

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

INSPIRED TO SERVE -
THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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P R O C E E D I N G S

GENERAL ALLEN: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. My name is John Allen, and I'm the president of the Brookings Institution, and it is my sincere pleasure to welcome you all to our online conversation on the critical role of public service in America Today.

This afternoon's webinar could not be more timely, as our Nation and the rest of the Global Community battle the COVID-19 Pandemic, and as we mark the beginning of Public Service Recognition Week, a 35 year old tradition honoring the individuals who service and sacrifice our great Nation, this is a particularly good moment for this conversation.

We are pleased to partner today with the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, a bipartisan, a 11-member group, created by the Congress, to develop recommendations to inspire more Americans to participate in Military, National, and Public Service, and review the Military Selective Service Process.

Last March, after two and a half years of research and public hearings and conversations, with Americans across the country, the Commission released its final report, entitled *Inspired to Serve*. We, at Brookings, are honored and we're delighted to join forces with the Commission today, to highlight its outstanding work on this important topic, and to discuss the conclusions of their extremely comprehensive report.

Amidst the COVID-19 Crisis, public service, even from afar, has never been more important. The service and the sacrifice of so many, from our cherished medical professionals and front line health care workers, to our first responders, and police, and those in our public and transportation systems, and those providing essential services in our utilities, and the tireless work of those who deliver to our homes. This work is service indeed, and it is critical to the integrity of our society, as a Nation, and for that we truly thank them.

Now, throughout my career, I've witnessed the transformative quality of service, time and time again, when individuals, from different walks of life, have had the opportunity to serve their country, and to do something bigger than themselves. They've lived up to the challenge and grown exponentially,

as a result. Indeed, they have regularly immersed as better citizens, with strong bonds that last a lifetime.

So, it's my hope that, in these difficult times, for our local, state and national communities, we can consider what service means for each and every one of us. After all, the service -- services, not a singular experience, designed for few, or even for personal gain, rather it is, as the Commission's report properly puts, and powerfully states, "A personal commitment of time and energy and talent to a man that contributes to the public good."

So, with that, allow me to briefly introduce our panelists for today. First, the chairman of the Commission, Joseph Heck, a brigadier general in the U.S. Army Reserve, and a board-certified physician, and a former member of the House of Representatives. There is no doubt that service was and remains a fixture in Joe's life, and I'd to thank him for his leadership, and for his service, and I'm delighted that he's able to join us here today.

Alongside Joe is Avril Haines, a dear friend, and also a commissioner, and long-time friend of our institution, at Brookings. Avril has had a distinguished career in Intelligence and National Security, having served as principle deputy national security advisor to President Obama, as well as deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, legal advisor to the National Security Council, among other positions, many impressive positions. Avril, it's wonderful to have you with us, again, today.

MS. HAINES: Thank you so much.

GENERAL ALLEN: Brookings community, we're joined by Isabel Sawhill, Senior Fellow in the Economic Studies program, as well as the architect and the biggest champion of Brookings work on public and national service in recent years, and last, but certainly not least, we're joined by Fiona Hill, who most recently served as deputy assistant to the President, and senior director for European and Russian affairs, at the National Security Council, and returned to Brookings, in January, as a senior fellow in our Foreign Policy program.

A month and a half ago, I had the great honor of recording a podcast with Fiona, on this very topic, national service, and I'm delighted that she's moderating this conversation today. So, with that, a final reminder that we are on the record, and we're streaming live today. So, please send us your

questions, at events@brookings.edu, or on twitter, using #inspire2serve. Inspire to serve.

We, now, offer the floor, or the screen, to our chairman, Joe Heck, to offer some of his remarks on behalf of the commission. Thank you, all. Thank you, to our panelists. Thank you for joining us, today, on this really important topic. Joe, over to you, please.

GENERAL HECK: Well, thank you. Thank you, General Allen, and my thanks to Brookings, as well, for hosting us today, yet again. Every Public Service Recognition Week is unique and special, and this is no exception, right?

If there's one thing that the COVID-19 Pandemic has shown us, it is the importance of Public Servants, who are working tirelessly for our security and wellbeing. So, I join General Allen in thanking these unsung heroes, for the extraordinary service they provide to the American People and our Nation.

Their efforts and commitment to serving the public at a time of great need is truly exemplary. We know that thank you is not enough, and after seeing the critical role of service during the COVID-19 Pandemic, service won't look the same, moving forward, and that's why we're here today, to ask, and perhaps answer the question: what does the future of Public Service entail? The Commission's spent the last two and a half years asking that question, traveling the country, visiting urban centers, suburban neighborhoods, and rural towns. We spoke with elected leaders, non-profit organizations, faith based communities, middle school, high school, and college students, with those who serve, and those who don't, and we found that, as was the case 200 years ago, during the earliest days of our Republic, America's extraordinary spirit of service continues to shape our Nation.

Americans repeatedly step up in support of each other, offering their sweat and ingenuity when needed, without expectation of anything in return. Yet, in a nation of 330 million, we have not unlocked the full transformational potential of service, to address critical National and local needs, and reinforce the very civic fabric of American Society.

Our vision is of a nation, in which service is the common expectation and experience of all Americans, when it is the norm, not the exception, when every American is inspired and eager to

serve, when every young person, might consider a career in military, in public service, or serving in a national service program, like a AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Peace Corps, making a difference while developing skills to help them in their future endeavors.

Service, beginning at an early age, and continuing throughout one's lifetime, develops skills and leadership among those who participate. It maximizes federal investments in pursuit of local, state, and national solutions, helps develop the nation's workforce, and brings people together to meet the critical needs of the nation.

By the year 2031, the 70th anniversary of President Kennedy's, 1961 inaugural speech, in which he famously said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country", and challenged every American to contribute in some way to the public good, we envision five million Americans will begin to serve in military, national, or public service, each and every year. This includes more than enough qualified individuals serving in the armed forces, minimizing the need for traditional military recruiting, one million individuals, annually taking up federally supported national service opportunities, and a modernized government personnel system attracting and enabling Americans with critical skills, and new generations to enter Public Service.

Our long-term goal is to nurture the existing spirit of service, into a culture of service, in which individuals, of all backgrounds, are aware of, have access to, and aspire to participate in opportunities to serve their communities or country. You know, as Alexis de Tocqueville traveled our fledging nation, 200 years ago, he observed that America is "a nation of joiners", distinctive for its rich tradition of individuals participating in civil society and faith organizations with the desire to serve community needs, and that's still true today. Americans answer the call to serve every day, and especially in times of crisis.

Nearly 24 million individuals participate in some form of military, national, or public service, but we also know that six percent of the federal workforce is under the age of 30, with more than a third eligible to retire in the next five years. Nearly a third of millennials state that they are unaware of existing national service opportunities, and 41 percent of youth have never considered military service.

