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LOUISIANA MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
Held on JUNE 27, 2023
AT THE LASALLE BUILDING
GRIFFIN ROOM, FIRST FLOOR
617 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70802

REPORTED BY: KELLY S. PERRIN, C.C.R.

COURT REPORTERS OF LOUISIANA, LLC
9522 BROOKLINE AVENUE, SUITE 217
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70809

PHONE: (225) 201-9650 * FAX: (225) 201-9651

E-MAIL: depos@courtreportersla.com

1	I N D E X	
2		PAGE
3	CAPTION	1
4	APPEARANCES	3
5	ROLL CALL	5-8
6	REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE	100
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

Page 2

1	APPEARANCES:
2	SECRETARY DONALD M. PIERSON, JR., (CHAIRMAN)
3	DUSTIN GUY, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF
4	(REPRESENTING SECRETARY/LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOEY
5	STRICKLAND, VICE CHAIRMAN)
6	GENERAL ROBERT J. "BOB" ELDER
7	MR. BRIAN P. JAKES, SR.
8	MR. JOHN E. MANION, III
9	MS. DEBORAH B. RANDOLPH
10	SENATOR MIKE REESE
11	MR. GARY B. SILBERT
12	MR. RONNIE L. SLONE
13	MR. MURRAY W. VISER
14	BRIGADE GENERAL D. KEITH WADDELL
15	REAR ADMIRAL JOEL R. WHITEHEAD
16	ROBERT M. "ROBBY" ABBOD, JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
17	FOR LMAC
18	MR. LINK MUSTIN, THE ROOSEVELT GROUP
19	MRS. PAT VISER
20	
21	
22	Reported by:
23	Kelly S. Perrin, Certified Court Reporter
24	
25	

Page 3

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. ABBOD:
All right. Good afternoon, everyone.

ALL PRESENT:
Good afternoon.

MR. ABBOD:
It's a pleasure to have y'all join us this afternoon for today's LMAC meeting. I'll go ahead and call today's meeting to order. I'm showing about five past one, so I think we can go ahead and get started. I know we have a number of important topics and activities to report out on. There's certainly been a lot of great work going on in pretty much every corner of the state. So I'm excited today to get to those reports and give you all an opportunity to share the great work that's going on throughout the state.

So since we typically begin our meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance, I'll kindly ask everyone, if you wouldn't mind, rising and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance?

(PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE BY ALL)

MR. ABBOD:
Thank you, everyone. You may be seated.

Page 4

So I'll do my best here to stick with the agenda. Each of you should have a packet. And within that packet, you should have an agenda. You should also have a list of our current LMAC Board members. If you do have a chance to look through that list and see any updates, revisions, changes to email addresses, please do let me know and we'll make that update in our system.

So we can go ahead and begin. Really, this is a little out of order. We did the Pledge first, but I'll move to our roll call. And please, again, forgive me for any mispronunciations.

Mayor Rick Allen?
(No response.)

MR. ABBOD:
Mayor Clarence Beebe?
(No response.)

MR. ABBOD:
Representative Raymond Crews?
(No response.)

MR. ABBOD:
General Robert Elder?
GENERAL ELDER:

Page 5

1 Here.
 2 MR. ABBOUD:
 3 Mr. Robert Gatti?
 4 (No response.)
 5 MR. ABBOUD:
 6 Mr. Brian Jakes?
 7 MR. JAKES:
 8 Here.
 9 MR. ABBOUD:
 10 Mr. John Manion?
 11 MR. MANION:
 12 Here.
 13 MR. ABBOUD:
 14 Secretary Don Pierson?
 15 SECRETARY PIERSON:
 16 Present.
 17 MR. ABBOUD:
 18 Ms. Deborah Randolph?
 19 MS. RANDOLPH:
 20 Here.
 21 MR. ABBOUD:
 22 Major General Ronald Richard?
 23 (No response.)
 24 MR. ABBOUD:
 25 Mr. Gary Silbert?

Page 6

1 Here.
 2 MR. ABBOUD:
 3 Okay. Thank you very much, everyone.
 4 I'm showing that we do have quorum. So we can
 5 move to Item No. 3, approval of previous
 6 meeting minutes? Did anyone have any
 7 questions, comments, or revisions to the prior
 8 meeting minutes? I believe those were
 9 circulated prior to today's meeting. So I'd
 10 like to ask for any comments at this time?
 11 Okay. I am hearing none. Does anyone
 12 have a motion to approve?
 13 MR. JAKES:
 14 So moved.
 15 MR. ABBOUD:
 16 Any second?
 17 MR. SILBERT:
 18 Second.
 19 MR. ABBOUD:
 20 All in favor, please say aye.
 21 ALL:
 22 Aye.
 23 MR. ABBOUD:
 24 Thank you. And with that, I would like
 25 to turn the meeting over to Secretary Don

Page 8

1 MR. SILBERT:
 2 Here.
 3 MR. ABBOUD:
 4 Mr. Ronnie Slone?
 5 MR. SLONE:
 6 Present.
 7 MR. ABBOUD:
 8 Senator Mike Reese?
 9 SENATOR REESE:
 10 Here.
 11 MR. ABBOUD:
 12 Secretary Joey Strickland?
 13 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:
 14 I'm here.
 15 MR. ABBOUD:
 16 Mr. Murray Viser?
 17 MR. VISER:
 18 Here.
 19 MR. ABBOUD:
 20 Major General Keith Waddell?
 21 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 22 Here.
 23 MR. ABBOUD:
 24 Rear Admiral Joel Whitehead?
 25 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:

Page 7

1 Pierson for his remarks.
 2 SECRETARY PIERSON:
 3 Thank you for your time and attention
 4 today. It's very much helpful for us to have
 5 the opportunity to interface to update you on
 6 a number of the things happening around the
 7 state, particularly as they relate to the
 8 military installation. My job today will be
 9 to walk that fine line of not stealing the
 10 thunder from a number of other reports that
 11 will be made but to still highlight some of
 12 the recent activities that we've had.
 13 Certainly, Senator Reese has been engaged in
 14 the Legislative Session and they've concluded
 15 their work, not completely, but for the most
 16 part, I guess, as they monitor which bills the
 17 Governor will sign, which ones he'll let
 18 become law without his signature and where
 19 vetoes are viewed to be appropriate by the
 20 Governor.
 21 But overall, the session, I think was
 22 very strong for the state. We have a very
 23 strong economy right now, \$473 million was
 24 provided to pay down State Employee's
 25 Retirement fund debt; \$50 million to Teacher's

Page 9

1 Retirement debt; \$181 million was placed into
 2 the Rainy Day Fund; \$505 million dollars were
 3 allocated to DOTD for various state priority
 4 road projects; another \$409 million in
 5 infrastructure projects, reports, and other
 6 important systems and roads and buildings and
 7 parks across the state; \$147 million for
 8 coastal protection; 193 million for higher ed;
 9 \$288 million for K-12 Early Childhood
 10 Education; \$144 million augments to the
 11 Department of Health. So the economy has been
 12 very, very strong in our state.

13 We have currently employed more people in
 14 Louisiana than ever before in history at
 15 higher wages. For LED, we tracked the
 16 investment coming into our state. And in
 17 2020, that was \$10 billion. But in 2021, that
 18 was \$20 billion. In 2022, that was another
 19 \$20 billion. In 2023, we're tracking right at
 20 \$18 billion right now. So we're going to have
 21 another very strong year in Louisiana driving
 22 the economy forward here. But we'll reserve
 23 some time later in the meeting for Senator
 24 Reese to add any remarks he may want to speak
 25 to relative to the Legislative Session.

Page 10

1 Executor Director Robbie Abboud and I
 2 attended the Redesignation Ceremony of Fort
 3 Johnson, formerly Fort Polk, and named after a
 4 World War I Medal of Honor recipient, and that
 5 took place on the 14th of June. It was
 6 well-attended and a great day for the POST.

7 Last Tuesday, we had Governor Edwards at
 8 the Paris Air Show. You have to travel far
 9 sometimes to see all the people that you need
 10 to meet up with. I guess we do that at
 11 Washington Mardi Gras. We travel there to see
 12 people from all around our state and a number
 13 of our elected officials. But for the
 14 Governor at the Paris Air Show, he was able to
 15 interface with executives from Boeing,
 16 Lockheed Martin, Airbus, and Northrop Grumman.
 17 And, of course, Boeing's got the space launch
 18 system program with a large number of
 19 employees at Michoud. Also, Lockheed Martin
 20 manufactures Orion Space Capsule at Michoud
 21 with another large contention of employees
 22 there.

23 Also of interest, just to note, and in
 24 Northrop Grumman, there's a lot of work on
 25 military aircraft at Chennault over in Lake

Page 11

1 Charles, a very important economic activity
 2 there in Lake Charles and diversifies the
 3 economy of that region. So those were all
 4 nice pieces for us and important intersects.

5 One of the other pieces of that that's
 6 happening currently is that there's a lot of
 7 interest around Camp Minden, where for many,
 8 many years, that was the Louisiana Army
 9 Ammunition Plant putting together the 155
 10 Howitzer rounds and other ammunition that
 11 supported the Korean and Vietnam Wars now has
 12 some activity there, America's last black
 13 powder manufacturing operation. But it's a
 14 place where energetics and explosives are not
 15 confronted with a community that doesn't want
 16 that happening in their backyard. Fortunate
 17 for us, that area has hosted for more than 50
 18 years, so they're comfortable as we bring in
 19 some of the more modern types of manufacturing
 20 opportunities there. And we've got our
 21 fingers crossed and appreciate the great
 22 working relationship that we have with General
 23 Waddell and his personnel that are allowing us
 24 to joint venture in these engagements. And
 25 when they're asking about the capacities and

Page 12

1 the capabilities there, it does take that team
 2 effort. So great working with you on these
 3 activities and opportunities, General.

4 Some things that you may want to note is
 5 on 10 July, Stephenson Stellar Corporation
 6 will have their ribbon cut in Shreveport at
 7 the Biomedical Research Foundation area there
 8 in the medical corridor. They're doing some
 9 great work with Global Strike Command working
 10 on a lot of things we can't talk about, but we
 11 know that there's a great deal of activity
 12 that's involved with all those operations. So
 13 it's great to be growing our software
 14 footprint and doing so in Northwest Louisiana.

15 Also of note in the same time frame
 16 almost, but there will be a Triad Symposium at
 17 LSU on the 20th and 21st of July. That will
 18 attract a large number of high-ranking Air
 19 Force and other service officials and elected
 20 officials into the area for a number of those
 21 discussions about the Nuclear deterrents, the
 22 role of the B52 bomber, and other elements;
 23 really a topnotch level of speakers. And I
 24 encourage you to look into that. And you can
 25 Google the Triad Symposium at LSU and it will

Page 13

1 come up available for you to register. Not
 2 only -- you don't have to travel, but a lot of
 3 it can be attended virtually by Zoom. So if
 4 that's of interest to you, please know that
 5 that symposium is coming, and LED will be
 6 represented there.

7 And finally another note for future
 8 activity, on October 31 to November 4, New
 9 Orleans will host the 2023 Congressional Medal
 10 of Honor Convention. It's a convention of
 11 really the Nation's most prestigious and
 12 patriotic celebrations. The number of Medal
 13 of Honor recipients is dwindling and -- but
 14 they expect more than 30 or 40 of those to be
 15 present. And you'll hear a lot more about
 16 that as we approach that date.

17 That's my report for the moment. I'll be
 18 available and under Other Business or to take
 19 your questions later in the meeting. Thank
 20 you, Robbie.

21 MR. ABBOUD:

22 Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. So
 23 we can go ahead and proceed on to Item No. 5
 24 on today's agenda, so Reports, Overview and
 25 Discussion. And to begin, I'd like to go

Page 14

1 ahead and call on Deputy Chief of Staff for
 2 the Department of Veterans Affairs, Dustin
 3 Guy, who will be reporting on behalf of
 4 Colonel Strickland today.

5 MR. GUY:

6 Thank you. All right. Thank you very
 7 much. So, as Robbie said, I'm Dustin Guy.
 8 I'm Deputy Chief of Staff for the Louisiana
 9 Department of Veterans Affairs and
 10 representing Secretary Joey Strickland. He's
 11 actually at a VA appointment today, so he
 12 couldn't be here with you but certainly
 13 appreciate the opportunity to brief on the
 14 Department.

15 The Louisiana Department of Veterans
 16 Affairs is an 850-person department that
 17 serves Louisiana. It's 283,000 veterans and
 18 their families. According to the Federal VA,
 19 our Veterans Assistance Counselors help bring
 20 in more than \$1.6 billion statewide in
 21 compensation and pension dollars.

22 As of June for fiscal year '23, our VACs,
 23 our Veterans Assistance Counselors filed more
 24 than 132,000 claims on behalf of Louisiana
 25 veterans. In terms of appeals, our staff

Page 15

1 worked 301 of those appeals resulting in
 2 retroactive payments of more than \$2.2 million
 3 in fiscal year '23. Our VACs have also
 4 verified veteran status of 1,252 businesses
 5 for LED's veterans first business initiative.

6 We have five veteran cemeteries located
 7 across the state, and I wanted to share a few
 8 of our numbers with those cemeteries. So our
 9 central Louisiana veteran cemetery in
 10 Leesville, we have 1,344 interred there and
 11 they average about 12 burials per months. At
 12 our Northeast Louisiana veteran cemetery in
 13 Rayville, there are 932 interred; average 11
 14 burials per month at that cemetery. At our
 15 Northwest Louisiana veterans cemetery in
 16 Keithville, 4,021 interred with an average of
 17 29 burials per month. And at our Southeast
 18 Louisiana veterans cemetery in Slidell, 4,112
 19 interred. They average 49 burials per month.
 20 That is our busiest cemetery. That cemetery
 21 opened in 2014. And our latest cemetery in
 22 2020 is in Jennings at the Southwest -- it's a
 23 Southwest Louisiana veterans cemetery. There
 24 are 382 interred at that cemetery and they
 25 average 12 burials per month. Overall, we

Page 16

1 have nearly 10,790 total interred in all five
 2 of our cemeteries. And overall, we're
 3 averaging 113 burials per month.

4 We are working with the Federal VA on
 5 construction products at three cemeteries. At
 6 Leesville, \$2.25 million; at Rayville, \$1.1
 7 million, and Slidell, \$5.2 million. We just
 8 completed a \$4.4 million project in Keithville
 9 to add 1,520 preplaced concrete crypts and
 10 1,260 Columnbarium niches among other
 11 improvements. It was an amazing process.

12 Let me tell you, we haven't -- we visited
 13 the cemetery during the construction. And, in
 14 fact, we're going to be visiting again this
 15 Friday, and it was an amazing process to see
 16 them placing these crypts in the ground, the
 17 amount of earth that they moved, and then the
 18 precision in which that they placed them, it
 19 was really amazing.

20 Our veterans homes, we have five veterans
 21 homes located across the state and we are
 22 caring for almost 600 veterans at these five
 23 homes. Our census numbers continue to
 24 increase by the hard work of our staff
 25 rebuilding them post-pandemic. Our veterans

Page 17

1 homes were hit very hard, unfortunately, but
 2 they are recovering and doing very well. And
 3 our numbers reflect that with a census at
 4 nearly 600. Our veterans family members and
 5 our community volunteers are back in their
 6 homes.

7 Our LaVetCorps Program, so we operate 32
 8 college and university campus veteran centers
 9 through our LaVetCorps Program where we call
 10 them navigators. They are student veteran
 11 leaders serve 10,000 student veterans and
 12 their families. This is -- we call it the
 13 LaVetCorps Program, this is actual an
 14 AmeriCorps Grant. This program is in its
 15 fifth year and we're seeing more veterans
 16 graduate and we want them to be leaders and to
 17 live a life after military service.

18 We are currently looking to fill
 19 vacancies in Delgado Community College West
 20 bank, Northwest Louisiana Technical Community
 21 College, Northwestern State University, South
 22 Louisiana Community College, Tulane
 23 University, and the University of Holy Cross
 24 to begin service in August.

25 Our State approving agency that approves

Page 18

1 all our GI bill payments for college campuses
 2 and student veterans, we have certified 244
 3 active institutions to receive GI bill
 4 payments. Most recently, brought in more than
 5 \$168 million in Federal dollars to Louisiana's
 6 higher education communities. Our Military
 7 Family Assistance Fund, that is a need-based
 8 program that we're very, very proud of, it
 9 provides assistance to veterans that are in
 10 need. Like I said, it's a need-based fund.
 11 It could be help with car payments, home
 12 loans, bills. Any veteran who falls on hard
 13 times, this is a Louisiana Resident Veteran
 14 who has been honorably discharged, they're
 15 eligible -- basically eligible for this
 16 assistance. The Board reviews application and
 17 we can award up to \$10,000 per year to a
 18 veteran. This fiscal year, we have awarded
 19 nearly \$125,000 in need-based claims to
 20 Louisiana veterans.

