, and we're working now with the profession of teachers and occupational therapists to get a compact going in those areas as well. They like to have us involved because they see military spouses as a very important constituency, they also recognize that they have very special needs, and they want to include the Department in talking to those occupations, as they try to solve it for their own occupation. So, I'll end there.

MS. PETRAEUS: As you can see a great resource who really has seen, seen the evolution of all of this. And now I'm going to move one space over to Mike Haynie, and hear from the world of academia, and what's being done, and what you've seen.

MR. HAYNIE: So, I'll build from the conversation on licenses and really expand -- I would argue that we should expand now the aperture, because in a similar way credentials are becoming the currency of the modern workforce. And I think if we look at how we can we can pull a policy lever, a programmatic lever to really move the needle on military spouse employment, underemployment, I think

one of the ways we can do it is working with industry, identifying in-demand labor-market-connected credentials, and then finding the means and mechanisms to put those credentials in the hands of spouses.

You know, for almost eight years I sat on the Department of Labor's Federal Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, and we talked about this issue all the time, and it became almost a little bit of a joke, honestly.

And I what I mean when I say that is we talked through -- we had policy conversations about how we could address credentialing. And I think at the end of the day, you know, one of the things I took away from almost eight years of those conversations is: Why don't we just do it?

And one of the things that we did at the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, with the help of some of our corporate partners, JPMorgan Chase, Accenture, with the help of some philanthropic partners; Howard Schultz, the former CEO and Chairman of Starbucks, is we created a program called Onward Opportunity.

This is a program that essentially is purpose-built, without apology, to put labor-market-connected credentials and certifications in the hands of veterans and military spouses. It's been open to military spouses since we created it now almost five years ago, 37 different pathways all available and accessible online that each lead to a different labor-market-connected credential or certification.

You know, the HR certifications, cybersecurity certifications, coding certifications, program management certifications, we offer this program, as I said, entirely online, but we also offer it in partnership with DoD, today on 18 military installations in residence also open to transitioning service members and spouses.

We'll put 14,000 people through this program this year alone, and I should have mentioned, I bury the lead sometimes. It's also entirely free. So if you look at, for example, one of the certification's more popular one is program management, PMP certification. That that certification if you go out in the world and sign up for a PMP prep course, it'll cost just somewhere, you know, 5,000 to \$7,500.

You can go through essentially that same course through Onward Opportunity, and if you

complete the training and sit for the practice exam, for the PMP certification, you pass the practice exam, we'll even pay your fee to sit for the actual PMP exam itself.

But the point of all this is, I think as we talk about licensure we should also be talking about -- you know, about half the -- half of the future jobs in this country require some kind of credential or certification, and more and more -- and I hate to say this as the Vice Chancellor of a university -- in many cases more so than a college degree, a credential is going to become the currency of the future labor market.

So I think one of the levers that that is just waiting for us to pull at scale as a community is this idea of really focusing credentials on military spouses, and so on there.

MS. PETRAEUS: Liz, over to you.

MS. O'BRIEN: Thanks. Excellent points. In 2014 I joined Hiring Our Heroes on the spouse side, and in 2015 I took over as Director of the program, and one of the first things I realized is that we were really built to serve the transitioning service member and the veteran community, right.

We were coming through with hiring events in locations with the idea that the person was getting out and going to stay in that location, and so at the time I think we had 18 hiring events that were happening for military spouses, and just based on our my own experience and my family's experience, that wouldn't work for me, because I might potentially come to Joint Base Lewis-McChord in March and Hiring Our Heroes has already come through with their hiring event, and I could potentially have to wait a whole year, or start to rebuild my network.

And so we took a hard look at our program and decided that we were really going to revamp and create a community-layered approach. And so we still host our hiring events because they're important, and we need to get spouses connected.

But what we've done now is build out our military spouse professional networks. We have over 55 networks around the globe, and so they are immediately, you have a community, as soon as you move, of like-minded spouses, folks that are seeking professional development opportunities, and that can occur when you are 18 years old, it can occur when you're 34 years old and think I'm not going to be a college basketball coach anymore, and I have to figure something out. Or it can happen when

you're 40 years old.