So, what does the future of service entail? Our report calls for a whole of government approach, to coordinate and promote military, national and public Service, a significant investment in civic education, new and improved efforts to recruit public servants, increased awareness, enhanced benefits, and significantly expanded opportunities for Americans to participate in national service and narrowing the civil military divide, and increasing awareness of military service, to ensure today's military continues to attract the most qualified personnel.

We believe the actions recommended in our report will empower Americans with broader knowledge of the fundamental principles of our republic, increase awareness of service options, and provide clear and supportive pathways to military, national, and public service. Our report, the legislative annex, and additional supporting materials can be found on our website, inspire2serve.gov, that's inspire, the number two, serve.gov.

Now is the time, and inspire to serve is the plan, to strengthen service, and achieve the vision of every American inspired and eager to serve. So, I very much look forward to the upcoming panel discussion and your questions. Fiona, I'll turn it over to you.

MS. HILL: Thank you so much, Joe. I also want to thank everybody who is on the other side of this call, today, for joining us. As you have mentioned, it's the week that we actually celebrate and recognize public service, and I know that, for many people outside of the public service sphere, this isn't a very well-known week of recognition, and, you know, I hope that, at least by doing event today, and having so many people participate, we will also help to promote this, somewhat.

I mean, as you said, Joe, this has been going on for 35 years, and you've had quite a rocky road in doing the report for the Commission, as well. I mean, it was a huge effort, as you've outlined, you and Avril, and many others, took part in this as Commissioners, Isabel Sawhill, and some of my colleagues from Brookings were part of the larger group that you talked to, but your first interim report came out at quite a difficult time, a year ago, right at the end of the longest shutdown for the Federal Government in history, 35 days, in which many Federal Government employees were furloughed, including groups, like the TSA, and the Coast Guard, and many other members of the federal

government, that I think a lot of the broad American public didn't even realize were part of the federal government apparatus.

And, of the 24 million people that you mentioned, that are involved in some way, of military and public and national Service, only a small fraction of those two million are, in fact, in the federal government. There is a popular perception out there of a very large federal government apparatus, a lot of bloat and inefficiency, and, unfortunately, in a recent PEW Poll, only 17 percent of those polled had any overarching trust in the federal government to, as they were asked in the question, to do the right thing most of the time.

So, we've seen -- unfortunately seen quite a decline in the popular opinion of Public Service, for some period of time, and probably the nadir of that was during the furlough. Now, you've come out with the fulltime report in a very different atmosphere, where we've seen public servants come to the forefront, and as you've said, you know, we're seeing the frontline responders, General Allen and others have, you know, given great praise to the people that have stepped forward.

We've seen Dr. Fauci, Anthony Fauci, one of the key people in the taskforce, when he's asked how he'd like to be remembered, for dealing with this very difficult situation, saying he'd like to be remembered, basically, as a dedicated public servant, who was trying to do his best in a period of great adversity. So, some of the questions that we've had coming in, from the people who are listening today, have been, really, about how this experience of the pandemic, of dealing with COVID-19, may have shifted the thinking about public service.

Can we really say that there's been a shift over the course of this full year, in which you put out the interim report, and now you've put out the final report, which came out in March? Do you think there has been a perceptual shift? And, if so, can we build on this momentum, and how would you like to see the commemoration of Public Service Week, say, a year from now, and looking forward into the future?

MS. HAINES: Who would you like to start that?

MS. HILL: Well, I'd like, perhaps, you know, Joe to make a quick comment, and, Avril,

then to come to you, too, as a commissioner, to give that, and your perspective as well. Thank you.

GENERAL HECK: Well, thanks. Thanks Fiona, and as you mentioned, the irony of releasing our interim report during the longest government shutdown, when we were talking about how to entice more people to enter public service, was not lost on us, as a commission.

I think, quite honestly, it's too early to tell whether or not there's been a shift, based on the response to the COVID Pandemic. Certainly, those of us that follow public service have seen individuals, again, perform heroically, and I think, perhaps, it's also expanded the definition of who is considered a public servant, right? So, you know, whether it's the schoolteacher, who had to readjust their lesson plans, or figure out how to educate their students, via the distance learning, whether it is the healthcare professionals, the nurses, that are working in the Emergency Department, in many cases, becoming infected themselves.

So, I think, hopefully, the big takeaway will be a greater expansion of who is considered a public servant, and I think you will still see those who want to try to call out the potential negative P, I mean, people are -- certain naysayers are going to be naysayers, regardless of what happens, right? But I think there is a movement that is a fledged movement, based on the response. I think it will expand the definition. Hopefully, it will last longer than the post 9/11 bump, right?

We tend to become a Nation of complacency and forgetfulness, where we only remember things for a short period of time, and then we go back to the status quo. I'm hoping that something like this, which has truly affected the entire Nation, in a degree heretofore unimaginable, will help elevate the imprimatur of those who are public servants.

MS. HILL: That's great. Avril, if you're thinking about this as well, and, you know, as we look forward to the next several years, I mean, some of the questions that we've had coming in, the pickup on Joe's point about expanding the understanding of public service, we had one question, for example, about cultural leaders. We've seen, you know, right across the world, and Italians getting onto their balconies to sing, you know, almost do entire operas, but we've seen orchestras, from around the United States and internationally, do free public performances on Zoom, you know, as we're doing, you

know, today.

We've seen all kinds of people trying to fill in those gaps for people to try to boost morale, but also in ways that, you know, we might be able to play it forward. So, one of the questions is also about -- could cultural leaders play an increasing role in public service, in the post COVID-19 future? Avril, how do you see this going forward?

MS. HAINES: Yeah, absolutely. So, thank you so much, and I think Joe crystalized the main points that I'd say about, you know, your first question, before I get to the cultural leader piece. I think, just to add to something he indicated, I think we are seeing a potential shift in the perception, and there was a PEW poll that was done recently, that indicated, really, a sort of significantly greater, you know, positive impression of how Federal Institutions are addressing the pandemic, and, in particular, I think, it was something like 79 percent approval of CDC, and, you know, 76 percent approval of HHS, of Health and Human Services, and, so, I think there's an opportunity, but also, as Joe said, like, you can see a bump in these moments, and the question is: how do you carry that forward? How do you actually, sort of, you know, kind of reach that momentum and push it, and this is one of the great questions that I think we always experience in the moments of jolts, you know, to the system in our country, and I am hopeful, right, that we can take this opportunity to actually not just grasp the sort of -- the morale issues, and the point about recognition, and what it is the federal service does, and corrects them of the misimpressions, as you pointed out, even in your very question, right?