21 Like I said, this is a fantastic program.
 22 It allows us to respond very quickly to
 23 veterans who are in need. We have different
 24 thresholds in terms of approval. We have an
 25 administrator who has the authority to approve

Page 19

1 up to \$1,500. Then it goes to a three-person
 2 committee up to \$2,500, and then a full board
 3 up to the \$10,000. Please, I want you all to
 4 be aware of this program. We've been able to
 5 help so many veterans and their families.
 6 Especially during Hurricane Ida, we were able
 7 to respond very, very quickly to veterans in
 8 need. In fact, many times, we were able to
 9 get them assistance before their insurance
 10 companies were able to.

11 I want to share, if I can, an email that
 12 we just received this weekend that kind of
 13 speaks to this program and the significance of
 14 it. This was an email, and it's very short,
 15 that was sent to our program administrator
 16 from a veteran that we assisted through this
 17 program, and he says:

18 I would like to take this opportunity to
 19 thank you and all of your staff for help you
 20 all provided for our family. My broken ankle
 21 is healing well and I'm back at work. If it
 22 wouldn't have been for the assistance you all
 23 provided, we would have lost just about
 24 everything. Again, I thank you all from the
 25 bottom of my heart. If there is anything I

Page 20

1 can do to help you with the good work y'all
 2 do, please do not hesitate to contact me.

3 So this is a fantastic program. It's
 4 made up primarily of donations. It's about a
 5 half-a-million-dollar fund at this point. And
 6 like I said, we're able to get the money to
 7 veterans and their family in need and we can
 8 do it rather quickly. So I just want you all
 9 to be aware of it. Veterans can fill out an
 10 application on our website, which is
 11 vetaffairs.la.gov. And those interested can
 12 make donations online as well, and I have
 13 cards. I also have some guide books that I
 14 want to make sure, if you're interested, you
 15 get one. It goes through all of our -- all of
 16 our programs. It's brand new, hot off the
 17 press up to date. It has all updated contact
 18 information. I want to make sure you have
 19 that. I probably don't have enough for
 20 everybody, but we'll certainly get them to
 21 you. Like I said, I have my card. We can get
 22 you whatever you need.

23 As far as our Outreach Program is
 24 concerned, we held our first Veterans Career
 25 and Education Fair on May 19th. More than 50

Page 21

1 veterans met with employers and pursued job
 2 applications. We're working to bring more job
 3 referral and job placement resources to
 4 veterans.
 5 On July 19th, in Baton Rouge, we'll
 6 unveil and dedicate the new heritage monument
 7 in honor of African American Service Members
 8 throughout our Nation's history. This
 9 monument will be in the Louisiana Veterans
 10 Memorial Park next to the State Capitol.
 11 In August, we will unveil and dedicate
 12 the new Purple Heart Trail in our Louisiana
 13 Veterans Memorial Park as well.
 14 In September, we'll hold our annual
 15 Suicide Prevention Summit and Gold Star
 16 Mothers and Families Recognition Ceremony.
 17 That will also -- Gold Star Recognition
 18 Ceremony will also be held in Louisiana
 19 Veterans Memorial Park. We have a monument
 20 there specifically for Gold Star Families.
 21 We're planning a great event in Baton
 22 Rouge during the week of Veterans Day this
 23 year. It will center around a documentary
 24 about a grandson who chronicled his World War
 25 II grandfather's service, which will be shown

Page 22

1 at the Manship Theatre in downtown Baton
 2 Rouge. And you can sign up for news from us
 3 at vetaffairs.la.gov.
 4 So we have a lot going on. We never slow
 5 down, that's the Colonel's direction, and
 6 that's what the Governor expects of us, so
 7 that's the Mission. So that completes my
 8 report. Does anybody have any questions?
 9 GENERAL ELDER:
 10 The packages that you have here, is that
 11 also online?
 12 MR. GUY:
 13 What's that?
 14 GENERAL ELDER:
 15 The packages that you have here for
 16 distribution, you also have that online?
 17 MR. GUY:
 18 This right here?
 19 GENERAL ELDER:
 20 Yes.
 21 MR. GUY:
 22 I don't believe so due to the volume of
 23 it. I mean, certainly, our website is a good
 24 resource and would get you in contact with
 25 someone who can give that to you, but I'll

Page 23

1 make sure you have one for sure.
 2 GENERAL ELDER:
 3 Okay.
 4 MR. GUY:
 5 Anyone else? Thank you very much.
 6 MR. ABBOD:
 7 Thank you very much, Dustin. We
 8 certainly work closely with the Department of
 9 Veterans Affairs. Dustin, you mentioned our
 10 veterans first business initiative, so we
 11 remain grateful for the work you all do and
 12 remain grateful for our partnership. So thank
 13 you for that.
 14 Next, I would like to call on General
 15 Waddell to report on guard activity. And I
 16 may just need one moment to pull up your
 17 slide.
 18 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 19 Okay. And I'll get him, our Governor's
 20 fellow to pass out a packet as well if you
 21 want to make notes along the way. All right.
 22 Senator Reese, Secretary Pierson, General
 23 Elder, Fellow Council Members, good afternoon.
 24 Again, I'm Keith Waddell, the acting General
 25 of the Louisiana National Guard.

Page 24

1 Before I get started, I just want to, as
 2 a baseline, I want to let everybody know our
 3 strategic objectives in Louisiana National
 4 Guard have not changed. They still revolve
 5 around readiness, supporting our deployed and
 6 redeployed units, all hazards operations,
 7 which are basically state emergencies, and
 8 moral, legal, and ethical service. So that --
 9 the first three are really a focused point for
 10 me during my presentation here this afternoon.
 11 So as far as build and maintain
 12 readiness, I want to share something that took
 13 place in March. We actually have a recruiter
 14 named Staff Sergeant Christian Knoll. He was
 15 the top production NCO in the entire nation,
 16 all 54 states in territory, number one for the
 17 second year in a row. Sergeant Knoll is from
 18 around the Shreveport area and has done very
 19 well, and he represented Louisiana well as he
 20 got that national award in March from
 21 Lieutenant General Jensen, the Director of the
 22 Army National Guard. And Sergeant First Class
 23 Jade Mays was the marketing NCO of the year
 24 for the entire country. So two success
 25 stories back here in our backyard, extremely

Page 25

1 proud of both of them.
 2 And they have contributed to what you see
 3 with personnel readiness up there. We're
 4 doing very well in terms of strength in
 5 Louisiana National Guard. If you look at the
 6 Army and the Air, both well over 100 percent,
 7 which is critical because as we try to compete
 8 for force structure and bring in more units
 9 into the State of Louisiana, that's really the
 10 first cut in what they're looking at. So once
 11 the numbers kind of demonstrate that the state
 12 can support, and as long as that force
 13 structure is something Louisiana can use, we
 14 go after it. We don't get it all. But if it
 15 fits for Louisiana, certainly, we try to get
 16 it.
 17 We are currently ranked number one as far
 18 as the Strength Health Index goes from the
 19 National Guard Bureau. It takes into account
 20 a variety of personnel metrics, and Louisiana
 21 is number one in the nation there. They do it
 22 every week in terms of kind of re-popping the
 23 chalk. And for the last four weeks, we've
 24 been on top. So, hopefully, we'll get to stay
 25 there.

Page 26

1 As far as equipment readiness, right now
 2 we have 27,500 reportable items in Louisiana
 3 National Guard. That's wheels and track
 4 vehicles. We're at about 94 percent right
 5 now. We're going through annual training with
 6 a lot of our units. So I like to be around
 7 97 percent is where I feel really good, but we
 8 do have a maintenance company that's deployed
 9 in Kuwait right now with a lot of full-time
 10 technicians, so that has set us back. And
 11 we're kind of readjusting our strategy to try
 12 to get the numbers back up.
 13 So as long as the parts are flowing in,
 14 because that is another constraint we have
 15 right now, as long as we can get those parts
 16 and hang them, we can drive those numbers up.
 17 But I still feel confident that if something
 18 happens as far as state emergency, your
 19 Louisiana National Guard will be there ready
 20 to respond and take care of the citizens and
 21 visitors to our state.
 22 With training readiness, again, we're in
 23 annual training right now. We do very well in
 24 terms of our peers as far as qualified
 25 individuals. You see we're number two; really

Page 27

1 go with number one, number two most days. So
 2 our training managers do a good job in our
 3 soldier availability and airman availability
 4 so they can go to training is also important.
 5 So when those two points intersect, end
 6 result, qualified soldiers and airmen for your
 7 Louisiana National Guard.
 8 So I get questions all the time about
 9 recruiting and how we're doing. So when you
 10 look at these two line graphs and you kind of
 11 see on the left side of the chart on the green
 12 line for the Army where you kind of had that
 13 downward trend, I will tell you right now, we
 14 have over 800 accessions in the Louisiana
 15 National Guard. So last year, we finished at
 16 769 for the entire year. We're already over
 17 800 with three months left to go.
 18 So our goal is a little over a thousand.
 19 I think we're going to come in a little over
 20 1,100 by my estimation. And based upon
 21 recruiter production at this point, we get
 22 45 -- nearly 45 percent of the market share.
 23 When you're talking about branches and
 24 components, your Louisiana National Guard
 25 recruiters are really, really working it hard

Page 28

1 along with the unit members. So, again, huge
 2 success there.
 3 On the air side, last year, we finished
 4 at 82. We're already at 93 right now. So
 5 when that COVID Vaccine Recension took place,
 6 we saw the numbers skyrocket in terms of
 7 accessions in the Louisiana National Guard.
 8 We did recently open up a storefront on
 9 Airline Highway. Right next to the storefront
 10 with the active Air Force and Reserves, we're
 11 right nextdoor neighbors to them. So we did a
 12 ribbon cutting a couple of weeks ago. We
 13 enlisted four people that day. So this is the
 14 best market in the State of Louisiana, so
 15 having that storefront there should really
 16 drive up the numbers as far as our Air Guards
 17 are concerned. So we're excited about that.
 18 On the retention side, on the Army, I
 19 think we're going to be around 78 percent this
 20 year. We've really gotten fat and happy over
 21 the last couple of years; 82, 86, and
 22 82 percent again; 78 percent is our
 23 organizational goal. We'll reach that this
 24 year. Still got some work to do these last
 25 three months. But in my back reach with the

Page 29

1 commanders, all the feedback I'm getting is
 2 positive. And any mitigation we can do to
 3 keep them on the team, certainly we're going
 4 to do that. I think that the fighter wing on
 5 the air side will be back up around 92,
 6 93 percent this year and that's kind of where
 7 we're used to as far as the Air Guard is
 8 concerned.

9 On Federal mobilizations, currently, we
 10 have 470 soldiers and airmen that are deployed
 11 somewhere in the world. The 1083rd
 12 Transportation Company, we actually did their
 13 deployment ceremony this Saturday at Airline
 14 High School. They actually left Saturday
 15 afternoon for Fort Cavazos, formerly known as
 16 Fort Hood, Texas. And they will be there
 17 until about July the 25th, and they will have
 18 onward movement to Kuwait where they'll spend
 19 nine months serving in theater.

20 Our next unit that is up is the assault
 21 helicopter battalion. Those three elements,
 22 Alpha, Delta, and Echo, they will be at
 23 Virginia during their deployment supporting
 24 Federal operations there.

25 So you see the projections in terms of

Page 30

1 392 more? I'll tell you, I get calls, it
 2 seems like almost every week with a
 3 notification for either an individual or a
 4 small unit to deploy. So we'll be adding to
 5 that list where you see sourcings there. That
 6 continues to grow almost every week.

7 On state emergency responses, we finished
 8 Plaquemines Parish this past Friday. So with
 9 the saltwater intrusion that was coming up on
 10 the Mississippi River for Buras and
 11 Boothville-Venice, we actually sent down
 12 palletized water to both of those locations to
 13 help them through the weekend. I know GOHSEP
 14 is working the long-term operation there. And
 15 the week before that -- or the weekend before
 16 that up in north Louisiana with the severe
 17 weather that took place there, we pushed a lot
 18 of water. We had generators on the ground.
 19 As a matter of fact, we recovered our last
 20 generator today from DeSoto Parish. So we
 21 should be able to close that 2023 northwest
 22 severe weather mission out today. And I'll
 23 talk cyber a little bit in a moment.

24 On innovative readiness training: So
 25 these are for our engineer battalions. So

Page 31

1 we've got three construction engineer
 2 battalions in Louisiana National Guard. Two
 3 of them have already been through their two
 4 weeks of annual training. So we've had a
 5 month's worth of work with Grambling, Grant
 6 Parish, and Lost Bayou Scout Camp. And we're
 7 making great progress there.

8 So the 520th engineer battalion out of
 9 Monroe, they will be the last engineer
 10 battalion that will start annual training
 11 after the 4th of July. They will put the
 12 final touches on all these projects that you
 13 see over on the right side. The reason those
 14 two on the left are highlighted is we've
 15 already completed both of those projects. So
 16 Grambling State is a Phase II. We actually
 17 went and cleared and grubbed a large section a
 18 couple of years ago. President Gallot got us
 19 to come back up there to do another 50 acres.
 20 A lot of horizontal work. All is well.

21 Grant Parish is in Phase II also. We
 22 began construction of a rifle and pistol range
 23 last year, which was basically all horizontal
 24 work. And then now, we're going back to
 25 finish up some of the horizontal and put in

Page 32

1 some of the vertical requirements that Sheriff
 2 McCain has.

3 Lost Bayou Scout Camp is a mile-long
 4 road -- stretch of road. They want some
 5 reshaping and re-profiling of that particular
 6 road. And then, the Vermilion Fire Tower is a
 7 horizontal project that will have a day one
 8 start after the 4th of July holiday. All of
 9 those are our IRT projects. These are huge
 10 wins for us with the community, so we love
 11 doing them any time we have a chance.

12 On our Training Center Rotations: I had
 13 the opportunity to go Fort Johnson a couple of
 14 weeks ago for the 44th Infantry Brigade Combat
 15 Team out of New Jersey. We actually had
 16 elements of the 256 from Lafayette that
 17 supported the opposing force. So that 183 PAX
 18 that you see right there, those were from the
 19 Lafayette unit or surrounding area.