And so that network, you know, we know spouses who are employed and 67 percent of them leave a job for PCS, they're then looking at about a four-month, best-case scenario unemployment. So, if I know I'm moving from D.C. to Honolulu, Hawaii, I'm going to reach out to that network and get plugged in immediately. But that what we realized from there is about a year into that experiment was that spouses were networking with each other, and that was great, and they were able to leverage that community but they weren't getting connected into the business community.

And so we thought, well, we're the Chamber of Commerce, why is everyone not going to the Chamber of Commerce? But in reality the majority of spouses don't even know that they -- that one of their first stops should be American Job Centers through Department of Labor, or leveraging DoD systems, or going to their local Chambers of Commerce.

And so what we did was launched our Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zones. Those are zones that are built outside installation gates, and we are bringing pillars of industry in to create solutions for those communities. The D.C. -- Northern Virginia MCs looks very different than the State of Texas MCs than in the State of Washington, because we are building solutions for those communities.

And we're leaning on the folks within industry that are already committed to changing the narrative and the culture around military spouse hiring, so that they can reach into their industry and bring folks in. Because I'm sure if you guys look to your left and right in this room you're going to see a lot of familiar faces, and we are consistently talking to the same group over and over again.

But what we're trying to do is get companies and organizations to realize the value of their economy and the power that they bring through their brand to local communities, and the leverage that they can place, not only on other businesses, right.

Who doesn't want to be at the table with the Veterans Board of Appeals? Who doesn't want to be at the table with Amazon, et cetera? And so when they leverage their brand for good we start to see true cultural change happen. And that's what our Economic Empowerment Zones are doing.

And then the final layer right now that we have at Hiring Our Heroes is we've launched

our Military Spouse Fellowship Program. In 2016 we put it in our strategy document for our spouse -- our Military Spouse Advisory Council. And it's a play on the Career Skills Bridge Program, and our Successful Corporate Fellowship Program where we take a transitioning service member 180 days of transition and match them with a company, and DOD is kind enough to keep on paying them.

Well, I wanted that opportunity for our spouses but Uncle Sam wasn't going to pay for us. And so through a lot of hard work, and fundraising, and generosity from companies who actually realized they need military spouses in their pipeline, right. We're all in a war for talent right now, and we have a great pipeline of talent.

So we can now take a military spouse, I can take you for six weeks, I can partner you with a company that is within your industry, or one that you want to switch into, I will pay your stipend for up to 32 hours a week for six weeks. And the company though must have an open requisition at the end of it. So we're not here for the experience, right, we're here to put military spouses into the hiring pipeline.

And how do we actually prove to a company that military spouses are worth hiring? Put them in front of them let them see what they can do, and that begins to change the culture.

We had a great pilot, courtesy of a DOL grant in Anne Arundel, and I can tell you of the 130 spouses that went through 83 percent of them were hired, 83 percent of them. There was a Defense contractor that offered a spouse a job initially before this, offered her a starting salary, even though she had about 15 years of experience. And she said, no, I'm worth more than that. She went through the Fellowship Program, and six weeks later they offered her \$82,000.

I can tell you, we've just launched a National Capital Region, and our early successes are coming in. We had a spouse that was offered a starting salary last week of \$150,000 with a signing bonus of \$40,000, another spouse was offered a starting salary of 125,000.

Is every situation going to look like that? No, because we're launching all over the country, right. We've got the National Capital Region, we have San Antonio, we have Colorado Springs, we'll launch in San Diego later this week, then we'll roll out to Honolulu, Hawaii, and Tampa. And you can tell that these are companies that are committed to supporting military spouses because they want them in the pipeline.

And, you know, this isn't something that's only occurring on our side of the House. You know, I look at the great solutions that Chairman Mason is creating at the Veterans' Board of Appeals, where she's looking with her direct hiring authority to bring military spouses in.

And I look at what the TJAC Program is doing on the Army side where they have the ability to use a direct hiring authority to bring military spouses in. And so really we're starting to see the cultural shift happen, not only externally with our public companies, but we're watching solutions within Federal Government. And if we can change culture within Federal Government and move that needle, can you imagine once what the country is going to see and take that model. And if we can do that at the highest levels, then why can't we do it in our public practices as well.