But -- but also to recognize the extraordinary value, that not just public service, but national service and military service can bring across the range of issues, to try to address a crisis, like we have today, and, I think that, you know, that's an element of the way our commission was established, was that it actually looks at all of these different areas of service, and asks us to look at how can we increase any of those -- and of service across these different areas, and I think that's sort of fascinating way to think about it, and it really leads into your second part of your question.

I mean, I think, we are sort of, hopefully, reestablishing and rethinking how we consider service, and also, hopefully, through that process, we're able to strengthen our society, and recognize the

value that we have in different parts of our community, and the different ways in which we address things, and I think one of the great values of service is, you know, even indicated in the opening remarks, that John made, I think is just -- it is an opportunity to not just -- to sort of step out of yourself, and to experience empathy across our society, but also to create some coherence in our society, and recognize how it is that we can help each other in these different communities, and hopefully unite us, at the same time that we're addressing the critical needs that we have across society.

So, I think, you're right, that we need to be thinking big, in terms of the different ways in which we might actually promote addressing those needs, including through Cultural Leaders, but I also think the fact that, you know, a variety of experts have indicated that the potential need will be, say, hundreds of thousands of folks to help us with contact tracing, in the context of COVID-19, right, is an example of how critical national and public service can be in these moments, and the ability to surge forward on those types of issues. You know, it's just -- that is what will help us to actually ramp up in society, address some of the economic challenges that we would otherwise be addressing, and so on, and, so, the value of service, I think, is no more, sort of, present then it is today, through this lens.

MS. HILL: Avril, just to push you out a little bit more on this, I mean, several of the questions, you know, have come in about non-military types of service, and kind of selective service reform, and also wondering about how one might use this terrible crisis as the opportunity to push this forward, and, obviously, within the commission's report, which was written before the full dimensions of the pandemic became clear, you were thinking a lot about strengthening selective service, and, you know, mobilization, and, so, thinking about how one might do this concretely for a national emergency, is there different ways in which we could bring together the dimensions of service that the commission has laid out?

And I -- I just want to give an example from the United Kingdom, which obviously, I, you know, know firsthand, myself, from, you know, my earlier part of my life. They have the Royal Volunteer Service, which has been helping the National Health Service, but it was initially setup on the eve of World War II, in 1938, as the Women's Voluntary Service, to organize for potential air raids and other, you know,

national emergency, as a result of the anticipated, at that point, outbreak of war, and then has morphed in, over time, from 1938, all this time, into a sort of a standing national mobilization entity. What were you thinking, in the terms of the Commission, about this, and about these kinds of larger roles that a more formalized service can take?

MS. HAINES: Yeah, so, yeah. There so many things to pull, you know, so many threads to pull out of your question, but let me just start with this. I think, in going around to the, you know, 42 cities, 22 states, that we did, as we talked to people that are in service, there's a remarkable interest in, actually, engaging in service. I mean, I think the history of our country is one that surrounds itself in this area, and you see that, that, you know, people want to serve.

However, the awareness of what the options are is actually quite low, and to your point, I think, one piece of what we were trying to figure out is how do we increase awareness? How do we give people an opportunity to actually engage and see what they're interested in, what they can do, what skills they can bring to bear, and then make those connections, and allow service to occur across a range of sectors, in order to address not just, as you point out, the military pieces, but also, sort of national emergencies, more broadly, and one of the recommendations that we have is this service platform, that really gives everybody an opportunity to get on to, you know, the website, and sort of say, okay, there's all these different types of service.

I can essentially register and sign up for a whole series of different things that might be available to us, through that process. But that is, sort of, creating that awareness is obviously only one very small piece of this puzzle, which is to say that you need to also build the infrastructure, in order to allow people to serve, give them both the aspiration, and the access to it, and, you know, when -- again, when you look at what we have right now, it -- we have appropriations for only about 75,000 positions for AmeriCorps, our sort of main through national service piece, you know, 250,000 is the goal that's currently in legislate.

We indicate, you know, as Joe indicated, up to million. We want to see a million slots provided for national service out of the five million that we're looking to actually promote, for 2031, and I

think, you know, building that infrastructure, getting the appropriations, in terms of what are the concrete steps that need to happen, right, building out all of those pieces that allow people to actually not just understand what's available, but then sign up, then have an option, and then be able to serve effectively, right? All of those are a piece of the puzzle, I think, to actually mobilizing what we have available to us, and if you think about it through the lens of just this particular emergency, as a way to understand how valuable it can be, right?

So, imagine, if you will, a scenario, in which you've already got, essentially, this kind of service platform available, right, and people have already signed up for their, you know, there might be a state ready reserve, for healthcare workers, for example, which some states have, like in Colorado, and other places, that would be available on this kind of a website for you to sign up to serve for, right? Other states can have these, the Federal Government can have those, and the FEMA core space, all of those things, and then we'd have those, basically, that roster of folks, that you can then mobilize, really quite quickly, and, moreover, it's not just mobilizing in the moment, in other words having the list of people, right?

But you may have already have, as many places do, right, set up for the possibility of having that kind of training, in advance, much like the National Guard does, or others, you know, where you sort have the ability to interact, understand what are the processes, so that you can hit the ground running, like this, when you need to, in the context of a National Emergency, but you're bringing to bear the skills that you have available to you, essentially to the society, when it needs it, and I think that's a critical aspect of this piece.

But I think there's also, and I know Belle and others who have talked about this, and their work, and you as well, I think, bringing, uniting the country, behind these kinds of moments, is really one of those, you know, it's an element that I think is so important to our work, and I think, you know, our Commission was a kind of a microcosm of it, in a sense, so, a Bipartisan Commission, I mean, you couldn't imagine with our leader, and Joe Heck, and really the cooperative sort of style among all of us, and the remarkable degree of collaboration, and unity over the importance of service was quite

astonishing, and I think belies some of the divisions that we see, otherwise.

MS. HILL: Now, that's -- that's great, Avril. I mean, I think we've got a lot of things to think about here. Bel, you, back in February, wrote an opinion piece in The Washington Post, in their section, which is looking for common ground, trying to bridge the divides, that Avril was talking about, you know, trying to make things non-partisan, and you tried to pull that thread, Belle, of an idea of a Voluntary National Service, so that people could mobilize, and could find ways to serve, but with more of a sort of centralized portal, to sort of address some of the issues that Avril was pulling up.

Do you want to come in on this, and a few more thoughts? And then I thought I'd ask John to give us some of his perspective from the military, and I'll pull those questions out a little after this, but, Bel, how were you thinking about this, and I know you've been very active with the Commission, and lots of people, of course, have been proposing this idea, but perhaps you could tell us a little bit about what you were thinking in the context of your interactions with the Commission.