20 And we also got to bring in our state
 21 partner of Belize. They sent about 140
 22 individuals from the Belize Defense Force and
 23 the Belizean Coast Guard that participated
 24 with the Special Operations Forces that were
 25 part of that rotation, so huge win. All the

Page 33

1 Belizeans, Minister Marin who is the Minister
 2 of Border Security and National Defense in
 3 Belize, I had an opportunity to talk to him.
 4 He was raving about all the great things that
 5 the Belizeans got to do while they were at
 6 Fort Johnson during that rotation.
 7 The next rotation up for us is when
 8 Hawaii comes through, the 29th. It's a small
 9 element. We'll just go support the observer
 10 controllers where they actually do the
 11 evaluations of the units that are going
 12 through.
 13 So with JRTC, we get a lot of requests
 14 from them just because we're in their
 15 backyard. And if they're ever short on a
 16 rotational unit, a lot of times, they'll reach
 17 out to me and say, "hey, can y'all support?"
 18 I mean, we look and see if we can; and,
 19 certainly, if it's possible, we do.
 20 On our cyber operations, so they just
 21 finished their two weeks in Arkansas of
 22 training. I think the last time I reported,
 23 they had just gotten back from Fort Meade,
 24 Virginia on their Federal deployment. Again,
 25 these guys and gals amaze me in terms of the

Page 34

1 work they actually do. With Emergency Support
 2 Function-17, you see how many incidents we've
 3 been involved with on the top left there
 4 really since 2019, very busy bunch.
 5 We haven't been as busy of late other
 6 than doing remote work. And that decision is
 7 made as it goes up through Director Tingle and
 8 Dickie Howze. The State says so. So, you
 9 know, we stand by. We're all ready to engage
 10 if they need us. We put them on state active
 11 duty in terms of our soldiers and airmen and
 12 they address whatever issue someone may be
 13 having.
 14 On our installations, we actually had a
 15 reduction of one readiness center. We
 16 transferred the Jonesboro Readiness Center
 17 over to the City of Jonesboro. So Mayor Spike
 18 Harris, Representative Jack McFarland, and
 19 Senator Jay Luneau were all part of that and
 20 hadn't used that facility for a little over
 21 five years. Mayor Harris came to me and said,
 22 "hey, sir, we'd like to do this. We'd like to
 23 re-purpose the armory so that we could conduct
 24 our police operations out there." So I think
 25 that's their headquarters for the police

Page 35

1 department.
 2 And in the back, the Legislature actually
 3 afforded them some money, I think, last year
 4 to do some development in the back so they can
 5 have farmers' markets and community kind of
 6 activities behind that readiness center. So
 7 Mayor Harris is full of energy, got a lot of
 8 great ideas and things that he wants to do for
 9 his municipality. So we were able to support
 10 him in that endeavor.
 11 On the military construction that you see
 12 on the right, I guess the specific update I
 13 will give you: On the Lake Charles Readiness
 14 Center, that project should finish, we
 15 believe, next summer. You know, over 50,000
 16 square feet of area for the soldiers for that
 17 unit. The Belle Chasse Alert Center, we think
 18 we'll be doing a ribbon cutting this summer.
 19 There was something with salt stabilization, a
 20 question when they were working on the apron,
 21 so they're trying to figure that out, and once
 22 they get that figured out and mitigated, we'll
 23 do that ribbon cutting.
 24 The Pineville Readiness Center is just
 25 about ready. I actually walked through the

Page 36

1 other day. They were doing some inside work.
 2 So I think we're very close there. And the
 3 Low Median Income Housing area that we have in
 4 back of Training Center Pineville, they
 5 probably -- it will probably be this fall
 6 before we're able to allow families to get
 7 into those housing areas. Everything else is
 8 kind of a renovation or an upgrade, but we
 9 have over a hundred million dollars of
 10 construction going on right now in Louisiana
 11 National Guard, which we're extremely excited
 12 about and thankful to our State Legislators as
 13 well as our Congressional Delegation for all
 14 their support in making these projects a
 15 reality.
 16 The future construction you see right
 17 there with the Lafayette Readiness Center,
 18 that one won't actually kick off until 2025.
 19 And these other projects go out to 2027. So
 20 big thing is we don't want a Budget Control
 21 Act to happen. We don't want that money to be
 22 taken back and we don't want to have to rereck
 23 those projects. So we keep them on the
 24 forefront, and you'll see that when we start
 25 talking about legislative priorities here in a

Page 37

1 moment.

2 On the Force Structure: So the engineer

3 branch, because we've gone through a

4 divisional realignment within the Army, what

5 has happened is in an engineer force structure

6 that we have, they've restructured the mobile

7 Augmentation Company and the Sapper Companies

8 into what they call a Combat Engineer Company

9 Infantry. So like in this state with the

10 256th Infantry Brigade, you know, we need

11 engineers that can go out there, dig fighting

12 positions, put in obstacles and all those

13 things that the maneuver elements need us to

14 do for them to conduct their operations. So

15 we lost our mobile Augmentation Company, which

16 is 926, and our Sapper Company. And basically

17 that's about 250 people, and the CECI is what

18 they call it with an acronym, it's about 170.

19 So we had a net loss there, but we're falling

20 in line with what the force structure is.

21 And my conversations with General

22 Hokanson, the Chief of National Guard Bureau,

23 and General Jensen, the Director of the Army

24 National Guard, they understand we had a bill

25 we paid there, but we still -- we paid a lot

Page 38

1 and our numbers indicate that if some other

2 force structures come available, Louisiana

3 needs to get it. So I don't let them forget

4 that any chance I get. I pretty much stay on

5 that.

6 We did have a transaction with Washington

7 State. So in Louisiana, with our chemical,

8 radiological, nuclear response element, what

9 they call CBRN, we've had infantry and

10 engineer units doing decontamination

11 responsibilities or missions. And what has

12 happened over the last 10 years is we've lost

13 a lot of soldiers because they didn't join the

14 National Guard to do decontamination. They

15 joined to do maneuver or construction, combat

16 engineering, whatever they joined to do. So

17 because I knew we were losing a lot of folks

18 here, I said, we need to try to get a chemical

19 company. So we didn't land a chemical company

20 whenever the force structure announcements

21 came out. So I went -- my second course of

22 action was to try to trade with another state.

23 So I went to Major General Bret Daugherty

24 from Washington State and said, "hey, I'll

25 trade you some MPs for come chemical." So we

Page 39

1 basically traded a platoon with the

2 understanding that, if it works better, we'll

3 keep doing that. So, you know, the value of

4 that chemical unit, especially here in south

5 Louisiana and all the plants that we have is

6 force structure we need.

7 So we'll continue to try to build upon

8 that chemical momentum that we have here.

9 It's supposed to stand up in September of this

10 year is when that first platoon will get here.

11 So we'll have to take it through training. It

12 just takes time, but we'll get them there

13 eventually. And the force structure that we

14 currently have at risk with the 122nd, what

15 they call ASOS and our TACP Enterprise, has

16 been identified for remission.

17 So the Director of the Annex Guard is

18 Lieutenant General Mike Loh. So in the last

19 presentation we had, we pushed back really

20 hard in the NDAA, the National Defense

21 Authorization Act last year to try to get the

22 TACP, you know, sustained here in Louisiana,

23 but with General Loh and General Brown, CQ

24 Brown, the Chief of the Air Force, who will

25 certainly be the Secretary of Defense here

Page 40

1 shortly. So seeing what's coming, the best

2 thing for Louisiana is to try to go after a

3 cyber squadron. So, you know, my position to

4 General Loh was, if y'all are going to take

5 our ASOS and TACP from us, we need a cyber

6 security squadron. So I'm just waiting for

7 the announcement to be made, but I feel like

8 we're fixing to get a cyber security squadron

9 here in Louisiana.

10 So I'm very optimistic just like I was

11 with the F15EXs. It worked out; so doing the

12 same thing here. And then my priorities

13 really hadn't changed in terms of force

14 structure in what we're trying to bring in and

15 to just show you some examples of where we're

16 making some stride there.

17 Our legislative priorities, when I go see

18 the Congressional Delegation, this is what I

19 talk to them about: The zero cost healthcare

20 for all National Guard service members. It's

21 been number one on our list. I don't think it

22 will happen this year honestly, but Senator --

23 or excuse me, Congressman Kim from New Jersey,

24 Congress Kelly from Mississippi, and there's a

25 coalition of elected officials that are

Page 41

1 helping us. We think dental will probably get
2 across the finish line, so we may get free
3 dental for every National Guardsman. So that
4 may be step one, and hopefully, step two,
5 we'll be able to get the healthcare. So we'll
6 keep working at it.
7 The F15 Eagle Recap, I keep it on there
8 even though the announcement was already made
9 by the F15EX is coming to Belle Chasse. We'll
10 talk a little bit more about that in a minute.
11 The MILCON, those are some of the things
12 I showed you on an earlier slide. Again, I
13 don't want it to lose -- I don't want it to
14 come off the radar, so I keep it there because
15 we need it because a lot of our facilities are
16 really old here in Louisiana.
17 And then the last one right there is just
18 the equity. With the duty status reform, the
19 equity is between the active component and the
20 Reserve, the National Guard.
21 Our legislative accomplishments, I just
22 highlighted a few on the Federal side. I
23 mentioned the F15EXs. That's a \$9.6 billion
24 investment in Louisiana. And the longevity of
25 having a wing here for 40 years speaks volume.

Page 42

1 So those -- that's a huge win right there in
2 itself. But with our education programs and
3 Job ChalleNGe, Youth ChalleNGe, STARBASE, I
4 get excited about those programs and what they
5 do for Louisiana.
6 And in the State Partnership Program, as
7 far as a diplomatic tool, I submit to you
8 there's nothing more valuable than that. And
9 it's proven itself over and over and over
10 again. You know, example I give you is with
11 Ukraine. That's California's partner. And
12 California has worked really closely with the
13 Ukraine and you see what's going on right now.
14 So that has paid a huge benefit.
15 On the state side, I know we have Senator
16 Reese in here, but to all the men and women
17 that served within the terms of what they did
18 for us on the state side, three things to
19 highlight: House Bill 485, it's fee exemption
20 for every serving member of the Louisiana
21 National Guard that's in college. So right
22 now, they already were entitled to state
23 tuition exemption. So what is happening is a
24 lot of universities, they start jacking up the
25 fees. So, you know, and I'll use Southern and

Page 43

1 LSU as an example. You go to Southern right
2 now, it's 2,400 for tuition and 2,400 for
3 fees. You go to LSU, it's 2,200 for fees;
4 2,200 for tuition, so that would basically
5 zero all that out for any active member of
6 Louisiana National Guard. So it will take it
7 back to where we were kind of in the '80s.
8 And, quite frankly, a Louisiana Guardsman
9 today is doing a whole lot more than a
10 Louisiana Guardsman was doing back in the
11 1980s. And you think back to that Federal
12 slide and that state slide that I showed you,
13 that speaks for itself. So I think that's why
14 it went through the Senate and the House
15 unanimous in terms of supporting 485 there.
16 So we're very grateful for that.
17 The other thing, 369, that 25 percent
18 automobile insurance reduction, any active
19 duty service member of the State of Louisiana,
20 they were already getting that, okay. That's
21 part of BRAC way back when. So our Enlisted
22 Association went after this one and got it
23 passed as well. So now any active Guardsman
24 will qualify for a 25 percent reduction on
25 their automobile insurance. So we're trying

Page 44

1 Cyber security to save them all we can. And
2 this is part of our retention package too that
3 we can present and recruit them for that
4 matter to an applicant or a current serving
5 member to keep them on the team. So
6 everything we can do to help Louisiana, we're
7 going to do it.
8 And then the final thing right there is
9 those of you who know about the Cyber security
10 Commission that we have in place, that's a
11 strategic working group that does what they do
12 that the Governor started back in 2017, which
13 was significant. And I'll tell you a lot of
14 states are jealous of the work that's done by
15 this group. We're blessed with a lot of
16 talent from a lot of different sectors across
17 the state of Louisiana, and we're making good
18 headway on all the action items that we take
19 on.
20 On the installations update, just some
21 more, but I think probably cited for you on
22 the Camp Beauregard redesignation, the
23 announcement was made by the Louisiana
24 National Guard Training Center Pineville. So
25 we're trying to change -- as we identify the

Page 45

1 installation, no longer do we say Camp
2 Beauregard. We try to focus on Training
3 Center Pineville. We anticipate the ceremony
4 will take place in the fall.
5 Secretary Pierson talked about Fort
6 Johnson. I think we'll get a good turnout
7 when we do our redesignation ceremony as well.
8 They've already taken down, for those of you
9 familiar with the installation, when you go to
10 Pineville now, they've already taken down Camp
11 Beauregard on the main front gate and where
12 you see the tankers. So the letters are
13 supposed to get in in August. We'll get them
14 to hang the new letters up. And then, once
15 they're able to do that and repaint our water
16 tower, we'll be ready to execute on our
17 ceremony. So, again, we're really excited
18 about that recognizing the Louisiana National
19 Guard today and the values that we represent.
20 The Purple Heart installations, so we
21 joined the trail. We actually did an
22 announcement, an unveiling on June the 1st.
23 Governor Edwards gave the countdown, three,
24 two, one, and all of our installations, when
25 you go in our installations now, you'll see

Page 46

1 the Purple Heart designation there. So those
2 recipients, they get discounts on our building
3 fee, preferential parking. Anything we can do
4 for those veterans, we're going to do it. So
5 we're excited about that announcement we got
6 to make.
7 On our state partners, I talked about
8 Belize a little earlier. With Haitians, we've
9 had some exchanges here lately. It's really
10 been focused on emergency management. We
11 still can't travel to Haiti because of
12 restrictions and all the things that are going
13 on there right now, but they do send teams up
14 to meet with us to talk about different topics
15 that interest them. So, again, strong
16 diplomatic tool here. Real thankful to be
17 partners with both of these countries.
18 On our Ed Programs, right now with the
19 Youth ChalleNGe Program, we actually have two
20 that are in session. Training Center
21 Pineville is out right now. Camp Minden,
22 Gillis W. Long Center are actually conducting
23 classes. The Job ChalleNGe Program got about
24 39 that are active currently. And on the
25 STARBASE Program, since it's involves 5th

Page 47

1 graders, they're out for the summer. So we're
2 not really doing anything there other than
3 getting ready for the next school year when we
4 actually bring those folks on.
5 On the STARBASE, we're looking to try to
6 get another program in the southwest
7 Louisiana. We're going to have to jump
8 through some hoops to get it because our
9 state's only authorized five and we have five
10 right now. And we've got three, Fort
11 Johnson's got one, Barksdale got the other.
12 So we'll have to get an exception to get an
13 initial STARBASE here, but we're working with
14 state leaders and local leaders to get that
15 done.
16 And the final slide right here is just
17 the backbone of our organization, the unsung
18 heroes of our organization. We actually did a
19 few great commission events for the folks that
20 run these programs a few weeks ago just to
21 show our appreciation. We gave a bunch of
22 awards out. But their value to our
23 organization, I just can't speak enough about
24 them and I'm so thankful for these folks and
25 the volunteers that we have. They really make

Page 48

1 us the quality organization that we are. So
2 thanking them is the least I can do as far as
3 I'm concerned.
4 So, ladies and gentlemen, that concludes
5 my report, subject to questions or guidance.
6 Yes, sir?
7 SENATOR REESE:
8 No, thank you for your presentation,
9 General. But the one question I have is
10 related to changing the force structure for
11 engineering, the battalion?
12 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
13 It was a company.
14 SENATOR REESE:
15 Company?
16 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
17 Two companies, yes, sir.
18 SENATOR REESE:
19 What, in any way, is there a negative
20 effect on Louisiana in your ability to respond
21 to our national disaster missions with the
22 changes that you're making today? Here is
23 background and the reason why I'm asking that
24 is because we are now understanding that the
25 46 engineers of Fort Polk might be on the

Page 49

1 bubble as well and I'm trying to better
 2 understand now how they could have an
 3 impact -- a negative impact to our state
 4 during disaster preparedness response?
 5 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 6 I don't think it has anything negative,
 7 Senator Reese. Certainly, the reduction of
 8 50, 60 people may seem like a big deal. It's
 9 not really, because any shortage that we have,
 10 just like for Hurricane Ida, I'll give you a
 11 good example. Hurricane Ida's 256 Infantry
 12 Brigade, the 527 Engineer Battalion and about
 13 three other companies were out, so we had
 14 2,800 National Guard service members that were
 15 out of the state during Hurricane Ida. So,
 16 basically, our plan -- our whole hazard plan
 17 has us calling other states to help us.
 18 So we have EMAC Agreements with, you
 19 know, I saw the tag of Arkansas last week and
 20 he and I were talking about, like, "hey,
 21 Keith, I'm ready. So as soon as we get the
 22 call, we'll send whatever we need to send down
 23 to you to support you." So I don't think we
 24 have any gaps. You know, certainly, I think I
 25 could put 8,000 people or guard members

1 anywhere in Louisiana if we need to if we had
 2 a state emergency right now, and 8,000 is a
 3 lot of folks. So I really don't think, you
 4 know, that change in force structure is really
 5 going to affect us that much in terms of
 6 putting us at risk for any state emergency.
 7 SENATOR REESE:
 8 Okay. Thank you.
 9 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 10 Yes, sir.
 11 Yes, sir?
 12 MR. SLONE:
 13 Again, thanks for the presentation. It
 14 always gets me back energized about what our
 15 military is doing --
 16 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 17 Yes, sir.
 18 MR. SLONE:
 19 -- and things around the state. I was
 20 curious about the potential -- well, not
 21 potential, but what are the demographics of
 22 the enlistees? Are you tracking that? I know
 23 it wasn't in here on the report, but is there
 24 anything you can share with us on that?
 25 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:

1 I could get you the actual statistics
 2 because we have a Joint Diversity Executive
 3 Council.
 4 MR. SLONE:
 5 Okay.
 6 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 7 And we met quarterly. And, in fact, I
 8 just left a call a little while ago, as a
 9 matter of fact, to come to this meeting. But
 10 we have all the statistics. We actually have
 11 them on the website where you can go and
 12 actually see them.
 13 MR. SLONE:
 14 Yeah.
 15 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 16 But, certainly, I can give those to you
 17 offline, or however you want me to do it.
 18 MR. SLONE:
 19 Yeah, either way is fine. If we can
 20 communicate directly, that would be great,
 21 because I think it speaks not only to the
 22 folks that we are going in but the folks that
 23 we're concerned about because of education and
 24 our workforce in general --
 25 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:

1 Yes, sir.
 2 MR. SLONE:
 3 -- as to, you know, who's actually --
 4 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 5 Right.
 6 MR. SLONE:
 7 -- enlisting.
 8 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 9 And, you know, that's part of my argument
 10 on the fee exemption.
 11 MR. SLONE:
 12 Uh-huh.
 13 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 14 Because what I -- I guess the background
 15 that I shared was, you know, somebody can get
 16 used to work in the school system. I would
 17 have family and kids come to me all the time,
 18 and when those fees started going up, now you
 19 put it out of reach for a lot of kids --
 20 MR. SLONE:
 21 Yes.
 22 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 23 -- and families. So, you know, in
 24 Mississippi, they charge \$150 a semester for
 25 fees. In Arkansas, it's \$100 for fees a

1 semester. In Texas, it's \$1,000 a semester
 2 for fees. So, I mean, we got a few of them --
 3 MR. SLONE:
 4 So we're in first place.
 5 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 6 -- leaving out of our state, you know,
 7 leaving our state because it just put it out
 8 of reach. So, you know, I agree, I think that
 9 was a big win for us from the demographic
 10 standpoint too. But you'll see with the
 11 numbers --
 12 MR. SLONE:
 13 Uh-huh.
 14 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 15 -- especially on the enlisted side, I
 16 mean, we're pretty close. It may be 5644.
 17 MR. SLONE:
 18 Okay.
 19 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 20 So, I mean, those demographics, we're a
 21 lot better than any other state in the country
 22 when you look at demographics, I think, on the
 23 enlisted side as well as the officer side.
 24 MR. SLONE:
 25 And one last comment to that is we have,

Page 54

1 in southeast Louisiana, the largest population
 2 of Hispanic. And I remember being a recruiter
 3 in Miami and just about everybody we were
 4 recruiting were Cubans.
 5 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 6 Yes, sir.
 7 MR. SLONE:
 8 So...
 9 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 10 Yes, sir. Well, I'll get with you
 11 offline --
 12 MR. SLONE:
 13 Sure.
 14 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 15 -- to get you your information and I'll
 16 send you an email --
 17 MR. SLONE:
 18 Thank you.
 19 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 20 -- if that's all the questions?
 21 MR. SLONE:
 22 Yes, sir.
 23 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 24 General Elder?
 25 GENERAL ELDER:

Page 55

1 I'm curious about the decision on the
 2 122nd ASOS, you know, I could see the argument
 3 when those F15Cs were an air mission, not an
 4 air to ground mission. If the -- if they're
 5 going to get an EX, which does have the cast
 6 mission and you have the JRTC right there, it
 7 doesn't make sense. I mean, what is the Air
 8 Force or the Guard, whatever their foundation,
 9 why do they want to pull it out now?
 10 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 11 You know, General, when we went to the
 12 briefing with General Loh, I want to say there
 13 were 15 to 20 elements that they identified,
 14 as what I call Legacy or what we probably call
 15 Legacy. And, you know, they kept talking
 16 about the re-missioning and he acknowledged us
 17 pushing back on the TACP. And I guess my
 18 position on it, as I got the presentation and
 19 caught him offline to talk to him, it was,
 20 like, so do you want to have something or do
 21 you want nothing or do you want me to force
 22 something else on you? I said, I don't want
 23 anything forced on me. I would rather keep
 24 what I have, just like all those airmen want
 25 to stay in the job that they're in; because

Page 56

1 even during state emergencies, that ASOS, in
 2 terms of what they can do from a communication
 3 standpoint is very valuable to us, especially
 4 when we're dropping super sacks and things
 5 like that. But I guess I just wait it out and
 6 I'm, like, you know what, if we're going to
 7 lose this battle eventually, cyber security is
 8 probably where we need to go and then maybe we
 9 go back to them when we get the Exes online
 10 and are able to reengage on that particular
 11 issue.
 12 GENERAL ELDER:
 13 So in your mind, there's no way to engage
 14 on it at this point? You'd have to wait?
 15 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 16 I really don't think it is. I mean,
 17 listening to General Brown's position when he
 18 was the Chief and General Loh as the Director,
 19 I mean those are two points of information,
 20 I'm like, okay, this is probably a battle
 21 we're going to lose.
 22 GENERAL ELDER:
 23 Just move it somewhere else?
 24 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 25 Yes, sir. Things will be more

Page 57

1 regionalized. So when they looked at our
2 numbers, we were like 53 percent, I think, on
3 TACP, and we were doing some things to try to
4 recruit more people in; like, we were having
5 infantry soldiers leave the infantry units to
6 go to TACP because they wanted all the
7 high-speed stuff.
8 GENERAL ELDER:
9 Uh-huh.
10 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
11 And we were growing the numbers and we
12 got it to about 75 percent. But because we
13 didn't get it there fast enough, General Loh
14 and General Brown made the decision that that
15 piece has to go to another state.
16 GENERAL ELDER:
17 Okay.
18 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
19 But if we get the cyber squad, I think
20 that's going to be a win for us.
21 GENERAL ELDER:
22 And, again, I was looking for it again,
23 the 122nd Fire Squad had a Red Air mission for
24 it and that went away. And is that what I
25 heard you say? I couldn't find it in the

Page 58

1 notes here.
2 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
3 The 122nd went to Langley last year.
4 They had, I guess, a six-month or three-month
5 deployment to Langley.
6 GENERAL ELDER:
7 Oh, talking about deployment to support
8 Red Air --
9 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
10 Yes, sir.
11 GENERAL ELDER:
12 -- at this point.
13 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
14 Now, we did just get back from Air
15 Defender. We were at Air Defender, I guess,
16 25 plus countries in Germany. You know, they
17 did a great job in the last couple of weeks in
18 Germany with Air Defender. So real proud of
19 them.
20 GENERAL ELDER:
21 And I just have one last question.
22 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
23 Yes, sir?
24 GENERAL ELDER:
25 You never talked at all about NGR

Page 59

1 funding. How does the State do in terms of
2 getting NGR money, and is there places where
3 you could use it, you think?
4 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
5 Well, based upon the conference we had
6 last week, I probably need to get back with
7 you offline, General Elder, because it came up
8 with all the Adjutant Generals as we were
9 talking NGR funding, and I guess there was a
10 lot of -- a lot of voices that didn't agree
11 about what it should be. So we're supposed to
12 have another meeting to be able to talk about
13 that with General Hokanson and see what we're
14 going to rerack. So...
15 GENERAL ELDER:
16 I'm sorry, the National Guard Reserve --
17 it's a special fund reserved for National
18 Guard modernization type things. So...
19 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
20 Now whenever those modernization windows
21 come open for us, what I've told all of our
22 units is, it doesn't matter what, you know,
23 what training you're supposed to be doing, we
24 got to stop and make sure we don't miss the
25 modernization window, because if you miss it,

Page 60

1 you go to the back of the line. So that may
2 delay you three to five years from getting
3 your new stuff. So we're trying to hold the
4 line there in terms of those modernization
5 windows. So...
6 GENERAL ELDER:
7 Thank you.
8 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
9 Okay. Thank you. All right. Anyone
10 else?
11 Okay. I appreciate your time this
12 afternoon.
13 MR. ABBOD:
14 Thank you very much, General. Following
15 along on the agenda here, I would like to call
16 up Mr. Gary Silbert, Southeast Military
17 Alliance.
18 MR. SILBERT:
19 Yes. Thank you. And I'll do it from my
20 seat. If you have any questions along the
21 way, please don't hesitate to interrupt me and
22 ask.
23 Just building on General Waddell's
24 presentation, we are particularly proud of
25 winning the F15EXs at Belle Chasse. It's a

Page 61

1 huge victory. We've been working really
 2 closely with the National Guard and the
 3 Rosedale Group for quite sometime. You know,
 4 obviously, we were hoping for either the F35
 5 or the F15EX. We would have been happy with
 6 either, but the F35, I believe, ended up going
 7 to Massachusetts. But we are replacing F15Cs
 8 that are approaching 40 years old, and we are
 9 hopeful that this aircraft will serve us for
 10 the next number of decades to come. So it's a
 11 huge victory.

12 You know, these things don't just happen.
 13 During the General's presentation, you saw all
 14 the metrics and by every measure, we really do
 15 stand out in the Air National Guard around
 16 maintenance, safety, attendance. And so these
 17 things don't just happen. So I really do just
 18 want to thank you for your performances. You
 19 really have served us well.

20 Just in no particular order, a couple of
 21 things that I'm pleased to update you on.
 22 We're currently working with Matt Zelden,
 23 Integrated Resource Management, the University
 24 of Louisiana System, and The Roosevelt Group
 25 in attempting to get a seventh maritime

Page 62

1 academy here in Louisiana at Federal City.
 2 There's a 15-point checklist. And,
 3 supposedly, we've done 14 out of the 15, and
 4 so we're getting pretty close working with the
 5 Maritime Administration. This requires an
 6 annual million-dollar allocation in the
 7 Department of Transportation via a House Bill.
 8 We also need the OMB to request and include in
 9 fiscal '25 dollars to get this done. So we'll
 10 be continuing to endure pressure on the
 11 Maritime Administration, pushing the
 12 Department of Transportation and we'll need to
 13 try to get this done. We're really excited.

14 Also, we're working with the Coast Guard
 15 and Astro America. It's a company that's
 16 interested in doing qualitative manufacturing
 17 or 3D printing to produce spare parts for the
 18 Coast Guard. As you can well imagine, it's
 19 not easy to find parts on the shelf. Many of
 20 them have to be remanufactured. So this idea
 21 of being able to do the 3D printing to add
 22 quantities and in a timely manner is pretty
 23 exciting.

24 Representative Troy Carter has been
 25 sponsoring some legislation and has the

Page 63

1 support of our senators to try to get this
 2 done. I've introduced the principal with
 3 Astro America with UNO, which is where
 4 hopefully this will happen, subject to
 5 funding.

6 We have a new 8th District Commander of
 7 the Coast Guard, I think it's Rear Admiral
 8 Richard Tim or Timmy.

9 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 10 Admiral Timmy just retired.

11 MR. SILBERT:
 12 Oh, okay. It's his replacement. Thank
 13 you. Do you -- can you share the name?

14 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 15 Yeah, I was at the change of command last
 16 Friday. Rear Admiral Richard Timmy retired
 17 there and had the change of command for new
 18 District Commander David Barata, and he just
 19 came in last week. He will take over command
 20 of the eighth Coast Guard district, which is
 21 the largest Coast Guard district in the Coast
 22 Guard in 26 states and headquartered in New
 23 Orleans.

24 MR. SILBERT:
 25 That's right.

Page 64

1 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 2 And has seven major supporting commands
 3 throughout those 26 states, including three
 4 air stations and seven sector commands,
 5 including one in Louisiana.

6 MR. SILBERT:
 7 Thank you for that. A little closer, you
 8 know, Ronnie Slone, who is a more recent
 9 Military Council member, marine veteran and
 10 successful entrepreneur in his own right in
 11 southeast Louisiana is our new Chairman of the
 12 Calendar Commitment Group, which is our
 13 defense community productions, and we thank
 14 him for all that Ron is doing. We had a
 15 recent meeting with our Captain on the base;
 16 reported that we have 90 Boeing contractors
 17 coming to train in Kuwait on the F18 over a
 18 two-year period starting in September.
 19 They'll be training in waves of four in over
 20 18-week periods. Unlike Ukrainian pilots, I
 21 think these guys are already pilots.

22 So this will be a little more specific
 23 and it should help give a nice little shot in
 24 the arm to our economy to have these folks
 25 staying in hotels and our contractors. So

Page 65

1 and, hopefully, we'll be able to build on that
 2 in the future, some of the training machines
 3 with international folks.
 4 We have our air show. I think that was
 5 on hiatus for a while due to COVID and other
 6 reasons, which will be March of '24. And I
 7 think those are the main things I wanted to
 8 report. I'm happy to answer any questions. I
 9 have to leave about 10 minutes of three for a
 10 meeting upstairs. If I have to leave early, I
 11 apologize, but I just wanted to mention that.
 12 GENERAL ELDER:
 13 Can I ask you a question about the air
 14 show? I might get with you on offline. So
 15 how often do you do your air shows, about
 16 every other year; or once it gets going again,
 17 it will be every year?
 18 MR. SILBERT:
 19 I think it's every two or three years. I
 20 think there's a little bit of internal
 21 competition to get it, and it just doesn't
 22 happen.
 23 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 24 Which air show is this? I'm sorry.
 25 MR. SILBERT:

Page 66

1 Huh?
 2 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 3 Which air shows is it?
 4 MR. SILBERT:
 5 This is at Belle Chasse.
 6 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 7 Yeah, it's every two years. So we did it
 8 last year. It will be next two years.
 9 GENERAL ELDER:
 10 So I should talk to you offline, because
 11 if you're in the air show business, you don't
 12 have consistency every year. It makes it a
 13 little difficult to get your acts. Barksdale
 14 is also every other year.
 15 MR. SILBERT:
 16 Oh, okay.
 17 GENERAL ELDER:
 18 And it's nicely in line to not be the
 19 year of Belle Chasse. So if those things were
 20 married up, we could go and collectively have
 21 the ax lined up so that we wouldn't be
 22 fighting. Because when you have a break, you
 23 have to fight for the ax.
 24 MR. SILBERT:
 25 So ours is March of '24. When is your

Page 67

1 air show?
 2 GENERAL ELDER:
 3 Next will be March of '25.
 4 MR. SILBERT:
 5 Yeah, I appreciate you saying that.
 6 Thank you.
 7 MR. ABOUD:
 8 Very good. Thank you, Gary.
 9 I'll next call on Mr. Murray Viser for an
 10 update on Barksdale Forwards. And, Murray,
 11 you're welcome to sit or come up, whatever you
 12 prefer.
 13 MR. VISER:
 14 I think I'll just be lazy. We are
 15 thankful for the help with the Roosevelt Group
 16 and our Congressional Delegation. We are in a
 17 really, really an enviable position as far as
 18 B52 goes. We're probably looking at 20 to 30
 19 years out of having B52s stay at Barksdale
 20 thanks to hypersonic weapons and the B52J. So
 21 I'm not going to jinx it and say that we're
 22 too golden because we certainly are not. I
 23 don't think there is such a thing anymore.
 24 And I'm not going to steal Link's thunder
 25 here, because I know he's got slides also.