But I will tell you is: are you willing to be that internal champion, right? I'm looking at folks sitting in this room, and I know that they have their day jobs, right, but they are, for their side jobs, spending hundreds of hours championing change for military spouses. And so everybody in this room has to consider themselves, a champion of change, or we're going to be here in another 15 years having this same conversation. And for me that's not okay.

MS. PETRAEUS: Well put. And now we'll go to Jen, to talk a bit about the non-profit sector. Thank you.

MS. DAVIS: Yes. So at NMFA we are a non-profit. As Holly was saying, we have an advocacy arm, that's part of what I do on a daily basis. And then we have programs. So we have a scholarship program, I'll talk about that first.

Holly had mentioned earlier, our scholarships can be used for traditional education, or for a licensure or certification, for supervision hours, we are one of the only people, if not the only group that allows scholarships to be used for supervision hours, as you're working up toward getting a license. And also the scholarships can be used for entrepreneurial experience -- expenses for those starting or, you know, having a business and having those expenses.

So, this year alone we are sitting at about 720 military spouses that we've awarded \$720,000, that's pretty extensive, and ever since 2004 we've awarded over 4,700 spouses \$5.7 million in scholarship funds.

So, with that in mind obviously they can use it for a broad range of things but we also look at how other scholarship programs could maybe be utilizing -- or spouses could be utilizing those funds, and maybe be expanded. So one of them is MyCAA when it comes to the advocacy part, one of the things we're looking at -- and I know DoD is talking about how could they expand MyCAA, but we'd like to see it expanded not just for when we're talking about ranks, like E6s and O3s, but also when it comes to what you can use that for.

Because it's pretty targeted what you can use those funds for, but we'd like to see it opened a little bit, and supervision hours it seems to be like for mental health professionals, or for healthcare professionals, that would be a great way to expand that program.

We'd also like to see expansion of the Relicensure, Reimbursement Program, a pilot program that the services all just rolled out their policies. They were running about 18 months late so we have talked to many congressional members about expanding that, or extending that program beyond the 2022 Sunset deadline. So we'd like to see that go beyond 2022, just to get good data about, you know, how many spouses have been able to take advantage of this program, and do we need to expand it beyond that.

We'd also like to see the allowance for that, the funds raised, we know right now it's up to \$500 for those relicensure fees for spouses, but we'd like to see that raised because we know a lot of spouses end up paying, you know, sometimes a 1,000 and \$2,000 every time they PCS.

I had a friend do that, she is a psychologist, and going to California, and she spent \$2,500 on one PCS. So we'd like to see that that allowance raised.

Marcus was talking about interstate compacts, we're encouraged that there are four active interstate compacts right now for EMS, for psychologists, for physical therapy, and --

QUESTIONER: Nurses.

MS. DAVIS: Nurses, yes nurse licensure program is -- for compact is pretty good. But we'd like to see those expanded in other states. I think the nurse one is probably the biggest one, and the most states have signed on to that. But one of the things I was talking to Marcus before about what can't we do, what can spouses do.

Share your story with the state legislators, and in the state that you're stationed. So even if you're not a constituent, you know, you're not voting for them, and like me, I'm a Florida resident but I'm stationed in Virginia. If I've got a licensure issue in the State of Virginia, I'm going to Virginia, and I'm going to share my story.

So go share your story, testify before them, the State Legislature season is coming up in the beginning of the year, so it's a great time to kind of get your story together, and find out who you need to talk to, and get connected.

Another thing that probably the biggest thing I've been working on this year is a Work Opportunity Tax Credit target group for military spouses. And I know that we've seen this, and for veterans, for qualified veterans but -- and there's been a lot of activity to try to get at this unemployment rate for military spouses, but we've never done a tax credit to incentivize employers to hire us.

And that's one of the biggest push backs from employers is, I know you're going to PCS in two to three years. You know, so giving them -- incentivizing them to take that perceived risk because we're just as awesome as anybody else, if not more. We're more educated, definitely more experienced in a lot of ways. But just encouraging them and giving them that incentive to take that chance.