MS. SAWHILL: Sure, happy to do that, and thanks for including me. I really would like to just say at the very start, here, that I am so impressed with this report, and I just want to congratulate the Commission, its leadership, its staff. I'm quite fussy about reports, and usually the reports I read I can find something wrong with them, and I couldn't find much wrong with this report.

Some reports have a lot of specific recommendations, but no sort of overarching animus or theme, and some reports have a lot of grandiose language, but no actionable items. This report has some of both, and I really like that about it. I mean, this call to service that the report and the Commission begins with, the idea that every American should be expected to serve, in one way or another, whether it's in the military, whether it's working for the government, in public service, or whether it's through Voluntary National Service, that the idea that, as citizens, we have rights, but we also have responsibilities, is, I think, exactly the right tone, and very much needed, right now. I am concerned, by the way, to go back to your earlier conversation about shutdowns and public service, more generally, that we have gotten into a mode in this country, where the public does not trust government, especially the federal government. They have more confidence in state and local government, and there was a bump,

as was said earlier, after 9/11, that there wasn't the leadership to carry that bump forward, and I think this is another point at which we can re-inspire people, and this report can do that.

So, I just hope it gets a lot of -- a lot of attention. On the whole idea of national service, and what I wrote The Washington Post article about, with John Bridgeland, whom, by the way, has been an absolutely wonderful advocate for this. I served in the Clinton Administration. He served in the Bush Administration, so once again, this was just a very bipartisan effort, and we both believe that there's lots of bipartisan support out there for the kind of ideas that are in this report.

But the reason we like this idea of Nat -- a greater investment in national service, voluntary national service, is because it's very popular. Four out of five Americans want to see more national service. There are many more people raising their hand to serve, applying for service slots, through AmeriCorps, The Peace Corps, or Senior Corps, or something else, than there are opportunities to serve.

When I went out and did focus groups, in 2018, with middle-class, and working-class Americans, around the country, and I tried out all my standard Brookings proposals on them, the proposal they liked best, by far, was this one. Let's make national service universal, especially for younger people. It should be a rite of passage into adulthood.

We can come back to civic education because I think that's a priority that the Commission underscored, better civic education, in -- from kindergarten, right through high school. I'd like to come back to that.

But the -- and we have a elderly population, I mean an aging population, I should say. I'm in that category. Many of friends are looking for ways to serve. They don't see where the opportunities are. So, there's a demand to serve, and what we need is the kind of platforms, and the kind of resources, and so forth, that the Commission has talked about, a council in the White House, itself, and so forth.

Now, you ask about one of the benefits that I think, Universal National Service would bring, and that is -- that I have stressed in my own work, and that is reducing our divisions. You know, as

we all know, we're very divided, now, as a country, whether it's by political affiliation, or by race, or religion, or by geography, or something else, and I've been very impressed in this, and the very serious research robust, rigorous research, that I've read, mostly by psychologists, that shows that if you want to bring people together, if you want to bridge some of these divisions, the best way to do so, and there's really good evidence on this, is to bring people together to work on a set of common tasks, and to learn about people with very different backgrounds and experiences than their own.

I mean, the military is the classic example, there. People who have served together in the military, and I'm sure the two military people on this panel can attest to this, people who have served together, they bond. They become -- they form friendships across unusual lines. So, I really do think that this could end some of our divisions and some of our tribalism. I'll stop there. I could say a lot more.

MS. HILL: No, thank you very much, Belle, and you gave a very good segue into posing to John, and then, you know, Joe about this interaction with military service. Another element of actually the federal government is about a third of federal government employees are veterans, and from my own experience inside of the federal government, on two tours of service there, I think the people with the most diverse backgrounds, who I met, had actually come out of the military because some of the questions that we're getting in from the audience members today, are really questions about how do you increase the diversity of people stepping up for public service? You know, there are statistics that show a few younger people. You've got a lot of people aging out now, in the federal government, in particular, but, more broadly, minorities, women, all underrepresented in the federal government, but, you know, certainly not in other parts of state and local government service, and are not in the military, which has done an awful lot to bring people of diverse backgrounds in.

So, I mean, I wonder, John, and then Joe, if you'd like to comment on this because both of you are people who've served in the military, and like many other military veterans, signed up for other forms of public service, and this is obviously something that veterans, in particular, are encouraged to do, but, you know, how could we build up on some of that experience, as we think about broadening out national service, because I do think that there's a bit of skepticism coming out in the questions that we're

getting from audience members about how would we do this, and how we would ensure that this is more reflective of the public at large and the diversity of the American population. So, John, and then Joe.

GENERAL ALLEN: Sure. It's a great question, but, you know, first, again, congratulations to the Commission because I think you've shown a light on some real opportunity for us. I mean, it -- a couple of points that relate to everything that has been said so far. Civic education is really essential to creating what I would consider to be habits of service, that we need to instill in our population at a very young age, that, plus local volunteerism, the idea of doing something for others, and being part of a volunteer group that does -- that stands for something bigger than themselves because what all that does is it begins, ultimately, to contribute to that which we value, I think, the most in our military, which is a commitment to selfless service, based on the principles of our constitution, something that we're willing to sacrifice a lot to preserve, and, so, I think that what you see, at least in the military today, and I know that there are other institutions in U.S. civil society, but in the U.S. Government, is that the military has worked very, very hard to achieve diversity, and I think there isn't a military commander that I know out there that would say that there is an objective to be achieved.

It's a journey to be achieved, and you don't ever arrive at diversity. It's something you have to work at all the time, and the experience of serving in a unit, where you are mixed in, inherently, with people of all walks of life, regardless of how you would categorize that walk of -- those walks of life -- that is of enormous value.

So, first, you have the opportunity to serve with people with very diverse views, from very diverse backgrounds, their varying religions, gender, all of those things that are important qualities of the diverse experience, and doing it in a unit, or an organization where you have a shared experience of camaraderie that creates relationships within that organization, but then habits of relationships, so that when the large numbers of our troops who matriculate out of the service every year, return to American society, they can return directly into local and state government, or local societies, and be leaders there, as well, and represent those values associated with our embracing diversity for the strength of that, as opposed to the very difficult, sometimes disintegrating, trends and energies that we see today, where

people are pulled apart, rather than unified, and what we see from the military is you get those kinds of experiences of being something -- part of something bigger than yourself, selfless commitment to those around you, but selfless commitment to a set of principles above you, and then when you finish that service, whether it's a short enlistment or it's a long-term career, returning, then, to civil society, and carrying those qualities with you.