Page 68

1 But we are very fortunate at Barksdale right
 2 now. And we're going to ensure not to try not
 3 to take our eye off the ball and make sure
 4 that we are where we need to be. Again, B52
 5 systems have been upgraded. Barksdale
 6 infrastructure has been upgraded. I'll let
 7 Link address those. Again, thanks to the
 8 Roosevelt Group and our Delegation. We are in
 9 very good shape.
 10 A couple of things that are coming up at
 11 Barksdale. Commander of Air Force Global
 12 Strike Command, General Tom Bussiere is going
 13 to -- he goes to senior leadership conference
 14 September 18th through the 23rd and he will
 15 have representatives from all of the Air Force
 16 Global Strike Command bases on campus for
 17 that. So that's a really wonderful feather in
 18 our hat for that.
 19 And Barksdale, coming up in November,
 20 Barksdale and the Shreveport-Bossier community
 21 is going to host a Global Strike challenge,
 22 that's November 7th, 8th, and 9th. And all of
 23 the Global Strike Command bases will be
 24 competing for the Barksdale trophy, which
 25 basically is a trophy that allows the

Page 69

1 communities some bragging rights so that
 2 they -- it encourages them to continue to
 3 support their bases and to do what needs to be
 4 done. So that's one page. And we're looking,
 5 again, probably 20 to 30 years for B52s.
 6 That's good.
 7 And General Bussiere, we're delighted to
 8 have him back at Barksdale. He's been there
 9 before. We have a great deal of MILCON that's
 10 coming up. And, again, I don't know if Link
 11 will discuss that, but I'll be happy to answer
 12 any questions anybody might have.
 13 SENATOR REESE:
 14 That's all good news.
 15 MR. VISER:
 16 Thank you, sir.
 17 MR. ABBOD:
 18 Thank you very much, Murray. So we'll go
 19 ahead and we'll jump Louisiana Armed Forces
 20 Alliance. And Link will include some updates
 21 for Louisiana Armed Forces Alliance as part of
 22 his report out. Link is with the Roosevelt
 23 Group based in Washington, D.C. He does great
 24 work interfacing with the Congressional
 25 Delegation, so we certainly look forward to

Page 70

1 today's update. Just one moment while I pull
 2 it up.
 3 MR. MUSTIN:
 4 Thank you, Robbie. Good afternoon,
 5 Council Members, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm
 6 Link Mustin, I've got the privilege and tall
 7 order of standing in for Chris Goode, who many
 8 of you have known for a decade or more. He's
 9 unable to be here, but I'm grateful for the
 10 opportunity.
 11 A quick bio from me, I transitioned from
 12 active duty as a Surface Warfare Officer in
 13 the Navy. This year, I served at-sea for
 14 several years on four ships. And then most
 15 recently, I served in the Pentagon as a
 16 congressional liaison to the House and Senate
 17 Appropriations Committees and became
 18 intimately familiar with the bill processes
 19 and the budget rollout and the annual
 20 appropriations from NDAA requests. So I'd
 21 like to spend the next 8 to 10 minutes just
 22 giving y'all an update on what we're seeing in
 23 Washington, revel in some of the victories,
 24 including the ones Murray talked about and
 25 talk a little bit about strategic focus from

Page 71

1 '25 and out.
 2 So the key initiative shaping the
 3 legislative landscape for defense or the
 4 annual President's Budget Request, National
 5 Defense Authorization Act, and then the
 6 Appropriations Outlook which have all been
 7 referenced today. But at the most basic
 8 level, the recent debt limit negotiation set
 9 spending caps for FY'24 and FY'25 based on
 10 FY'22 levels and then nonbinding caps over the
 11 fit of the future defense plan out through
 12 '29. So we'll see small growth over the next
 13 five to six years, but that could change in
 14 '26 if things are renegotiated.
 15 The caps are going to require the
 16 government to be more discerning in how they
 17 spend and invest Federal dollars, but we're
 18 optimistic that we're still going to see
 19 initiatives like DCIP and Community Project
 20 Funding and congressionally-directed spending
 21 that will benefit the State of Louisiana.
 22 So for the next two slides, we'll talk
 23 about appropriations and NDAA timeline. And
 24 appropriations is always a little bit more
 25 concerning than NDAA. NDAA is sort of a

Page 72

1 must-pass Bill. It's been passed year over
 2 year form decades. But in the last 10 years,
 3 I think we've only seen an Appropriations Bill
 4 pass on time once.
 5 So we're watching appropriations closely,
 6 but with a skeptical eye. And both
 7 appropriations and NDAA were delayed this year
 8 because of the debt still in negotiations. So
 9 we're a little bit behind the ball, which is
 10 concerning for appropriations because they
 11 need as much time as possible. And we're
 12 expecting that the Bills will get passed on
 13 the floor in the House and the Senate, but
 14 it's likely that we'll see a continuing
 15 resolution this year like we have in the past
 16 which presents certain challenges like no new
 17 starts.
 18 On the NDAA timeline, they're moving
 19 along. The House has completed their markup.
 20 The Senate has completed their markup. We
 21 expect four votes in July followed by
 22 conference and expect to see a Bill hopefully
 23 passed on time. But we're confident this will
 24 get passed. And we -- I was at an event with
 25 a senior member of the House Armed Services

Page 73

1 Committee recently from Alabama, and he was
 2 talking about NDAA and appropriations and
 3 said, "I'm not concerned about the NDAA, that
 4 will get through, but I am concerned about
 5 appropriations." And the picture he painted
 6 was kind of scary because he couldn't see
 7 ourselves up as long as a two-year CR. And
 8 some of it comes down to the differences in
 9 the House and the Senate. But there's also
 10 challenges with Pentagon policy and other
 11 things that are -- could trigger amendments
 12 like the Hyde Amendment and others that --
 13 well, could present a challenge for
 14 appropriations. So that's one that we're
 15 watching closely.

16 For some of the comparisons in the NDAA,
 17 you know, as normal, the House and the Senate
 18 have different positions on various issues
 19 with the highlights are looking at Ukraine
 20 aid. They're looking at the ship numbers and
 21 platforms for the Navy, Navy retirements, what
 22 the Navy would like to divest of ships to save
 23 money, and that's always a tricky, sticky
 24 issue. DEI policy, Cyber Force, General
 25 Waddell talked a little bit about cyber, a

Page 74

1 cyber squadron. The House doesn't have a
 2 provision for a Cyber Force, but the Senate
 3 does. So we don't think any of these
 4 differences will prevent a Bill from getting
 5 passed.

6 For budget highlights, there's a lot of
 7 bullets up here, but just to point out a few,
 8 the Defense budget, \$842 billion, an increase
 9 of 3.2 percent over last year's enacted
 10 levels. We're going to see the highest pay
 11 raise for the military and civilians since
 12 2002. Another big one is the robust Nuclear
 13 Enterprise Modernization investment, which is
 14 a strategic significance for Louisiana. So
 15 that's encouraging that we're continuing to
 16 see that investment.

17 This is just a snapshot of the defense
 18 budget, a breakdown. You can see with the
 19 wind down with the wars in the Middle East and
 20 increasing focus on China and Russia, the Navy
 21 and the Air Force are tending to get more
 22 money over time. The Army is growing, but
 23 you'd expect to see last year and this year
 24 not a huge jump in appropriations. But at the
 25 bottom, you can see some highlights, a \$26

Page 75

1 billion increase over the last year, and then
 2 \$100 billion since FY'22.

3 For Louisiana MILCON, there's indirect
 4 benefits in the defense bill, you know, that
 5 benefit Louisiana, like, I think in the SHPO,
 6 you have a conversation account, for example,
 7 the Navy added \$400 million for Ship-to-Shore
 8 Connector, which is built by Textron. But
 9 specifically for the State, the MILCON adds
 10 are usually typically a lot of money and
 11 they're reliable, we get them on time. And
 12 Murray talked about some of the -- some of the
 13 enviable benefits that Barksdale has gotten
 14 recently. And this year is an eventful act
 15 with the Weapons Generation Facility, \$112
 16 million authorized and passed in the
 17 HAC-MILCON kind of appropriations waiting to
 18 see what the Senate is going to do, but very
 19 likely that we'll see the same with the
 20 Senate.

21 And then Community Projects Funding,
 22 which is essentially Earmark, a new name for
 23 Earmark, but Rep. Johnson pioneered, pushed
 24 through a medical facility expansion of the
 25 307 Bomb Wing for \$7 million. And that would

Page 76

1 have never gotten done without his support.

2 There is one area of MILCON that is not
 3 dead in the water, but it's not looking
 4 promising right now which is the Multipurpose
 5 Athletic Field at Fort Johnson. HASC
 6 authorized it, but it was not funded in the
 7 HAC-MILCON Bill. It was not included in the
 8 budget request. So just the fact that HASC
 9 authorized it is promising. So it's not dead
 10 in the water and we're going to wait and see
 11 what HASC is going to do. But right now, it
 12 is not an issue that was funded.

13 So the next three slides, I'm just going
 14 to talk about LAFA/Fort Johnson, Barksdale,
 15 and then SEMA. The big push for Fort Johnson
 16 over the last four months has been this
 17 Defense Community Infrastructure Program, the
 18 DCIP initiative for the Leesville Airport
 19 Runway Extension. It's a \$5 million project.
 20 The application was submitted last week. And
 21 some of the key dates are down here.
 22 Mid-August, we expect to receive a grant
 23 application invitation; and then here, by
 24 September on whether or not that funding is
 25 awarded. So that will be the -- I think it

Page 77

1 will extend the runway out to 5,600 feet,
 2 which would be a big win.
 3 And then for Barksdale, Murray alluded to
 4 some of these things already, but big win in
 5 obtaining the \$7 million CPF grant for
 6 upgrades to the 307th Bomb Wing Medical
 7 Facility.
 8 Our next focus is trying to arrange a
 9 Community Partnership Air Force visit with
 10 Barksdale to discuss things like quality of
 11 life, childcare options, and then identify
 12 potential additional DCIP opportunities for
 13 projects.
 14 And then looking out, Strategic Planning
 15 for FY'25, we'd like to coordinate a command
 16 briefing with the Barksdale leadership and the
 17 Roosevelt Group during the Community
 18 Partnership meeting to focus on where the
 19 needs are for FY'25 and beyond.
 20 And then in closing with SEMA, Gary spoke
 21 about it, General Waddell talked it, but this
 22 is a big win with the F15EX replacement to
 23 replace the outdated Charlies and Deltas.
 24 Continuing efforts to focus on the Navy's
 25 intent and the stance on modernizing the

Page 78

1 adversary fleet. I know that's a concern at
 2 Belle Chasse, and it's something we're
 3 watching closely.
 4 MR. SILBERT:
 5 Link, if I could probably share what I've
 6 been told, to serve a good purpose for the
 7 next three to five years is really beyond
 8 that.
 9 MR. MUSTIN:
 10 Right.
 11 MR. SILBERT:
 12 It's the solution we're talking about.
 13 MR. MUSTIN:
 14 Right. And, again, I'm looking forward
 15 to having more of that discussion. I've had
 16 an opportunity to be with Gary tomorrow at
 17 Belle Chasse and hear about the base and what
 18 the needs are. And I look forward to having
 19 that discussion. I know that's a hot button.
 20 And I just kind of talked about that last
 21 bullet.
 22 So that concludes my presentation.
 23 Hopefully, it bought y'all back some time and
 24 I'm happy to standby and answer any questions
 25 as well.

Page 79

1 GENERAL ELDER:
 2 Just one, you mentioned that you didn't
 3 think the budget cap would influence
 4 congressional directed funding, but so the
 5 caps were based on what was spent last year,
 6 so there were already -- plus what's in there,
 7 so it's just held at that, it can't go above
 8 that; is that the situation?
 9 MR. MUSTIN:
 10 Yes. Yes, sir.
 11 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 12 That was my question to begin with, but
 13 the second one is, do you all have any
 14 thoughts or ideas on what's going to happen
 15 with Senator Tuberville's hold on flag and
 16 general officer promotions or --
 17 MR. MUSTIN:
 18 That's a great question, sir. That's
 19 been asked a lot. Especially, I'm also a Navy
 20 Reservist assigned to the second fleet in
 21 Norfolk, Virginia, and that comes up a lot
 22 because it's getting to the point now where
 23 people can't PCS, they can't move. You've got
 24 06s taking, you know, Captains in the Navy,
 25 for example, taking jobs designated for

Page 80

1 Admirals who are just waiting to be able to
 2 promote. And I think it probably won't change
 3 until there's enough pressure.
 4 Just recently, I read an article about
 5 the Pentagon talking about the readiness
 6 impacts of Senator Tuberville's stance. And I
 7 think when, once -- when the -- when DoD can
 8 paint a picture of the readiness impacts, the
 9 detrimental readiness impacts to the Senator
 10 Tuberville's position, he probably won't have
 11 enough pressure to change his mind. Because I
 12 think, in his mind, the crux -- my impression
 13 of the crux is, he is not necessarily opposed
 14 to -- he is -- in his -- he thinks it's
 15 unprecedented that the military would pay for
 16 soldiers, sailors, and airmen to have the
 17 procedure, the abortion procedure. And that's
 18 his sticking point is that DoD should not be
 19 paying -- it's not that they can't take a
 20 leave, but that DoD should not be paying for
 21 that. And DoD sees it as a readiness concern.
 22 So it's really -- this is coming down to
 23 politics, and I know it is creating a
 24 readiness issue though.
 25 MR. VISER:

Page 81

1 Yeah. It is a definite readiness concern
 2 because Barksdale has two General Officers
 3 right now that are being held up, General
 4 Gebara and also General Bussiere (sic).
 5 MR. MUSTIN:
 6 Yes, sir.
 7 GENERAL ELDER:
 8 Not Bussiere.
 9 MR. VISER:
 10 Not Bussiere, I'm sorry.
 11 GENERAL ELDER:
 12 Lutton.
 13 MR. MUSTIN:
 14 Lutton. Thank you very much. But it's a
 15 mess.
 16 MR. MUSTIN:
 17 Yeah, there's changes of command that
 18 have been delayed.
 19 GENERAL ELDER:
 20 So for our clarification, the issue is
 21 not the services. Secretary Austin's letter
 22 said services could pay for the travel to go
 23 to a hospital, a military hospital where --
 24 where in the state where procedures can be
 25 performed, it doesn't change anything in terms

Page 82

1 of what can be paid for within the direct
 2 policy. They authorize them to pay travel --
 3 MR. MUSTIN:
 4 Right.
 5 GENERAL ELDER:
 6 -- for that.
 7 MR. MUSTIN:
 8 Yes, sir.
 9 GENERAL ELDER:
 10 So it's not paying for the procedure
 11 itself; it's paying for the travel.
 12 MR. MUSTIN:
 13 No, no, not the -- sorry, yeah, it's the
 14 travel for the procedure. But it's sticky and
 15 I think -- I mean we've got nominations now
 16 coming out of the Marine Corps, Chairman of
 17 Joint Chiefs. There are ways that the Senate
 18 can get people confirmed, but it's very
 19 painful and laborious and it's causing a
 20 readiness concern. I think when DoD -- once
 21 Senator Tuberville feels enough pressure about
 22 the military readiness that's being launched,
 23 that may change.
 24 Well, thank you for the opportunity to be
 25 with you all. It's my first time to Baton

Page 83

1 Rouge and New Orleans and it's been awesome so
 2 far. So I look forward to working with y'all
 3 in the future.
 4 GENERAL ELDER:
 5 You come in with the baseball team?
 6 MR. JAKES:
 7 Geaux Tigers.
 8 MR. ABOUD:
 9 Thank you very much, Link. We'll go
 10 ahead and jump to the Executive Director's
 11 report. I know we should be cognizant of the
 12 time here, so I'll move quickly on this
 13 report. But I did want to highlight, Link
 14 mentioned, he referenced the DCIP Project,
 15 which is through the Office of Local Defense
 16 Communities and Cooperation, and the shorthand
 17 is DCIP, but it's the Defense Community
 18 Infrastructure Program.
 19 In 2020, they had the Pilot Program and
 20 LED stood up and applied for funding with
 21 partnership and under leadership of the
 22 Governor's office, been working with the
 23 Vernon Parish School Board as well as a
 24 support letter that we received from
 25 Installation Command at the time at Fort Polk.

Page 84

1 So I wanted to just highlight progress
 2 because we're in year three of the work we're
 3 doing on that project, and we're approaching
 4 about 80 percent completion. And we expect to
 5 have a number of sites complete by the start
 6 of next school year. So, again, just some
 7 information already provided, the security
 8 award in September of 2020 and it's a
 9 seven-and-a-half-million-dollar grant and
 10 that's through OLDCC. This is to develop
 11 technology enhanced learning centers at five
 12 school sites in the Vernon Parish School
 13 System. And each of those sites will have
 14 steam buildings, technology centers, outdoor
 15 learning space that are outfitted with these
 16 technology packages to really enhance quality
 17 of life in military value on behalf of members
 18 of the military as well as their spouses and
 19 families.
 20 So here's the first -- the first item I
 21 wanted to show you. This is from March of
 22 this year. We did a site visit OLDCC
 23 leadership, Colonel Sally Hannan flew in and
 24 met with the school liaison office officer as
 25 well as architect, Vernon Parish School Board,

Page 85

1 and our Regional partners to walk through the
2 site. So at this time, it's about 65 percent
3 complete. Right now, we are about 80 percent
4 complete.
5 But I did want to show you, you can see
6 here on the right side, this is one of the
7 technology centers. It's about 60 foot by 40
8 foot. This will be outfitted with the
9 technology package. And on the left side a
10 little further down is a larger steam
11 building. So those are about 90 feet by
12 60 feet. And so each of these school sites
13 will have each a technology center, a steam
14 building, as well as some outdoor learning
15 space. So this is the inside of the steam
16 building. Again, this is about 65 percent
17 complete back in March, but I did want to
18 highlight some of the project progress to
19 date.
20 This is the inside of the technology
21 center. Again, it's about 60 foot by 40 foot.
22 Leesville Junior High School, which is just
23 across the street from Leesville High School,
24 part of the grant went to a LED digital sign
25 to communicate messaging to students,

Page 86

1 teachers, and parents. And just behind that
2 is one of the technology centers.
3 So it's still at Leesville Junior High,
4 this is the inside of the technology center.
5 And then this is one of the outdoor learning
6 spaces. This is about 40 feet by 100 feet in
7 which they'll have an opportunity to go
8 outside and do some activities and some
9 learning in just a different space. And just
10 behind this is a steam building. So at
11 Leesville Junior High as well, you'll have a
12 technology center, outdoor learning space, and
13 a steam billing.
14 Vernon Middle, this is just a photo of
15 the technology center. Just on the other side
16 of this is a steam building as well. Vernon
17 Middle also has an outdoor learning space.
18 And then Pickering High School and
19 Elementary School, this is -- it's two schools
20 but one site. And so the elementary school
21 has -- they do have a steam building. And
22 then Pickering has a steam building and
23 technology center. Now, all sites will be
24 ready by August of this year, so the start of
25 the new school year, all sites except for the