Another thing that we as an organization do is we have these Facebook groups for professional, you know, for nurses, for teachers, for mental health professions, and just looking at the peer-to-peer support, hosting that and seeing how spouses help each other, whether it's, you know, what should I use my CAA for? You know, I've got this opportunity, what credential should I go for? Or what -- how should I expand my professional skills on my résumé? Or if it's, you know, I'm moving to this location are there any jobs open?

So it's awesome to see -- to be able to host that. If you're in one of those professions I strongly advise getting hooked up with that, because I mean spouses are super supportive of each other, and it's fantastic to see.

MS. PETRAEUS: I knew I was going to learn a lot today, and certainly I have. I think -- it's heartening to hear about what's being done, and the number of ways this problem is being worked on.

But now it's our chance to answer some questions from you. I think we've got about a-

half-an-hour left, so if there's anyone who would like to ask us a question. I see a hand back there.

Please tell us who you are, and then ask your question.

MS. TOMLIN: Hi. I'm Emily Tomlin -- I work for the Résumé Place in the Federal Career Training Institute. Hi, I'm Emily. What is the actual unmet need for unemployment? You mentioned that the total rate is 24 percent, but what percent do you think are actually hoping to have jobs?

MS. PETRAEUS: I'm going to -- the panelists are the experts here, so I'm going to let them jump in, the ones who feel that they are best qualified to answer this.

MR. HAYNIE: Thank you. You see, I can depend on the Army to help me out. I'm an Air Force guy. So that question is a good question. It depends on the data source you're looking at. So if that 25 percent, because there are also multiple numbers out there about military spouse unemployment, if that 25 percent is coming from the Department of Labor data, that represents the population in the workforce. Meaning the parts that are -- that have intention to be seeking a job. So it is not necessarily -- meant represent 25 percent of all military spouses, it is meant to -- or unemployed, it's meant to represent 25 percent of those military spouses who are seeking employment, are unable to find it. Does that answer your question?

MS. TOMLIN: And do know what percentage is the spouse incentive?

QUESTIONER: Yes.

QUESTIONER: Twenty-four percent?

QUESTIONER: So it's 43 percent of spouses are seeking work at all, 17 percent are actively seeking (inaudible) neither are employed, but more than likely underemployed, and that's more than (inaudible)

MS. PETRAEUS: Okay. I'm going to leave it too then. We've got a lot of hands up, so let's see how we can get to.

MS. BARRON: Hi. I'm Patty Barron with AUSA. I love the panel, because you've all touched on so many important resources and information. My question is really for Liz and for Jen. Thinking about 250,000 that come into the military every year, can you all think about creating some kind of roadmap that can be published on the military spouse employment journey?

Because you've touched on it and I think that for our young spouses, you know, they get very surprised when they find out what transition really looks like, and I'm wondering if that would be helpful.

MS. O'BRIEN: I think that we are always open to ideas. It's something that can probably be borne out of our 21st Century Workforce Working Group in conjunction with the Second Lady's Office. But I would never say no to such a wonderful idea. And I'm somebody that loves to operate off visuals, so I'm open to it.

MS. DAVIS: Yeah I think we definitely are too. It's something we as an organization have kind of talked about what that would look like. I know we've talked about like the caregiver roadmap model and what that looks like and how helpful that is. So I think something, a tool like that would be very much appreciated.

MS. PETRAEUS: Okay. A hand over there.

MR. VAZIRANI: Good morning. Ashish Vazirani, with the National Military Family Association. My question is directed to Marcus and maybe Elizabeth. We've talked a lot about opportunities and things that are being done to provide opportunities for military spouses. One of the things that hasn't been mentioned is a key enabler which is childcare. The DoD is though is the country's largest employer-sponsored childcare program.

So I'm interested in knowing what, either between the DoD, or maybe from the Chamber's perspective, what innovations should we expect in childcare that will enable Military Spouse Employment? And how will that change as the military families change, and particularly as many military families are moving off the installation and living out in the community?