So many military end up in our classrooms. I think that's a wonderful thing, and they embody for the young students, and this goes back to the issue of civic education. They embody for those students', those habits of leadership, those habits of volunteerism, those habits of commitment to the best aspects of diversity, which is a unified population that stands for something. Boy, that's a powerful, powerful contribution, and there was a commandant in the Marine Corps we had a few years, I'll just draw on my own service, he used to say that the Marine Corps makes do -- does two things for our country. It fights the nation's battles, but it makes Marines, and what he meant by that was the Marines who take their uniform off and go home and still carry those values of service, those values of selflessness, those values of commitment, carry that home to civil society and stand for something there, and in that way, become an example for others. So, the military's a very important feeder into civil society, of those very values that we seek to emulate through national service.

MS. HILL: Thanks so much, John. Joe, in the report, there's a point about, you know, inculcating the spirit of public, national, and military service. I mean, it comes out very clearly, and it also equates, in many respects, kind of civic, civic education, as almost a sort of a national security imperative. In fact, you know, there's been lots of analysts and commentators writing op-eds and articles about this link between civics education and national security, and, of course, we've seen a major decline outside of the military, where John has very eloquently described that sense of civic duty that's also built into military service and the civics education, and how, you know, so many veterans then go on to teach and to do all kinds of other public service. How could you, you know, see, and which you've outlined in the report, moving forward, embedding public service, that sense of public service in civics education, and I think, you know, the statistics are what, it's only -- it's less than 10 states, who now have civics as part of their

curriculum. Obviously, a number of private schools, you know, have that, but how could we think about what John has just said about that military ethos, somehow providing that in the rest of the educational system? How were you thinking about that, from your own military service, when you were chairing the commission?

GENERAL HECK: So, great question. So, I think, you know, building on what both Bel and General Allen said, you know, very few organizations that I'm aware of, other than the military, bring people together from disparate backgrounds, who, after a period of time together, leave calling each other brother and sister, and that is the goal, to bring people together from different demographics and have them view each other as brothers and sisters, and I think that service experience is what, then, propagates that military veteran into some other form of service.

We saw this. We, on our travels, visited with a group from Senior Corps, outside of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, you know, a group of aging retirees, who, now, decide that they want to give back to their community, whether it's, you know, visiting with homebound seniors, tutoring at risk youth, providing meals, and, so, I asked them, you know, what their background was previously, and what made them get into Senior Corps, right? So, almost invariably, all the men were prior service. Women were either prior service, nurses, or schoolteachers, so somebody who had a service ethos already embedded within them.

So, to the question of how do we expand this, and how do we get it into different demographics, you know, so, I'm a physician, right? So, everything for me is a medical analogy. So, you know, I believe that everybody has a service gene, and the goal is how do we activate that gene? Because we know, historically, that if somebody participates in a service opportunity, and it was a meaningful, fulfilling experience for them, they will continue to serve throughout their lives, right?

So, how do we start that earlier? So, we start it with civic education, and making sure that youth understand, as Belle said earlier, that it's not just about your rights as a citizen, but your responsibilities as a citizen. How can you ask someone to give to a country, to a community, to a state, when they have no idea about how we were formed as a nation, as a state, as a community? And this

came to me as well, we were in Denver, visiting a high school in a at-risk community, and, quite honestly, one of the students, as we were talking about service opportunities, said to me, why would I want to give back to a country that I don't believe has given to me? Right, and, so, we had to talk about, well, it's not just, you know, national service. You can give right here, in your community, and all of a sudden eyes were wide open, right, and, so, so, we start with civic education, and I think also important is the follow-on service learning piece that we put in, right?

So, we talk about a maybe finite service project in the middle school years. You know, here's a certain project that you're going to do, as a middle school student, to show you what service is about. We talk about semesters of service in high school, where there's a semester-long service project you undertake as a high school junior or senior, before you graduate, and then we talk about a very groundbreaking program, which is a service fellowship program, where it's -- you don't have to participate in a already preordained Federal Government Program, but go find an opportunity in your local community, and the money will follow you, right? Go to a certified nonprofit, say that you want to work with them as a fellow, and the money, the, you know, one million of folks that we want to support every year, that will come to you wherever you are.

So, it's not necessarily having to grow more of the national service programs, based in Washington, D.C., and I think if we take that approach, civic education, rights and responsibilities as a citizen, a specific service project in middle school, a service of semester in high school, a fellowship post high school, we will activate that service gene, and you will, then, have individuals participate in service, when appropriate and when convenient for them, throughout their lifetime.

MS. HILL: I mean, this is a great vision. I mean, I know from many of, you know, the questions that we're getting in, how do we make it happen? And, obviously, the Commission, you didn't just lay out the vision, you actually came up with some recommendations. So, I mean, I'd like to ask you and Avril about, first of all, the resources that we would need to do this, and then, also, I mean, some of the obstacles that we're going to have to overcome.

I mean, again, one of them is the low opinion that people have had, at least at the

Federal Government level, and there's often a conflation of Federal Government public service, when, really, as you're talking about there's communities, there's local municipal service, there's state level. I'm -- I think, in some of the research that Brookings and other colleagues have done, you know, people also have a somewhat lower opinion of state level service, too, but their communities, and their immediate surroundings, that certainly gets people motivated because they want to see results, and they want to really, you know, have a feeling that they're doing something and that they're having an impact, but how, then, were you, when visiting legislation, the kind of resources that then are needed, at all the different levels of this?

GENERAL HECK: Avril, do you want to go first? All right. So, well, first -- right? We have many recommendations, 164 to be precise, within the report. We also did a legislative annex. So, we actually hired a former House of Representatives Bill Drafter to come in and put all of this into legislative language, so that, you know, any member of the House or Senate who wanted to utilize this, it's already drafted for them, tried to make it as easy as possible, understanding that, you know, an omnibus bill, like that, which would take multiple sequential committee referrals, is unlikely to make it to the finish line, but provides a cut and paste opportunity for people who like specific pieces of it, right?

No matter where you come from on the political spectrum, there is something in that legislative annex that you will like, and we hope that we can get folks to pick and choose what they like and move it forward. Now, the only areas that we actually directly assigned a cost to were to the civic education piece and the service-learning piece; civic education, \$200 million a year, service-learning, \$250 million a year, in part to call out the very apparent lack of Federal support for both of these things, right?

So, civic education funding has dropped, from 2010 to now, from 150 million a year to five million a year. The Federal Government spends \$54 per student on STEM and five cents per student on civic education. So, we did it in order to actually call out what we believe is the injustice about how civic education and service learning is viewed within the Federal bureaucracy.

Now, we know that there are other costs associated, right? You want to grow national

service opportunities, and you will hear people argue the counterpoint. That's been tried before, right? The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act called for 250,000 national service program slots, which were authorized but never appropriated. So, the authorization's there, but the money's not, and we tried to make the argument that this is about investing a dollar today to serve, to save that four or five dollars on the back end.