Page 87

1 steam building and technology center at
2 Pickering High School. So four of the five
3 will all be ready by the start of August of
4 next school year. And then in September,
5 shortly thereafter, they will finish these
6 final two sites.
7 So, again, I know I'm running through
8 them pretty quickly, but for the sake of time,
9 I at least wanted to show progress to date.
10 It's been a significant initiative that we've
11 taken on, but one that's been tremendous in
12 displaying the alignment of partnership that
13 we talk about day in and day out to execute on
14 some of these deliverables.
15 And the second piece I wanted to just
16 mention, Dustin had mentioned it earlier, the
17 veterans first business initiative. Since we
18 met last, we have reached a significant
19 milestone of 1,000 businesses that have been
20 enrolled or certified through the veterans
21 first business initiative. And so LED, once
22 we hit that mark in March earlier this year,
23 we did launch an advertising and marketing
24 campaign around that to highlight this
25 activity and this achievement. And I did want

Page 88

1 to relay just a quick excerpt from that press
2 release:
3 Louisiana veterans first business
4 initiative established in 2019 to promote
5 businesses owned by veterans, active duty
6 reserve military, or Gold Star spouses has
7 reached a new milestone with the certification
8 of its 1,000th participating veteran-owned
9 business. This program provides an
10 opportunity for Louisianans to give back to
11 the current and former service members and
12 their families who have sacrificed so much for
13 us. And it is a tribute to the tremendous
14 contributions that veterans make to our
15 state's economy."
16 And so I just wanted to relay that just
17 to highlight the progress that we've made over
18 these initiatives that we've been working on
19 for years now, and it's great to see the
20 progress that we've made.
21 And so with that, that will conclude the
22 Director's reports. I did want to move to
23 General Comments, New Business.
24 Senator Mike Reese, if you have a moment,
25 I'd like to invite you to make a few comments

Page 89

<p>1 recapping the Legislative Session. 2 SENATOR REESE: 3 Sure. I'll be glad to add to some of 4 what Major General Waddell talked about 5 earlier. A few more Bills of interest in the 6 Legislation this session dealing with the 7 military, one of them was from an 8 infrastructure standpoint is continue funding 9 Highway 117 in Fort Polk at Johnson, that's 10 how we primarily access for our main base out 11 to our training area where they purchased 12 about 75,000 additional acres. We've moved \$6 13 billion up into Priority 1 funding to get that 14 project initiated and started with \$30 million 15 in trailing funds in P5. And we'll see that 16 project start coming to fruition over the 17 course of the next two years. 18 There was an Act 355 by Stephanie 19 Hilferty that deals with property tax 20 exemptions for veterans with disabilities and 21 kind of clarifying some existing law in that 22 category. We have Senate Bill 187 that deals 23 with the occupational therapy licensing 24 compact. Again, we continue to try to enter 25 these compacts where possible to really</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 modules that focuses specifically on that 2 topic. And, obviously, we need to do 3 everything we can as a state to get behind 4 that epidemic. So those are just a few more 5 Bills, Robbie, that I found that were focused 6 on the military this session. 7 MR. ABBOD: 8 Excellent. Thank you, Senator. 9 Any other comments at this time in Other 10 Business? Yes, sir? 11 GENERAL ELDER: 12 I wasn't here long enough to do actually 13 do a full blown report, but one of the things 14 that happened this year is that the Secdef has 15 changed the way they're handling the NC3, 16 Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications 17 funding which before had always been done by 18 the services. They brought it up as being 19 starting not in '24, but '25. It's going to 20 be programmed by OSD itself. The reason 21 they're doing that is -- and by the way, the 22 service was a problem with the Air Force is 23 they would take money that was that the OSD 24 thought should be going to the Communications, 25 and they'd push it into something else and</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 92</p>
<p>1 benefit our military spouses to come to 2 Louisiana with licensure from another state. 3 That's been very, very successful in the areas 4 of nursing and physical therapy in this and 5 occupational therapy. 6 Another Bill HB472 by Buddy Mincey, the 7 Bill requires a five-year teacher certificate 8 to be issued to a service-connected military 9 member whether it's a family member or active 10 duty that comes to our state with an active 11 teaching certificate from another state that 12 we would immediately recognize that with a 13 five-year teaching certificate. And they're 14 still subject to background checks and that 15 standard background information. 16 And then another interesting thing that 17 we brought it up here on a number of 18 occasions, I'm happy to see somebody make that 19 first-step effort at it, but Representative 20 Miguez had House Bill 466 that added some 21 additional training modules to the State 22 Police's online gun safety courses that really 23 focus on veteran suicide, active duty and 24 veteran suicide by handgun. And so they 25 directed the State Police to add some training</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 91</p>	<p>1 then OSD would put it back in and they said, 2 well, we just want it to go in there in the 3 first place. 4 There's some other things that occur with 5 that could have some interesting implications 6 for things that at Global Strike Command in 7 terms of things that they'll be responsible 8 for, but that's further down and that should 9 be a good thing for us. 10 The other thing that's of interest is 11 that Stratcom is trying to set up a network 12 with 3 nodes for doing NC3 related things; one 13 outside of Barksdale, one in the national 14 capital region. And that could be a really 15 good thing for us because it would be a 16 prototyping experimentation site that would be 17 there outside of Barksdale. And they have 18 some -- it's worth mentioning, Link, because 19 the Nebraska Delegation put some language and 20 also some funding requests in that were not 21 only for Nebraska but for Louisiana and also 22 for Virginia. Actually, it didn't say 23 Virginia and Maryland but they wanted it in 24 the NCR, and but so it could be a benefit to 25 us. So I thought it would be of interest to</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 93</p>

1 the group.
 2 MR. ABBOUD:
 3 Thank you, General.
 4 Yes, sir?
 5 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 6 I just have a quick question again for
 7 the Secretary. Could you tell us again when
 8 is that location and date of the medal of
 9 honor convention?
 10 SECRETARY PIERSON:
 11 It will be at the World War II Museum in
 12 New Orleans and, again, those dates are
 13 October 31st through 4 of November. You
 14 should see some promotion around it. But if
 15 it's something you have interest in, it's
 16 probably a good idea to, you know, lean into
 17 some content on the web at the World War II
 18 Museum site. And there's a very convenient
 19 and nice hotel they have adjacent to the
 20 facility, so getting in there in advance might
 21 be of interest to you as well.
 22 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 23 I'm the President of the Navy League in
 24 New Orleans and we would be happy to help in
 25 any way we could with that if you need

Page 94

1 assistance.
 2 SECRETARY PIERSON:
 3 Yeah, the folks over there in the
 4 Administration would welcome that very much.
 5 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 6 I want to say I had a meeting with him
 7 last week, Pete Crain. You know Pete Crain?
 8 He's the CASA for Louisiana in the south, and
 9 I know I had to send a (indiscernible) to him
 10 in a meeting and they were doing some things
 11 in terms of planning and supporting the event,
 12 so I know they asked us to do that, but I can
 13 share Pete's name and number with you.
 14 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 15 That would be great.
 16 MAJOR GENERAL WADDELL:
 17 You can reach out to him and see what
 18 y'all can do.
 19 REAR ADMIRAL WHITEHEAD:
 20 Yes, sir. Thank you very much.
 21 MR. ABBOUD:
 22 Any Other Business before we move on?
 23 Okay. I'm hearing none.
 24 I'd like to open the floor for questions
 25 or comments from the public?

Page 95

1 Okay. I'm hearing none.
 2 So that should cover everything for
 3 today. I would like to call on LMAC Chairman
 4 Secretary Pierson for some closing remarks.
 5 SECRETARY PIERSON:
 6 Just very proud of the work that we're
 7 accomplishing. As you know, this
 8 Administration is winding down. We've got 195
 9 days left or something of that nature, but the
 10 work, we continue to aggressively pursue.
 11 Really proud of the \$7.5 million technology
 12 centers over there in Vernon Parish School
 13 Board. Don't let these float through your
 14 mind that maybe we could get one of those.
 15 That program was discontinued, so they're one
 16 off. But we keep watching the menu, and
 17 thanks to the Roosevelt Group for helping us
 18 watch the menu. And that's why we're making
 19 another DCIP award application for that runway
 20 extension that you heard briefed as well.
 21 So we continue to engage what we call in
 22 the military targets of opportunity and done
 23 so very successfully. Thank you for your
 24 support and the support that we get from the
 25 Legislature to be able to execute this. We'll

Page 96

1 continue to keep you informed. I think we'll
 2 have another LMAC meeting later this year.
 3 MR. ABBOUD:
 4 Yes, sir.
 5 SECRETARY PIERSON:
 6 We have -- we're seeking to always
 7 execute two a year. And once we get a
 8 location identified, we'll pass that along to
 9 you so you can save the date. And look
 10 forward to seeing some of you up there at the
 11 Triad Symposium in Shreveport that will be in
 12 just a few weeks. Thank you very much.
 13 MR. ABBOUD:
 14 Thank you, Mr. Secretary.
 15 With that, any motions to adjourn?
 16 MR. SILBERT:
 17 Move to adjourn.
 18 MR. ABBOUD:
 19 Any second?
 20 MR. SLONE:
 21 Second.
 22 MR. ABBOUD:
 23 All in favor, please say aye.
 24 ALL:
 25 Aye.

Page 97

1 MR. ABOUD:
2 Thank you very much.
3 (WHEREUPON, THE MEETING ADJOURNED)
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1 This certification is valid only for a
2 transcript accompanied by my handwritten or digital
3 signature and the image of my State-authorized seal
4 on this page.
5 Signed:
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7 KELLY S. PERRIN,CCR
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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
2 I, KELLY S. PERRIN, a Certified Court
3 Reporter, Certificate #23035, in good standing with
4 the State of Louisiana, as the officer before whom
5 this meeting was taken, do hereby certify that the
6 foregoing 99 pages;
7 That this testimony was reported by me in
8 stenographic machine shorthand by Computer-Aided
9 Transcription, transcribed by me or under my
10 personal direction and supervision, and is a true
11 and correct transcript to the best of my ability
12 and understanding;
13 That the transcript has been prepared in
14 compliance with transcript format guidelines
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17 contractual relationships, as defined by Louisiana
18 Code of Civil Procedure Article 1434 and in rules
19 and advisory opinions of the board; that I am not
20 of counsel nor related to any person participating
21 in this cause and am in no way interested in the
22 outcome of this event.
23
24
25

0	125,000 19:19	2002 75:12	26 64:22 65:3
06s 80:24	132,000 15:24	201-9650 1:19	72:14 75:25
1	14 63:3	201-9651 1:19	27 1:3
1 2:3 90:13	140 33:21	2014 16:21	27,500 27:2
1,000 54:1	1434 99:18	2017 45:12	283,000 15:17
88:19	144 10:10	2019 35:4 89:4	288 10:9
1,000th 89:8	147 10:7	2020 10:17	29 16:17 72:12
1,100 28:20	14th 11:5	16:22 84:19	29th 34:8
1,252 16:4	15 56:13 63:2,3	85:8	3
1,260 17:10	150 53:24	2021 10:17	3 2:4 8:5 93:12
1,344 16:10	155 12:9	2022 10:18	3.2 75:9
1,500 20:1	168 19:5	2023 1:3 10:19	30 14:14 68:18
1,520 17:9	17 35:2	14:9 31:21	70:5 90:14
1.1 17:6	170 38:18	2025 37:18	301 16:1
1.6 15:20	18 10:20 65:20	2027 37:19	307 76:25
10 10:17 13:5	181 10:1	20th 13:17	307th 78:6
39:12 66:9	183 33:17	217 1:17	31 14:8
71:21 73:2	187 90:22	21st 13:17	31st 94:13
10,000 18:11	18th 69:14	225 1:19,19	32 18:7
19:17 20:3	193 10:8	23 15:22 16:3	355 90:18
10,790 17:1	195 96:8	23035 99:3	369 44:17
100 2:6 26:6	1980s 44:11	23rd 69:14	382 16:24
53:25 76:2	19th 21:25 22:5	24 66:6 67:25	39 47:24
87:6	1st 46:22	92:19	392 31:1
1083rd 30:11	2	244 19:2	3d 63:17,21
11 16:13	2,200 44:3,4	25 44:17,24	4
112 76:15	2,400 44:2,2	59:16 63:9	4 14:8 94:13
113 17:3	2,500 20:2	68:3 72:1	4,021 16:16
117 90:9	2,800 50:14	92:19	4,112 16:18
12 10:9 16:11	2.2 16:2	250 38:17	4.4 17:8
16:25	2.25 17:6	256 33:16	40 14:14 42:25
122nd 40:14	20 10:18,19	50:11	62:8 86:7,21
56:2 58:23	56:13 68:18	256th 38:10	87:6
59:3	70:5	25th 30:17	

[400 - actual]

400 76:7	617 1:6	97 27:7	accomplishing
409 10:4	65 86:2,16	99 99:6	96:7
44th 33:14	7	9th 69:22	accomplishm...
45 28:22,22	7 76:25 78:5	a	42:21
46 49:25	7.5 96:11	abboud 3:16	account 26:19
466 91:20	70802 1:7	4:2,6,24 5:17	76:6
470 30:10	70809 1:18	5:20,23 6:2,5,9	achievement
473 9:23	75 58:12	6:13,17,21,24	88:25
485 43:19	75,000 90:12	7:3,7,11,15,19	acknowledged
44:15	769 28:16	7:23 8:2,15,19	56:16
49 16:19	78 29:19,22	8:23 11:1	acres 32:19
4th 32:11 33:8	7th 69:22	14:21 24:6	90:12
5	8	61:13 68:7	acronym 38:18
5 14:23 77:19	8 71:21	70:17 84:8	act 37:21 40:21
5,600 78:1	8,000 50:25	92:7 94:2	72:5 76:14
5-8 2:5	51:2	95:21 97:3,13	90:18
5.2 17:7	80 85:4 86:3	97:18,22 98:1	acted 99:16
50 9:25 12:17	800 28:14,17	ability 49:20	acting 24:24
21:25 32:19	80s 44:7	99:11	action 39:22
50:8	82 29:4,21,22	able 11:14 20:4	45:18
50,000 36:15	842 75:8	20:6,8,10 21:6	active 19:3
505 10:2	850 15:16	31:21 36:9	29:10 35:10
520th 32:8	86 29:21	37:6 42:5	42:19 44:5,18
527 50:12	8th 64:6 69:22	46:15 57:10	44:23 47:24
53 58:2	9	60:12 63:21	71:12 89:5
54 25:16	9.6 42:23	66:1 81:1	91:9,10,23
5644 54:16	90 65:16 86:11	96:25	activities 4:12
5th 47:25	92 30:5	abortion 81:17	9:12 13:3 36:6
6	926 38:16	above 80:7	87:8
6 90:12	93 29:4 30:6	academy 63:1	activity 12:1,12
60 50:8 86:7,12	932 16:13	access 90:10	13:11 14:8
86:21	94 27:4	accessions	24:15 88:25
600 17:22 18:4	9522 1:17	28:14 29:7	acts 67:13
		accompanied	actual 18:13
		100:2	52:1

[actually - annual]

<p>actually 15:11 25:13 30:12,14 31:11 32:16 33:15 34:10 35:1,14 36:2 36:25 37:18 46:21 47:19,22 48:4,18 52:10 52:12 53:3 92:12 93:22 add 10:24 17:9 63:21 90:3 91:25 added 76:7 91:20 adding 31:4 additional 78:12 90:12 91:21 address 35:12 69:7 addresses 5:8 adds 76:9 adjacent 94:19 adjourn 97:15 97:17 adjourned 98:3 adjutant 60:8 administration 63:5,11 95:4 96:8 administrator 19:25 20:15 admiral 3:15 7:24,25 64:7,9</p>	<p>64:10,14,16 65:1 66:23 67:2,6 80:11 94:5,22 95:14 95:19 admirals 81:1 advance 94:20 adversary 79:1 advertising 88:23 advisory 1:2 99:19 affairs 15:2,9 15:16 24:9 affect 51:5 afforded 36:3 african 22:7 afternoon 4:3,5 4:8 24:23 25:10 30:15 61:12 71:4 agency 18:25 agenda 5:2,4 14:24 61:15 aggressively 96:10 ago 29:12 32:18 33:14 48:20 52:8 agree 54:8 60:10 agreements 50:18 ahead 4:9,11 5:10 14:23</p>	<p>15:1 70:19 84:10 aid 74:20 aided 99:8 air 11:8,14 13:18 26:6 29:3,10,16 30:5,7 40:24 56:3,4,7 58:23 59:8,14,15,18 62:15 65:4 66:4,13,15,24 67:3,11 68:1 69:11,15 75:21 78:9 92:22 airbus 11:16 aircraft 11:25 62:9 airline 29:9 30:13 airman 28:3 airmen 28:6 30:10 35:11 56:24 81:16 airport 77:18 alabama 74:1 alert 36:17 alignment 88:12 allegiance 4:20 4:22,23 allen 5:15 alliance 61:17 70:20,21</p>	<p>allocated 10:3 allocation 63:6 allow 37:6 allowing 12:23 allows 19:22 69:25 alluded 78:3 alpha 30:22 amaze 34:25 amazing 17:11 17:15,19 amendment 74:12 amendments 74:11 america 63:15 64:3 america's 12:12 american 22:7 americorps 18:14 ammunition 12:9,10 amount 17:17 ankle 20:20 annex 40:17 announcement 41:7 42:8 45:23 46:22 47:5 announcements 39:20 annual 22:14 27:5,23 32:4</p>
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[annual - b52]