MR. BEAUREGARD: We're now getting really out of my area of expertise, somewhat dangerous ground. It is a very difficult issue. It's not just capacity it's also quality capacity that is affordable. So, the little I know is that the Department is looking at all opportunities to increase that, certainly through what can be done to increase capacity on the installation as well as what they can do to partner with communities to increase the capacity off installation.

One interesting thing I think is that the waiting list issue is bound somewhat by

geography. So there are certain areas that have a much higher concern in terms of availabilities than others. And the Department is going to look at it with regards to this kind of an approach, and it seems to be major metropolitan areas that have the highest concern for waitlists, and lack of resource in terms of child care.

So that's, I think, one of the focuses that the Department is going to pursue is that geographical approach to make sure that they are targeting the areas that are of most concern.

MS. O'BRIEN: Thanks Marcus. Ashish, it's a great topic of conversation, and one that I know that is the underlying challenge for so many military spouses, but it's also the -- childcare is also an underlying issue for Americans at large. We are as a country way behind, comparatively, to other countries.

And when we start talking, some of the solutions, well that we've seen, one that was just borne out of our Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone in the State of Washington, was we were able to partner with Pac-Mountain, and they provided funding for military spouses to become certified childcare providers within the state of Washington.

So, nothing to do with being on installation but they wanted to, one, provide military spouses an opportunity to go to work, and to help unpack the waiting lists that are occurring on installation.

Marcus mentioned geographies, for us at Hiring Our Heroes were focused on, what solutions can we create in -- around Honolulu, around San Diego, San Antonio, and Norfolk, which are the areas that have the longest waiting lists. It is not something that can be tackled by one organization, or even solely Department of Defense, you know, partnering with Armed Services, YMCA, Child Care Aware. An educational component, you know, when we have the gold standard of childcare already created in the Department of Defense, but it's not any good if we can't access it.

But those waiting times don't exist everywhere but for where they do exist, how are we also educating and informing military spouses about resources that exist outside of the gate, and leveraging NACRA, and other subsidy programs. I can't tell you how many conversations we have where spouses don't even know that those subsidies exist.

So we are always open to additional conversations, but I don't think the solution is solely on Department of Defense. I think we have to turn an eye towards our communities, and towards our non-profit partners to supplement, but really focusing on those four geographies of Honolulu, San Diego, Norfolk and San Antonio.

QUESTIONER: This is really a comment more than a question. But to your point, Liz, I think if every employment resource out there for military spouses had a connection to a child-care resource that would help with the messaging, because you often never see anything about childcare on a spouse employment website or pamphlet. And I think repeating that message over and over again could help. Of course they have to work. We won't want people calling resources that are hollow, so just more of a commitment.

MS. O'BRIEN: Absolutely, and in all the noise that exists out there, how do we cool it down? You know we often have a conversation with military spouses because they're opting out of returning to the workforce because childcare is exorbitant, and we're only going to break even or, you know, my entire salary is going to be used. Well, it's not just my entire salary. This goes back to educating military spouses. It's my salary and my spouse's salary put together, and we're taking a percentage of that to offset the child care for the children we created together.

But in the interim, even if I'm not putting buckets of money away I am paying into my 401(k), I'm paying into Social Security, et cetera. So there are long-term impacts when spouses opt out of the workforce solely based on the expense of child care.

MS. APPEL-NEWBY: Thank you. Emily Appel-Newby, I'm working with ICF in Fairfax, Virginia. So this is a panel about unemployment, and one representative that I don't see at the table is the U.S. Department of Labor. What do you -- recommendations from each of the panelists, what opportunities do you see to partnering with the U.S. DOL to address this issue?

MR. BEAUREGARD: I'll go ahead and start. One of the things I didn't bring up in my remarks was the fact that we have been partnering with the Department of Labor on licensure, specifically on the issue of implementation by state Boards. Department of Labor put together a program to educate state Boards on how better to serve military spouses based on best practices from several states.

They also have been doing the same with regards to educating military spouses on how to navigate licensure, licensure issues. And so we see the Department of Labor as a good, solid partner in terms of dealing with these pithy issues, and trying to get the word out, and trying to change approaches. And I'll leave it at that, as one opportunity that we've had.