We know the studies have shown that for every dollar invested in national service, the investor, in this case the federal government, will recoup three to four dollars on the back end, in lower use of social safety nets of lower criminal justice issues, right? So, so, we've got to make that case.

We show that their -- if you give that person, as I mentioned, a meaningful service opportunity earlier, they will continue to serve and give back throughout their lifetime. So, it -- it's like compounded interest. I mean, it just keeps giving back over and over again, and those are the arguments that we need to bring forward, you know, very vociferously to those who may still be an opponent, not necessarily of service, but of the federal government's funding of the programs, and I'll give Avril an opportunity because she was instrumental in pulling together a lot of these recommendations in this area.

MS. HILL: You know what, Avril, perhaps you could -- Avril, perhaps you could also think about whether there's a public-private component to this, as well --

MS. HAINES: I was going to mention --

MS. HILL: -- because I would like to hear some of your thinking on that, too.

MS. HAINES: Yeah, no. I mean, I think, so, in addition to the legislative proposals, I think, you know, another piece of what Joe's saying, too, is that, first of all, it takes leadership from the Executive Branch. So, it, just to highlight a few things on that, and then get to your public private point. I think one of the recommendations we make is this council that would exist at the White House, and it would be one that would be stretching across the service areas, and sort of promote and coordinate the work that's being done on service, and we see that as absolutely critical, frankly, to driving the kind of action that we see as necessary in order to do what it is that we want to do, in creating this ultimately, in

this culture of service, and this expectation of service that's universal.

The second piece I'll just note in that context is, you know, we make a lot of recommendations that are present, in part, in the legislative proposal that relate to the public service piece. So, just coming back to the beginning of our conversation and how critical it is to have, you know, frankly, a far more flexible, less outdated personnel system that's really based on talent management, as opposed to the current structure, you know, getting -- dealing with USAJOBS, and just a total overhaul of that, thinking about more flexible benefit opportunities, so that you can have and attract and retain, frankly, the talent that's in this next generation that doesn't think about spending a 30-year career in the federal government, but wants to go in and out and use their talents as they can, so a whole series of things that are -- require both legislation and executive action because there's actually a lot of authorities we've found that exist for the executive branch that aren't being used, frankly, to create the kind of atmosphere and the talent management system that we see as valuable.

So, there's so much more to be said, but leadership, as Bel said, really, from the executive branch, is a critical aspect of this, but another point is we talk about and we call out, in the context of our recommendations, both institutes of higher education and the private sector, in particular, and the fact is there's a lot that these sectors can do to contribute to creating the kind of culture of service that we're interested in promoting, and it's -- from the institutes of higher education perspective, you have much to say in relation to what's already been said on the civics education and service learning.

Obviously, institutes of higher education can help to train the teachers that work through the K through 12 education, that we'd like to see have happen in civics education and in service learning spaces, but then also to accentuate those to create the curriculums to, you know, really promote these areas in ways that they haven't been for some time, and then, secondly, you know, I was thinking about it in admissions, right, like, having an expectation and a recognition of how valuable it is for students to experience service, and to contribute in that way, I think, is a piece of what we'd like to see, as part of this universal expectation of service and a recognition of the value that it provides, not just for the society but for the actual individuals who are engaging in it, both professionally and personally.

So, I think that's another piece of it, but then, also, frankly, focusing in on the kinds of talents and skills that are needed in public service and really trying to drive education in a way that helps to promote that because I think -- I know that John, Fiona, and -- both of you, and Joe, as well, and Bel probably, too, but all of us have -- that have spent so much time on national security and foreign policy recognize how critical it is, frankly, that we actually are able to mobilize the talent that exists in this country to make us as competitive as we need to be to address the threats of the future. So, I think that's a critical aspect of what can be done.

In the private sector, we had a number of business roundtable discussions, and other things were really remarkable degree of support, generally, for service, but, you know, we sort of highlighted some of the spaces where rubber meets the road for them, which is, you know, actually seeing service as something that's valuable in their employees, and recognizing that when they're hiring, and recognizing the value that leadership can bring from service into their organizations, and seeing that as part of their thinking, right, and also promoting service from the private sector and engaging in it, and, you know, and recognizing, frankly, the value that service from the Federal Government and, as you point out, state, and local, and tribal authorities, all of these combined, and it's not just about service in these different spaces, but if you look at AmeriCorps volunteers today, for example, who are helping to promote and address the COVID-19 crisis, many of them are doing things where they are supporting state and local emergency responders, right?

So, it's a -- there's a real continue -- sort of integration of service across these ranges that needs to be recognized and promoted by all of these different sectors of society.

MS. HILL: Well, that's great. John, actually, I'd like to bring you, and then Bel, in on this, as well. Avril really laid out a very large universe, there. I mean, obviously, for think tanks, like Brookings, you know, which were set up more than 100 years ago, also with a view to trying to help make government more effective and to think about many of these problems. I mean, people, like Bel, you know, spend all of their day trying to figure out how to address some of these, you know, critical issues that are facing the nation and come up with some practical solutions.

Some of the questions that we've also got in, have focused on how can you globalize this, this thinking? I mean, obviously, we're trying to figure out how to deal with crises that America is facing and to mobilize our population to deal with the challenges that, you know, are intrinsic to us, but there's also, you know, a very much -- an international dimension to this, particularly when you're dealing with a global pandemic. There are best practices that one can pick up. I mentioned the Royal Voluntary Service in the United Kingdom, you know, which is really kind of one of the things that we're talking about here, this how do you mobilize a nation, really, all kinds of different levels, to deal with a crisis, and it was set up just with the anticipation of World War II, and it has continued all of that time.