<p>32:10 63:6 71:19 72:4 answer 66:8 70:11 79:24 anticipate 46:3 anybody 23:8 70:12 anymore 68:23 apologize 66:11 appeals 15:25 16:1 appearances 2:4 3:1 applicant 45:4 application 19:16 21:10 77:20,23 96:19 applications 22:2 applied 84:20 appointment 15:11 appreciate 12:21 15:13 61:11 68:5 appreciation 48:21 approach 14:16 approaching 62:8 85:3 appropriate 9:19 appropriations 71:17,20 72:6</p>	<p>72:23,24 73:3 73:5,7,10 74:2 74:5,14 75:24 76:17 approval 8:5 19:24 approve 8:12 19:25 approves 18:25 approving 18:25 apron 36:20 architect 85:25 area 12:17 13:7 13:20 25:18 33:19 36:16 37:3 77:2 90:11 areas 37:7 91:3 argument 53:9 56:2 arkansas 34:21 50:19 53:25 arm 65:24 armed 70:19,21 73:25 armory 35:23 army 12:8 25:22 26:6 28:12 29:18 38:4,23 75:22 arrange 78:8 article 81:4 99:18</p>	<p>asked 80:19 95:12 asking 12:25 49:23 asos 40:15 41:5 56:2 57:1 assault 30:20 assigned 80:20 assistance 15:19,23 19:7 19:9,16 20:9 20:22 95:1 assisted 20:16 association 44:22 astro 63:15 64:3 athletic 77:5 attempting 62:25 attendance 62:16 attended 11:2,6 14:3 attention 9:3 attract 13:18 augmentation 38:7,15 augments 10:10 august 18:24 22:11 46:13 77:22 87:24 88:3</p>	<p>austin's 82:21 authority 19:25 authorization 40:21 72:5 authorize 83:2 authorized 48:9 76:16 77:6,9 100:3 automobile 44:18,25 availability 28:3,3 available 14:1 14:18 39:2 avenue 1:17 average 16:11 16:13,16,19,25 averaging 17:3 award 19:17 25:20 85:8 96:19 awarded 19:18 77:25 awards 48:22 aware 20:4 21:9 awesome 84:1 ax 67:21,23 aye 8:20,22 97:23,25</p>
			b
			<p>b 3:9,11 b52 13:22 68:18 69:4</p>

<p>b52j 68:20 b52s 68:19 70:5 back 18:5 20:21 25:25 27:10,12 29:25 30:5 32:19,24 34:23 36:2,4 37:4,22 40:19 44:7,10,11,21 45:12 51:14 56:17 57:9 59:14 60:6 61:1 70:8 79:23 86:17 89:10 93:1 backbone 48:17 background 49:23 53:14 91:14,15 backyard 12:16 25:25 34:15 ball 69:3 73:9 bank 18:20 barata 64:18 barksdale 48:11 67:13 68:10,19 69:1 69:5,11,19,20 69:24 70:8 76:13 77:14 78:3,10,16 82:2 93:13,17</p>	<p>base 65:15 79:17 90:10 baseball 84:5 based 19:7,10 19:19 28:20 60:5 70:23 72:9 80:5 baseline 25:2 bases 69:16,23 70:3 basic 72:7 basically 19:15 25:7 32:23 38:16 40:1 44:4 50:16 69:25 baton 1:7,18 22:5,21 23:1 83:25 battalion 30:21 32:8,10 49:11 50:12 battalions 31:25 32:2 battle 57:7,20 bayou 32:6 33:3 beauregard 45:22 46:2,11 beebe 5:18 began 32:22 behalf 15:3,24 85:17 believe 8:8 23:22 36:15</p>	<p>62:6 belize 33:21,22 34:3 47:8 belizean 33:23 belizeans 34:1 34:5 belle 36:17 42:9 61:25 67:5,19 79:2,17 benefit 43:14 72:21 76:5 91:1 93:24 benefits 76:4 76:13 best 5:1 29:14 41:1 99:11 better 40:2 50:1 54:21 beyond 78:19 79:7 big 37:20 50:8 54:9 75:12 77:15 78:2,4 78:22 bill 19:1,3 38:24 43:19 63:7 71:18 73:1,3,22 75:4 76:4 77:7 90:22 91:6,7 91:20 billing 87:13 billion 10:17,18 10:19,20 15:20 42:23 75:8</p>	<p>76:1,2 90:13 bills 9:16 19:12 73:12 90:5 92:5 bio 71:11 biomedical 13:7 bit 31:23 42:10 66:20 71:25 72:24 73:9 74:25 black 12:12 blessed 45:15 blown 92:13 board 5:5 19:16 20:2 84:23 85:25 96:13 99:15,19 bob 3:6 boeing 11:15 65:16 boeing's 11:17 bomb 76:25 78:6 bomber 13:22 books 21:13 boothville 31:11 border 34:2 bossier 69:20 bottom 20:25 75:25 bought 79:23 brac 44:21</p>
--	---	--	---

[bragging - center]

<p>bragging 70:1 branch 38:3 branches 28:23 brand 21:16 break 67:22 breakdown 75:18 bret 39:23 brian 3:7 6:6 brief 15:13 briefed 96:20 briefing 56:12 78:16 brigade 3:14 33:14 38:10 50:12 bring 12:18 15:19 22:2 26:8 33:20 41:14 48:4 broken 20:20 brookline 1:17 brought 19:4 91:17 92:18 brown 40:23 40:24 58:14 brown's 57:17 bubble 50:1 buddy 91:6 budget 37:20 71:19 72:4 75:6,8,18 77:8 80:3 build 25:11 40:7 66:1</p>	<p>building 1:4 47:2 61:23 86:11,14,16 87:10,16,21,22 88:1 buildings 10:6 85:14 built 76:8 bullet 79:21 bullets 75:7 bunch 35:4 48:21 buras 31:10 bureau 26:19 38:22 burials 16:11 16:14,17,19,25 17:3 busiest 16:20 business 14:18 16:5 24:10 67:11 88:17,21 89:3,9,23 92:10 95:22 businesses 16:4 88:19 89:5 bussiere 69:12 70:7 82:4,8,10 busy 35:4,5 button 79:19</p>	<p>california 43:12 california's 43:11 call 2:5 4:9 5:12 15:1 18:9 18:12 24:14 38:8,18 39:9 40:15 50:22 52:8 56:14,14 61:15 68:9 96:3,21 calling 50:17 calls 31:1 camp 12:7 32:6 33:3 45:22 46:1,10 47:21 campaign 88:24 campus 18:8 69:16 campuses 19:1 cap 80:3 capabilities 13:1 capacities 12:25 capital 93:14 capitol 22:10 caps 72:9,10,15 80:5 capsule 11:20 captain 65:15 captains 80:24</p>	<p>caption 2:3 car 19:11 card 21:21 cards 21:13 care 27:20 career 21:24 caring 17:22 carter 63:24 casa 95:8 cast 56:5 category 90:22 caught 56:19 cause 99:21 causing 83:19 cavazos 30:15 cbrn 39:9 ccr 100:7 ceci 38:17 celebrations 14:12 cemeteries 16:6 16:8 17:2,5 cemetery 16:9 16:12,14,15,18 16:20,20,21,23 16:24 17:13 census 17:23 18:3 center 22:23 33:12 35:15,16 36:6,14,17,24 37:4,17 45:24 46:3 47:20,22 86:13,21 87:4 87:12,15,23</p>
	<p>c</p>		
	<p>c 4:1 99:1,1 c.c.r. 1:12 calendar 65:12</p>		

[center - coming]

<p>88:1 centers 18:8 85:11,14 86:7 87:2 96:12 central 16:9 ceremony 11:2 22:16,18 30:13 46:3,7,17 certain 73:16 certainly 4:13 9:13 15:12 21:20 23:23 24:8 26:15 30:3 34:19 40:25 50:7,24 52:16 68:22 70:25 certificate 2:6 91:7,11,13 99:3 certification 89:7 100:1 certified 3:23 19:2 88:20 99:2 certify 99:5 chairman 3:2,5 65:11 83:16 96:3 chalk 26:23 challenge 43:3 43:3 47:19,23 69:21 74:13 challenges 73:16 74:10</p>	<p>chance 5:6 33:11 39:4 change 45:25 51:4 64:15,17 72:13 81:2,11 82:25 83:23 changed 25:4 41:13 92:15 changes 5:7 49:22 82:17 changing 49:10 charge 53:24 charles 12:1,2 36:13 charlies 78:23 chart 28:11 chasse 36:17 42:9 61:25 67:5,19 79:2 79:17 checklist 63:2 checks 91:14 chemical 39:7 39:18,19,25 40:4,8 chennault 11:25 chief 3:3 15:1,8 38:22 40:24 57:18 chiefs 83:17 childcare 78:11 childhood 10:9 china 75:20</p>	<p>chris 71:7 christian 25:14 chronicled 22:24 circulated 8:9 cited 45:21 citizens 27:20 city 35:17 63:1 civil 99:18 civilians 75:11 claims 15:24 19:19 clarence 5:18 clarification 82:20 clarifying 90:21 class 25:22 classes 47:23 cleared 32:17 close 31:21 37:2 54:16 63:4 closely 24:8 43:12 62:2 73:5 74:15 79:3 closer 65:7 closing 78:20 96:4 coalition 41:25 coast 33:23 63:14,18 64:7 64:20,21,21</p>	<p>coastal 10:8 code 99:18 cognizant 84:11 collectively 67:20 college 18:8,19 18:21,22 19:1 43:21 colonel 3:4 15:4 85:23 colonel's 23:5 columnbarium 17:10 combat 33:14 38:8 39:15 come 14:1 28:19 32:19 39:2,25 42:14 52:9 53:17 60:21 62:10 68:11 84:5 91:1 comes 34:8 74:8 80:21 91:10 comfortable 12:18 coming 10:16 14:5 31:9 41:1 42:9 65:17 69:10,19 70:10 81:22 83:16 90:16</p>
---	---	--	---

[command - contractual]

<p>command 13:9 64:15,17,19 69:12,16,23 78:15 82:17 84:25 92:16 93:6</p> <p>commander 64:6,18 69:11</p> <p>commanders 30:1</p> <p>commands 65:2,4</p> <p>comment 54:25</p> <p>comments 8:7 8:10 89:23,25 92:9 95:25</p> <p>commission 45:10 48:19</p> <p>commitment 65:12</p> <p>committee 20:2 74:1</p> <p>committees 71:17</p> <p>communicate 52:20 86:25</p> <p>communication 57:2</p> <p>communicati... 92:16,24</p> <p>communities 19:6 70:1 84:16</p> <p>community 12:15 18:5,19</p>	<p>18:20,22 33:10 36:5 65:13 69:20 72:19 76:21 77:17 78:9,17 84:17</p> <p>compact 90:24</p> <p>compacts 90:25</p> <p>companies 20:10 38:7 49:17 50:13</p> <p>company 27:8 30:12 38:7,8 38:15,16 39:19 39:19 49:13,15 63:15</p> <p>comparisons 74:16</p> <p>compensation 15:21</p> <p>compete 26:7</p> <p>competing 69:24</p> <p>competition 66:21</p> <p>complete 85:5 86:3,4,17</p> <p>completed 17:8 32:15 73:19,20</p> <p>completely 9:15</p> <p>completes 23:7</p> <p>completion 85:4</p> <p>compliance 99:14,16</p>	<p>component 42:19</p> <p>components 28:24</p> <p>computer 99:8</p> <p>concern 79:1 81:21 82:1 83:20</p> <p>concerned 21:24 29:17 30:8 49:3 52:23 74:3,4</p> <p>concerning 72:25 73:10</p> <p>conclude 89:21</p> <p>concluded 9:14</p> <p>concludes 49:4 79:22</p> <p>concrete 17:9</p> <p>conduct 35:23 38:14</p> <p>conducting 47:22</p> <p>conference 60:5 69:13 73:22</p> <p>confident 27:17 73:23</p> <p>confirmed 83:18</p> <p>confronted 12:15</p> <p>congress 41:24</p> <p>congressional 14:9 37:13</p>	<p>41:18 68:16 70:24 71:16 80:4</p> <p>congressiona... 72:20</p> <p>congressman 41:23</p> <p>connected 91:8</p> <p>connector 76:8</p> <p>consistency 67:12</p> <p>constraint 27:14</p> <p>construction 17:5,13 32:1 32:22 36:11 37:10,16 39:15</p> <p>contact 21:2,17 23:24</p> <p>content 94:17</p> <p>contention 11:21</p> <p>continue 17:23 40:7 70:2 90:8 90:24 96:10,21 97:1</p> <p>continues 31:6</p> <p>continuing 63:10 73:14 75:15 78:24</p> <p>contractors 65:16,25</p> <p>contractual 99:17</p>
---	---	---	---

[contributed - delighted]

<p>contributed 26:2</p> <p>contributions 89:14</p> <p>control 37:20 92:16</p> <p>controllers 34:10</p> <p>convenient 94:18</p> <p>convention 14:10,10 94:9</p> <p>conversation 76:6</p> <p>conversations 38:21</p> <p>cooperation 84:16</p> <p>coordinate 78:15</p> <p>corner 4:15</p> <p>corporation 13:5</p> <p>corps 83:16</p> <p>correct 99:11</p> <p>corridor 13:8</p> <p>cost 41:19</p> <p>council 1:2 24:23 52:3 65:9 71:5</p> <p>counsel 99:20</p> <p>counselors 15:19,23</p> <p>countdown 46:23</p>	<p>countries 47:17 59:16</p> <p>country 25:24 54:21</p> <p>couple 29:12,21 32:18 33:13 59:17 62:20 69:10</p> <p>course 11:17 39:21 90:17</p> <p>courses 91:22</p> <p>court 1:16 3:23 99:2</p> <p>courtreporter... 1:20</p> <p>cover 96:2</p> <p>covid 29:5 66:5</p> <p>cpf 78:5</p> <p>cq 40:23</p> <p>cr 74:7</p> <p>crain 95:7,7</p> <p>creating 81:23</p> <p>crews 5:21</p> <p>critical 26:7</p> <p>cross 18:23</p> <p>crossed 12:21</p> <p>crux 81:12,13</p> <p>crypts 17:9,16</p> <p>cubans 55:4</p> <p>curious 51:20 56:1</p> <p>current 5:5 45:4 89:11</p> <p>currently 10:13 12:6 18:18</p>	<p>26:17 30:9 40:14 47:24 62:22</p> <p>cut 13:6 26:10</p> <p>cutting 29:12 36:18,23</p> <p>cyber 31:23 34:20 41:3,5,8 45:1,9 57:7 58:19 74:24,25 75:1,2</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">d</p> <hr/> <p>d 2:1 3:14 4:1</p> <p>d.c. 70:23</p> <p>date 14:16 21:17 86:19 88:9 94:8 97:9</p> <p>dates 77:21 94:12</p> <p>daugherty 39:23</p> <p>david 64:18</p> <p>day 10:2 11:6 22:22 29:13 33:7 37:1 88:13,13</p> <p>days 28:1 96:9</p> <p>dcip 72:19 77:18 78:12 84:14,17 96:19</p> <p>dead 77:3,9</p> <p>deal 13:11 50:8 70:9</p> <p>dealing 90:6</p>	<p>deals 90:19,22</p> <p>deborah 3:9 6:18</p> <p>debt 9:25 10:1 72:8 73:8</p> <p>decade 71:8</p> <p>decades 62:10 73:2</p> <p>decision 35:6 56:1 58:14</p> <p>decontaminat... 39:10,14</p> <p>dedicate 22:6 22:11</p> <p>defender 59:15 59:15,18</p> <p>defense 33:22 34:2 40:20,25 65:13 72:3,5 72:11 75:8,17 76:4 77:17 84:15,17</p> <p>defined 99:17</p> <p>definite 82:1</p> <p>dei 74:24</p> <p>delay 61:2</p> <p>delayed 73:7 82:18</p> <p>delegation 37:13 41:18 68:16 69:8 70:25 93:19</p> <p>delgado 18:19</p> <p>delighted 70:7</p>
--	---	--	---