MS. PETRAEUS: Liz, I know you mentioned the American Job Centers, I believe. So, I don't know if you wanted to say --

MR. HAYNIE: I'll live up to the stereotype of the academic and remind folks that part of the Department of Labor is the Bureau of Labor Statistics. I think we need better data and, you know, right now the data that is captured by things like the American Community Survey ought to be elastic, but the sample sizes are so small that you really can't reliably understand the economic issues impacting these families.

So, you know, my suggestion would be that we acknowledge the importance of military families broadly in our national security, in the health of our communities, and begin to capture data that gives us a long-term look at the economic consequences of the military service experience.

MS. O'BRIEN: I can tell you, on behalf of Hiring Our Heroes, we work closely with Department of Labor. My President, Eric Eversole is the Chairman of the FACA Committee. I've been in several times to testify, the Second Lady's office has been in, so it is a focus for that group currently.

I can tell you we've partnered with Department of Labor on leveraging workforce development grants for displaced workers, for displaced homemakers across the country that are allowing us to put spouses into these fellowships.

I can also tell you that the Women's Bureau is doing a tremendous amount of work. I believe they've hosted -- held over 10 listening sessions with military spouses this year around the country, and they are now moving on to hosting listening sessions with companies and corporations around the country as well.

So the rollout of the map that happened under DOL Vets that allows a spouse to click on the State of Utah and see what licensing, credentialing opportunities are afforded them, you know, as they move there, for a nurse. So there is, I would say, certainly a focus with the DOL.

I can also tell you that I'm working with various chiefs of staffs within different lines of business at DOL to help them scrub their lists and see which jobs they can actually hire military spouses for that could potentially be remote or portable. So they're not only looking outward but, you know, the Executive Orders -- it's placing a great deal of pressure on folks internally as well.

MS. DAVIS: Yeah, I think it's safe to say we all work with DOL pretty closely. There are - a lot of the employment meetings that we're at. As Liz and Marcus referenced the map, on that page that houses the map that is super-interactive and very, very helpful. It's a fantastic resource.

But they also have other links on that same page for searching for jobs, they have a little job portal, and then they also have, what I was talking about earlier, with the Relicensure, Reimbursement Program, they have each services' policy, a link to it, so spouses can go and find out, you know, what they need to do to get that reimbursement when they PCS. So, yeah, we're all very aware of, and work closely with them. A fantastic resource.

MR. BEAUREGARD: And if I could take just one second bite of the apple. One other thing that we worked with the Department of Labor and it's a broader issue. The DOL funded a grant to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, and the National Governors Association, to do a consortium on licensure, writ large, to see how they could start -- how states could reduce the burden associated with licensure.

And they picked vulnerable populations, and transitioning service member and military spouses were singled out as one of those vulnerable populations that needed additional consideration. And so even where they're not necessarily partnering directly with us they're considering the military spouse experience, and the need to take care of the military spouse as part of their overall effort.

MS. PETRAEUS: Lots of hands raised.

QUESTIONER: Good morning.

MS. PETRAEUS: I'm not sure we'll get to everybody. But I hope so, yes.

QUESTIONER: I'm Dr. John Duarte. I specifically want to know if there are going to be increased opportunities for spouses with regard to getting employment with the Department of Defense, Education Activity. And while I appreciate the theoretical in these statistical analyses, are there any

practical steps that are in place, or going forward to help a spouse get a job with the Department of Defense Education Activity?

MR. BEAUREGARD: I don't have that level of granularity. I don't know of any. I apologize. I do know that, you know, Department-wide there's been an effort to increase the opportunities for military spouses. And it's certainly something that the leadership is focused on. So I suspect it's going to be impacted upon, you know, the various Department agencies, such as DoDEA, but I have no words for you on that.

QUESTIONER: Good morning. I was just wondering if somebody could comment on the impact this issue has on the Force itself, either through recruiting problems, or retention problems, or just effectiveness, knowing that the spouse back at home base can't get a job, it's going to impact on their ability to do their job.

MS. PETRAEUS: I think we might hit the academic here to start with.