I mean, John, perhaps you could give us, you know, a little bit of an insight into how you've been thinking about this, from leaving your military service to then, you know, heading up a public facing institution, like Brookings, that's grappling with this, and how we might think of this in international sense. We've got some people from the United Nations, who are writing in, you know, reminding us that, you know, the United Nations, again, another organization that's been maligned over time, was actually set up in the work of all of these disasters of the 20th century, especially World War II, to try to deal with many of these problems. I'd be interested to hear about, you know, some of the thoughts you've had, John.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well, a couple things. You know, first, one of the reasons that the United States has been as influential as it has, around the world, for so many reasons, and for so long, is because we have -- we have believed in multilateralism. It's never been about the United States alone. It has always been about the United States within a community of nations, a community of nations that have -- either shares our values, or shares our interests, and we're able to accomplish a lot in that regard. For example, as Avril said very well, and as Joe has said, administration and leadership is really important in a moment like this, and I'm not going to get into the critique right now of how we're doing in that regard, but as we think about an opportunity that has been presented to us, right now, the pan -- this opportunity for the United States to lead the community of nations in dealing with this pandemic, to get after its basic causal factors, to create resilience in the world's economy and societies, to resolve this, if it

ever breaks out again, and then one of the things that this pandemic has really done is it has exposed inequality in the world, and here's an opportunity for the United States and the community of nations, we call it, at Brookings, the community of democracies, but, more broadly, the community of nations, who are willing to share in that responsibility, to deal with the inequality that we have faced in the world, which this, now, gives us an opportunity to truly focus our efforts to deal with, but the United States brings a couple of things to every crisis, in a multilateral sense, around the world, and one is the convening power, from the moral suasion of our leadership, and this is what we need to be exerting right now, and this is what's made us truly the great country that we are, our capacity to live our values and to extend those values, and this is a moment when we really need to discover that and extend those values, first on the pandemic, but, more broadly, here is an opportunity of the 21st century, for us to recognize what has laid bare so many of the problems in the multilateral world, and to try to take steps to embrace the solutions, and to organize, and lead the community of nations in dealing with that, and I think this is a rare moment.

You know, often, these kinds of visionary moments come from a trauma, whether it's a war or it's a massive disaster of some form or another. I was involved in a South Asian tsunami. Many things changed there, for the better, in the aftermath of that. Here is an opportunity we should not miss to reestablish and reaffirm our belief in the United Nations, our belief in multilateral organizations, and our willingness, as a nation, to lead, in a multilateral sense, living our values, extending our values, ultimately to solve this problem, and if we miss this, history will not be kind to the United States at this moment.

MS. HILL: And this is a very important message, John. Belle, when you were going around and talking to people, as you were fleshing out the idea of the national public service, you know, obviously, a lot of people wanted it to be voluntary, not mandatory, but, I mean, how do you think that the -- many of the people you were talking to would react to, you know, John's appeal for, you know, the United States returning to a sense of global leadership, in terms of also setting a standard for voluntary public service? I mean, do you think that this is something that would resonate with people?

MS. SAWHILL: Well, to be honest, when you go out and talk to ordinary citizens, and I was talking to people without college degrees, none of the people I talked to were what we would call part

of the elite, they would think a lot about the international aspects of this. I, obviously, totally agree with John, on what he just said, but I want to be realistic that this is not something that your average American gets up and worries about, and I want to go back to, therefore, the whole idea of civic education, which can include ways in which we are connected to the rest of the world, and understanding all of that a little bit better, and I think that the Commission's work in that area is really, really important.

I mean, you know, people are shocked when you tell them that 22 percent of Americans can't name even one branch of government. There may be even more shock when you tell them that 37 percent don't even know one right that's guaranteed by the First Amendment. Think about that. Now, I have friends, who volunteer at these citizenship ceremonies, when people -- when immigrants are naturalized, and they tell me those ceremonies are very moving.

The test you have to take to become a U.S. citizen is quite tough. I'm afraid most of our high school students couldn't pass it. They should be exposed to tests of that sort, and they should be asked to go to such a ceremony before they graduate from high school. I think they would learn that people from other countries are very eager to become U.S. citizens, but they do need to learn about what life is like if you're not a U.S. citizen.

MS. HILL: Well, I can certainly attest to that, Belle, as a naturalized citizen, that, you know, I've found the civics educational part of that not just very interesting and necessary, but also very moving, and I have to say, you know, taking part in that naturalized -- naturalization ceremony was a very important event for me, and I was really struck just at the diversity and just the great upwelling of positive emotion of the people that I -- and I naturalized with. I mean, it was in a sort of rather faceless building up in Baltimore, but it was one of the most moving occasions in my life, and I do think that, you know, finding a way back to civics education is very valuable, and I'd like to turn back to, you know, Joe, on this.

I mean, when we start thinking about a return to this, back to civics education, I mean, what do you think is the main obstacle here? I mean, I worry a little bit about the politicization of everything right now. I mean, obviously, public service ought to be apolitical. There are all kinds of issues that shouldn't be politicized. Public health is an obvious one, as we're trying to deal with this crisis,

but national security, so many different aspects, and I do know, from my own extended family in the U.S., the family I married into, but I also have, you know, relatives here, many of them, you know, have jobs as teachers, and first responders, and nurses, and they do set -- tend to have a sense of solidarity, not just with the U.S., but with other people going through emergencies worldwide. I mean, we've seen our first responders, firemen, people who deal with earthquakes and search and rescue, going out to other countries to help, when they're called upon to do so; nurses, you know, going around the world, as well as around the country. So many people have signed up to go and help in New York, all the way across the country.

I mean, how do we tackle some of this, too, so that people are politically aware, and aware of the kind of need for action and service but are not -- it's not politicized in some way? How did you feel -- I mean, you know, somebody who has really tried to have a bipartisan approach to something, how did you feel we could overcome this, Joe?

GENERAL HECK: Yeah, that's a great question, Fiona. So, it's -- you know, it's interesting to get the backstory of how we actually included civic education as one of our recommendations, one of our topic areas, because it was not one of the charges that was included in our mandate, from Congress, nor was it one of the guiding principles given to us by the President, but as we traveled around the country and talked with people about service, it was the American public that brought up the importance of civic education and the current lack thereof.

So, it appears to me that there is a hunger and a thirst for civic education to be brought back into the curriculum. What are the issues that we face? Well, there's only so many hours in a school day, right, and, so, as you focus on one area, some -- something else has to give, and with the last decade's emphasis on STEM Education, we have seen a lot of other topics and subjects be pushed off to the side to meet the timeframe of a school day. You know, it's not just civic education, but most of the social studies. Things, like vo-tech, shop, home ec, the arts, are all being pushed aside, and, so, we have to strike the balance. Right, yes, STEM education's important, but if you don't have a fundamental understanding of this country and how we function, having a STEM education, really, isn't going to be of

much benefit. So, that's one piece.

The other piece, of course, is always funding, right, and we asked local school districts to continue to do more with the decreasing federal dollars, as I mentioned the amount that was formerly appropriated to this area, and how it's declined over the last decade. So, that's why we call for the service grants and the civic education grants to help provide the seed money, if you will, for schools.

We also talk about the importance of an assessment of the progress, right? There has to be a return on the investment, and, so, you know, the National Association of Educational Progress has a civic education exam. Unfortunately, most students, right now, do not score proficient on that exam, nor is it required, really, to be given at certain intervals. It's one of the optional exams that's available. So, we need to look at that, as well, and I think the last piece is that this does not have to -- we're not talking about, okay, you're going to take one semester of American History and U.S. Government, and that checks the box.

You can weave civic education into every subject that's being taught, and that's how you inoculate the generational change. It's not by taking one class, and, you know, getting the B grade, and having it on your report card. It's how do you really make it a very part of a person's being and fiber, and the only way you're going to do that is to weave it through every class that they take, and, so, that's how we look at trying to move the Civic Education Program forward. We do have best practices in our appendix to the report.

Some states are doing phenomenally well, others not so much, but we do have some really good best practices. We did a lot of work with the iCivics program, in looking at how they would move this ahead, and, so, they're out there. We just have to provide the momentum to the school districts and to the states, just to try to implement.

MS. HILL: Well, that's great, I mean, especially the idea of weaving things in. I mean, Avril, I wonder if you'd like to, you know, elaborate on this a little bit, as well, I mean, as somebody who's been in and out of the federal government, I'm sure, like me, you were struck by how many of your colleagues had had an experience in which their school had brought them to Washington, D.C. to meet

with their Congressman or the Senator, or they'd had, you know, in a past civics education class, and that's how they've been inspired.

I mean, I have to say that my experience in the National Security Council, also in the Intelligence Council, I was struck by, you know, just the diversity of the walks of life that my, you know, fellow public servants had come from. Many of them came from really poor impoverished backgrounds from all the way across the United States, but they all had in common, again, either military service, that they were veterans, or a great experience of civics education, a great teacher, or a moment where they met their Congressman or their Senator, or they took part in some school trip to Washington, D.C. or the State Capitol, and that was what inspired them to serve later. So, Avril, I mean, I wonder if you've had any more thoughts to elaborate on what Joe said, there?

MS. HAINES: Yeah, absolutely, and, I mean, I think one small point, and then a broader point would -- just in the context of what you were saying. Service learning is another area where, as Joe indicated with civics education, where you can actually pull things in across a whole range of topics, and I -- and we were fascinated in talking to different teachers in schools across the country for, you know, their creative approaches to these issues, but, you know, you can be in a biology class, and there's a service learning component of it, right, where they're actually taking biology and using that expertise to show how you can actually engage in service, through these processes, and that's a remarkable -- it's just a very inspiring thing, to see people who are very focused on their particular, you know, kind of expertise, but, nevertheless, recognizing this (inaudible) and as we've been saying throughout the discussion, I mean, I think it is -- the data demonstrates this, but, certainly, this is consistent with my own experience, and it sounds like yours, too, Fiona, which is just how, once you get hooked, it's hard not to, you know, continue.

In other words, once you serve once, the clear indication is that you're more likely to serve again, and that happens across a range of issues, but I wanted to sort of -- to your broader point, just comment on my particular parochial perspective on this, and I think, you know, John's comments resonate with me very much, in terms of the degree to which we require multilateralism and a need to

engage multilaterally in order to promote our own interests and to see ourselves and our allies and others survive and thrive.

I think the lens through which I've seen this, from a national security standpoint, in addition to the competitiveness point that I made earlier, and, Fiona, I think you've spoken, particularly eloquently, on this, I think the divisions in our country are ones that, you know, I've seen adversaries exploit, ultimately, and these are, you know, vulnerabilities in our democracy, in a sense, and in addition, I think another critical aspect of this, from my perspective, in terms of actually trying to address national security and foreign policy issues, is that the divisions in our country make us less capable of responding to those adversaries when they do, in fact, exploit those activities, and, as a consequence, I've come, in my national security and foreign policy professional experience, to believe that, if we don't address those issues, that actually is going to be the long pole in the tent to addressing our national security and our foreign policy, and I think you can make the argument, quite persuasively, to people around the country, who do care about our national security, and you see, in the polls that exist, you know, among folks who are more skeptical about, sometimes, multilateral engagements, through international organizations, and trade, and so on, recognize the value that they have gotten out of it, from a national security standpoint, from a peace and prosperity standpoint, coming out of World War II and otherwise, and I think that is something that I believe service can actually help combat, and I think that's a -- you know, obviously, it's been an underlying point that we've all made in different ways, but the reality is service can actually bring us together in ways that nothing else seems to be able to do it, and it is something that, you know, through these experiences, we see the value of service to actually heal these divisions, but coming back to some of the questions that you were getting at, it's only going to work if we actually develop the diversity that, you know, people are asking about.

In service, we recognize that, you know, for the military, most of our accessions come from the American Southwest, that, you know, in fact, 40 percent, I think, come from five states, you know, so, we see the need for increasing the diversity of who serves in the military, across the geography, that goes to the civilian military divide, that Joe mentioned, a whole series of things like that.

We have recommendations specifically to try to address those issues, right, and we recognize the value of actually promoting service in all of these different areas, including addressing some of the inequality issues that were mentioned, and I think, you know, service is another place where we can -- we have the most, you know, extraordinary gap of inequality of all advanced economies.

That's something we need to address. So, this is another place where we're able to actually make some moves in that space to do something about it. So, I think it's a really -- it's an interesting -- you know, I feel as if all of us come at this issue from different perspectives, but there's real value in solving many of our problems through this lens.

MS. HILL: Well, this is wonderful, Avril. I think you've actually given us a good concluding overview, here, because, very sadly, you know, we're out of time. We had to wrap up at 3:15, and I think that's, you know, where we are now. I would just like to thank all of you, on behalf of Brookings, and all of my colleagues, for participating in this, and I know that John is very eager, you know, for all of us to help out more on inspiring people to public service. It's the ethos of Brookings, itself. It's why Mr. Brookings and his family endowed the institution more than 100 years ago, to help, and increasing the effectiveness of our government, and that can only be done when people are mobilized behind, not just in support of government in a kind of a popular opinion fashion, but actually actively taking part in it, and I think this whole message of your report, Joe, and Avril, and all of the Commissioners, was that we all have agency.

We can all do something, and, you know, as you said, Joe, in your opening remarks, we're looking forward, next year, to the 60th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's call to service, but 10 years out, for the 70th anniversary, you'd like to see millions more Americans actually actively engaged in public service, and that seems, to me, not just an admirable vision, but a realistic goal, if we can all pull together, and where Belle and other colleagues at Brookings who were looking at voluntary service and at civics education, you know? Hopefully, we can keep a role in this space, too.

So, we'd like to congratulate the commission, again, on this fabulous report, thank all of our audience members for taking part in this. We've really had a great set of questions coming in, in a

very large and diverse audience, and we wish you luck in the promotion of the report, going forward. So, thank you so much, Avril and to Joe, and congratulations on just an amazing work over the last two years.

Thank you.

GENERAL HECK: Thank you.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well done.

MS. HAINES: Thank you so much.

GENERAL ALLEN: Be well.

MS. HAINES: Be well.

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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.

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