MR. HAYNIE: I mean, so I could go on, on this question for the remainder of the time we have. I have become a cage rattler (phonetic) related to this. You know, the conversation we're having is a national security conversation. You know, we don't talk enough about the fact that we are now 18, like I'm so used to say in 17 years, now 18 years into the longest sustained period of conflict in this country's history, and that burden shouldered by, entirely by a Military Force of volunteers.

That's unprecedented in this history, in this country's history, and I think as we look at the data, and as we -- we did a study, it's been a -- it's been a couple of years now, but I still think it's the largest primary data collection of post -- the post-9/11 generation of military families, about 8,500.

And, you know, one of the things that really struck me looking at the responses to this 200-question, I think, survey of the military service experience, was that, one, it was very clear that the motivation for volunteerism while patriotism, and service to country were part of it, a big piece of it were -- it was about the economic utility, it was about advancing the opportunity for education, economic gain, et cetera.

And, you know, if we can't deliver on that motivation on the backend future for volunteerism falls apart. When you look at the fact that, you know, the Army has missed its recruiting

goals now two years in a row. You know, I think the Marine Corps would've missed their recruiting goals except they changed the formula there towards the end a little bit, so all of a sudden they made their recruiting goals. They're resourceful Marines.

But again, from this survey to see this trend of military families, you know what's the -- by DoD's own numbers, what is it, only 3 in 10 Americans between the ages of 18 and 22 or are qualified for military service to volunteer, 3 in 10.

So if you think about what this funnel is this funnel that's getting narrower and narrower of those who are both eligible and willing³ because you need both, you know the extent to which we can point people with opportunity costs to do something other than raise their hand, to say, nope, this is the path that's right for you, depends an awful lot on the extent to which the Military Service experience, when they take that uniform off, when that family transitions, there are opportunities for them above and beyond what was there when they raised their hand in the first place.

And, you know, I think -- I talk, I come down here and I talk to the policy folks who do national security, and they point to these kinds of conversations. Well that's not security. That's not relevant to what we do. Well, it should be. It absolutely should be, because if we don't get this right, the cracks in the All-Volunteer Force model are going to become big chasms. And I think things fall apart.

MS. O'BRIEN: Mike, to piggyback on what you said, we take this narrow funnel and we get them through the door, and then we're not retaining them. We're training them, or investing money, we're investing dollars, or investing education, and then I get angry at home because I don't have the opportunity to contribute, because it's not always about money, it's about self-worth, it's about drive, it's about ability to contribute to my family.

And it absolutely, by our definition, becomes an issue of national security, if after the Army has invested almost over a million dollars on my spouse, that we decide to walk. And now he's gone.

MS. PETRAEUS: I think we're right about at the point where, I think that was probably, that took us right back around to, why is this important, you know, and important for the military as a whole, and for our country.

I'm going to throw one thing in there that we didn't talk about today, because with my Better Business Bureau background I used to see a lot of it, and I want military spouses who are seeking employment to have an awareness of it, which is that job search environment is rife with scams. There are so many ways to get into trouble when you think you're looking for a job.

Because if you think about it, online especially, what do you do on a job site? You put all your information on there. Don't you? And if somebody calls and says they want to hire you, then you give them more information.

So I think we need to build some awareness that it's kind of a jungle out there in that, you know, and that you need to go through reputable channels when you're -- when you're looking for work. Just something that occurred to me while we were talking because, you know, nothing more disheartening to see somebody who thinks they're trying to improve their lives, and instead they get taken for a bunch of money. So that's my scam alert of the day.

But what a great panel; and I'm just very honored to have been up here with them, I think they're such expertise. And I hope, like me, that you have all learned something.

And now I'll hand it off to Dr. O'Hanlon to close it out.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Holly. So very briefly, I just want to first of all echo this important point (inaudible) -- as anything. And so we are happy to have hosted this in the context of a Foreign Policy, and National Security Program at Brookings, I could not agree more with that point.

Also, before asking you to join me in thanking the panel, I want to personally thank everybody else in the room who came, but especially military families, and their representatives, and those who have supported them.

But please, do now join me in thanking this remarkable panel. (Applause)

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2020