[deliverables - earlier]

<p>deliverables 88:14</p> <p>delta 30:22</p> <p>deltas 78:23</p> <p>demographic 54:9</p> <p>demographics 51:21 54:20,22</p> <p>demonstrate 26:11</p> <p>dental 42:1,3</p> <p>department 10:11 15:2,9 15:14,15,16 24:8 36:1 63:7 63:12</p> <p>deploy 31:4</p> <p>deployed 25:5 27:8 30:10</p> <p>deployment 30:13,23 34:24 59:5,7</p> <p>depos 1:20</p> <p>deputy 3:3 15:1 15:8</p> <p>designated 80:25</p> <p>designation 47:1</p> <p>desoto 31:20</p> <p>deterrents 13:21</p> <p>detrimental 81:9</p>	<p>develop 85:10</p> <p>development 36:4</p> <p>dickie 35:8</p> <p>differences 74:8 75:4</p> <p>different 19:23 45:16 47:14 74:18 87:9</p> <p>difficult 67:13</p> <p>dig 38:11</p> <p>digital 86:24 100:2</p> <p>diplomatic 43:7 47:16</p> <p>direct 83:1</p> <p>directed 72:20 80:4 91:25</p> <p>direction 23:5 99:10</p> <p>directly 52:20</p> <p>director 3:16 11:1 25:21 35:7 38:23 40:17 57:18</p> <p>director's 84:10 89:22</p> <p>disabilities 90:20</p> <p>disaster 49:21 50:4</p> <p>discerning 72:16</p> <p>discharged 19:14</p>	<p>discontinued 96:15</p> <p>discounts 47:2</p> <p>discuss 70:11 78:10</p> <p>discussion 14:25 79:15,19</p> <p>discussions 13:21</p> <p>displaying 88:12</p> <p>distribution 23:16</p> <p>district 64:6,18 64:20,21</p> <p>diversifies 12:2</p> <p>diversity 52:2</p> <p>divest 74:22</p> <p>divisional 38:4</p> <p>documentary 22:23</p> <p>dod 81:7,18,20 81:21 83:20</p> <p>doing 13:8,14 18:2 26:4 28:9 33:11 35:6 36:18 37:1 39:10 40:3 41:11 44:9,10 48:2 51:15 58:3 60:23 63:16 65:14 85:3 92:21 93:12 95:10</p>	<p>dollar 21:5 63:6 85:9</p> <p>dollars 10:2 15:21 19:5 37:9 63:9 72:17</p> <p>don 6:14 8:25</p> <p>donald 3:2</p> <p>donations 21:4 21:12</p> <p>dotd 10:3</p> <p>downtown 23:1</p> <p>downward 28:13</p> <p>drive 27:16 29:16</p> <p>driving 10:21</p> <p>dropping 57:4</p> <p>due 23:22 66:5</p> <p>dustin 3:3 15:2 15:7 24:7,9 88:16</p> <p>duty 35:11 42:18 44:19 71:12 89:5 91:10,23</p> <p>dwindling 14:13</p>
			e
			<p>e 1:20 2:1 3:8 4:1,1 99:1,1,1,1</p> <p>eagle 42:7</p> <p>earlier 42:12 47:8 88:16,22 90:5</p>

[early - everybody]

<p>early 10:9 66:10</p> <p>earmark 76:22 76:23</p> <p>earth 17:17</p> <p>east 75:19</p> <p>easy 63:19</p> <p>echo 30:22</p> <p>economic 12:1</p> <p>economy 9:23 10:11,22 12:3 65:24 89:15</p> <p>ed 10:8 47:18</p> <p>education 10:10 19:6 21:25 43:2 52:23</p> <p>edwards 11:7 46:23</p> <p>effect 49:20</p> <p>effort 13:2 91:19</p> <p>efforts 78:24</p> <p>eighth 64:20</p> <p>either 31:3 52:19 62:4,6</p> <p>elder 3:6 5:24 5:25 23:9,14 23:19 24:2,23 55:24,25 57:12 57:22 58:8,16 58:21 59:6,11 59:20,24 60:7 60:15 61:6 66:12 67:9,17</p>	<p>68:2 80:1 82:7 82:11,19 83:5 83:9 84:4 92:11</p> <p>elected 11:13 13:19 41:25</p> <p>element 34:9 39:8</p> <p>elementary 87:19,20</p> <p>elements 13:22 30:21 33:16 38:13 56:13</p> <p>eligible 19:15 19:15</p> <p>emac 50:18</p> <p>email 5:7 20:11 20:14 55:16</p> <p>emergencies 25:7 57:1</p> <p>emergency 27:18 31:7 35:1 47:10 51:2,6</p> <p>employed 10:13</p> <p>employee's 9:24</p> <p>employees 11:19,21</p> <p>employers 22:1</p> <p>enacted 75:9</p> <p>encourage 13:24</p>	<p>encourages 70:2</p> <p>encouraging 75:15</p> <p>endeavor 36:10</p> <p>ended 62:6</p> <p>endure 63:10</p> <p>energetics 12:14</p> <p>energized 51:14</p> <p>energy 36:7</p> <p>engage 35:9 57:13 96:21</p> <p>engaged 9:13</p> <p>engagements 12:24</p> <p>engineer 31:25 32:1,8,9 38:2,5 38:8 39:10 50:12</p> <p>engineering 39:16 49:11</p> <p>engineers 38:11 49:25</p> <p>enhance 85:16</p> <p>enhanced 85:11</p> <p>enlisted 29:13 44:21 54:15,23</p> <p>enlistees 51:22</p> <p>enlisting 53:7</p> <p>enrolled 88:20</p> <p>ensure 69:2</p>	<p>enter 90:24</p> <p>enterprise 40:15 75:13</p> <p>entire 25:15,24 28:16</p> <p>entitled 43:22</p> <p>entrepreneur 65:10</p> <p>enviable 68:17 76:13</p> <p>epidemic 92:4</p> <p>equipment 27:1</p> <p>equity 42:18,19</p> <p>especially 20:6 40:4 54:15 57:3 80:19</p> <p>essentially 76:22</p> <p>established 89:4</p> <p>estimation 28:20</p> <p>ethical 25:8</p> <p>evaluations 34:11</p> <p>event 22:21 73:24 95:11 99:22</p> <p>eventful 76:14</p> <p>events 48:19</p> <p>eventually 40:13 57:7</p> <p>everybody 21:20 25:2</p>
--	---	---	--

[everybody - finished]

<p>55:3 ex 56:5 example 43:10 44:1 50:11 76:6 80:25 examples 41:15 excellent 92:8 except 87:25 exception 48:12 excerpt 89:1 exchanges 47:9 excited 4:15 29:17 37:11 43:4 46:17 47:5 63:13 exciting 63:23 excuse 41:23 execute 46:16 88:13 96:25 97:7 executive 3:16 52:2 84:10 executives 11:15 executor 11:1 exemption 43:19,23 53:10 exemptions 90:20 exes 57:9 existing 90:21 expansion 76:24</p>	<p>expect 14:14 73:21,22 75:23 77:22 85:4 expecting 73:12 expects 23:6 experimentat... 93:16 explosives 12:14 extend 78:1 extension 77:19 96:20 extremely 25:25 37:11 eye 69:3 73:6</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">f</p> <hr/> <p>f 99:1 f15 42:7 f15cs 56:3 62:7 f15ex 42:9 62:5 78:22 f15exs 41:11 42:23 61:25 f18 65:17 f35 62:4,6 facilities 42:15 facility 35:20 76:15,24 78:7 94:20 fact 17:14 20:8 31:19 52:7,9 77:8 fair 21:25</p>	<p>fall 37:5 46:4 falling 38:19 falls 19:12 familiar 46:9 71:18 families 15:18 18:12 20:5 22:16,20 37:6 53:23 85:19 89:12 family 18:4 19:7 20:20 21:7 53:17 91:9 fantastic 19:21 21:3 far 11:8 21:23 25:11 26:17 27:1,18,24 29:16 30:7 43:7 49:2 68:17 84:2 farmers 36:5 fast 58:13 fat 29:20 favor 8:20 97:23 fax 1:19 feather 69:17 federal 15:18 17:4 19:5 30:9 30:24 34:24 42:22 44:11 63:1 72:17</p>	<p>fee 43:19 47:3 53:10 feedback 30:1 feel 27:7,17 41:7 feels 83:21 fees 43:25 44:3 44:3 53:18,25 53:25 54:2 feet 36:16 78:1 86:11,12 87:6 87:6 fellow 24:20,23 field 77:5 fifth 18:15 fight 67:23 fighter 30:4 fighting 38:11 67:22 figure 36:21 figured 36:22 filed 15:23 fill 18:18 21:9 final 32:12 45:8 48:16 88:6 finally 14:7 find 58:25 63:19 fine 9:9 52:19 fingers 12:21 finish 32:25 36:14 42:2 88:5 finished 28:15 29:3 31:7</p>
---	--	---	---

[finished - general]

<p>34:21 fire 33:6 58:23 first 1:5 5:12 16:5 21:24 24:10 25:9,22 26:10 40:10 54:4 83:25 85:20,20 88:17 88:21 89:3 91:19 93:3 fiscal 15:22 16:3 19:18 63:9 fit 72:11 fits 26:15 five 4:10 16:6 17:1,20,22 35:21 48:9,9 61:2 72:13 79:7 85:11 88:2 91:7,13 fixing 41:8 flag 80:15 fleet 79:1 80:20 flew 85:23 float 96:13 floor 1:5 73:13 95:24 flowing 27:13 focus 46:2 71:25 75:20 78:8,18,24 91:23 focused 25:9 47:10 92:5</p>	<p>focuses 92:1 folks 39:17 48:4,19,24 51:3 52:22,22 65:24 66:3 95:3 followed 73:21 following 61:14 foot 86:7,8,21 86:21 footprint 13:14 force 13:19 26:8,12 29:10 33:17,22 38:2 38:5,20 39:2 39:20 40:6,13 40:24 41:13 49:10 51:4 56:8,21 69:11 69:15 74:24 75:2,21 78:9 92:22 forced 56:23 forces 33:24 70:19,21 forefront 37:24 foregoing 99:6 forget 39:3 forgive 5:13 form 73:2 format 99:14 former 89:11 formerly 11:3 30:15</p>	<p>fort 11:2,3 30:15,16 33:13 34:6,23 46:5 48:10 49:25 77:5,14,15 84:25 90:9 fortunate 12:16 69:1 forward 10:22 70:25 79:14,18 84:2 97:10 forwards 68:10 found 92:5 foundation 13:7 56:8 four 26:23 29:13 65:19 71:14 73:21 77:16 88:2 frame 13:15 frankly 44:8 free 42:2 friday 17:15 31:8 64:16 front 46:11 fruition 90:16 full 20:2 27:9 36:7 92:13 function 35:2 fund 9:25 10:2 19:7,10 21:5 60:17 funded 77:6,12 funding 60:1,9 64:5 72:20</p>	<p>76:21 77:24 80:4 84:20 90:8,13 92:17 93:20 funds 90:15 further 86:10 93:8 future 14:7 37:16 66:2 72:11 84:3 fy'22 72:10 76:2 fy'24 72:9 fy'25 72:9 78:15,19</p>
			g
			<p>g 4:1 gallot 32:18 gals 34:25 gaps 50:24 gary 3:11 6:25 61:16 68:8 78:20 79:16 gate 46:11 gatti 6:3 geaux 84:7 gebara 82:4 general 3:6,14 5:24,25 6:22 7:20,21 12:22 13:3 23:9,14 23:19 24:2,14 24:18,22,24 25:21 38:21,23 39:23 40:18,23</p>

[general - great]

<p>40:23 41:4 49:9,12,16 50:5 51:9,16 51:25 52:6,15 52:24,25 53:4 53:8,13,22 54:5,14,19 55:5,9,14,19,23 55:24,25 56:10 56:11,12 57:12 57:15,17,18,22 57:24 58:8,10 58:13,14,16,18 58:21 59:2,6,9 59:11,13,20,22 59:24 60:4,7 60:13,15,19 61:6,8,14,23 66:12 67:9,17 68:2 69:12 70:7 74:24 78:21 80:1,16 82:2,3,4,7,11 82:19 83:5,9 84:4 89:23 90:4 92:11 94:3 95:5,16 general's 62:13 generals 60:8 generation 76:15 generator 31:20 generators 31:18</p>	<p>gentlemen 49:4 71:5 germany 59:16 59:18 getting 30:1 44:20 48:3 60:2 61:2 63:4 75:4 80:22 94:20 gi 19:1,3 gillis 47:22 give 4:16 23:25 36:13 43:10 50:10 52:16 65:23 89:10 giving 71:22 glad 90:3 global 13:9 69:11,16,21,23 93:6 go 4:9,11 5:10 14:23,25 26:14 28:1,4,17 33:13 34:9 37:19 38:11 41:2,17 44:1,3 46:9,25 52:11 57:8,9 58:6,15 61:1 67:20 70:18 80:7 82:22 84:9 87:7 93:2 goal 28:18 29:23</p>	<p>goes 20:1 21:15 26:18 35:7 68:18 69:13 gohsep 31:13 going 4:14,18 10:20 17:14 23:4 27:5 28:19 29:19 30:3 32:24 34:11 37:10 41:4 43:13 45:7 47:4,12 48:7 51:5 52:22 53:18 56:5 57:6,21 58:20 60:14 62:6 66:16 68:21,24 69:2 69:12,21 72:15 72:18 75:10 76:18 77:10,11 77:13 80:14 92:19,24 gold 22:15,17 22:20 89:6 golden 68:22 good 4:3,5 21:1 23:23 24:23 27:7 28:2 45:17 46:6 50:11 68:8 69:9 70:6,14 71:4 79:6 93:9 93:15 94:16 99:3</p>	<p>goode 71:7 google 13:25 gotten 29:20 34:23 76:13 77:1 government 72:16 governor 9:17 9:20 11:7,14 23:6 45:12 46:23 governor's 24:19 84:22 graders 48:1 graduate 18:16 gambling 32:5 32:16 grandfather's 22:25 grandson 22:24 grant 18:14 32:5,21 77:22 78:5 85:9 86:24 graphs 28:10 gras 11:11 grateful 24:11 24:12 44:16 71:9 great 4:14,17 11:6 12:21 13:2,9,11,13 22:21 32:7 34:4 36:8 48:19 52:20</p>
--	---	---	--

[great - highest]

<p>59:17 70:9,23 80:18 89:19 95:15 green 28:11 griffin 1:5 ground 17:16 31:18 56:4 group 3:18 45:11,15 62:3 62:24 65:12 68:15 69:8 70:23 78:17 94:1 96:17 grow 31:6 growing 13:13 58:11 75:22 growth 72:12 grubbed 32:17 grumman 11:16,24 guard 24:15,25 25:4,22 26:5 26:19 27:3,19 28:7,15,24 29:7 30:7 32:2 33:23 37:11 38:22,24 39:14 40:17 41:20 42:20 43:21 44:6 45:24 46:19 50:14,25 56:8 60:16,18 62:2,15 63:14 63:18 64:7,20 64:21,22</p>	<p>guards 29:16 guardsman 42:3 44:8,10 44:23 guess 9:16 11:10 36:12 53:14 56:17 57:5 59:4,15 60:9 guidance 49:5 guide 21:13 guidelines 99:14 gun 91:22 guy 3:3 15:3,5 15:7 23:12,17 23:21 24:4 guys 34:25 65:21</p>	<p>h</p> <p>hac 76:17 77:7 haiti 47:11 haitians 47:8 half 21:5 85:9 handgun 91:24 handling 92:15 handwritten 100:2 hang 27:16 46:14 hannan 85:23 happen 37:21 41:22 62:12,17 64:4 66:22 80:14</p>	<p>happened 38:5 39:12 92:14 happening 9:6 12:6,16 43:23 happens 27:18 happy 29:20 62:5 66:8 70:11 79:24 91:18 94:24 hard 17:24 18:1 19:12 28:25 40:20 harris 35:18,21 36:7 hasc 77:5,8,11 hat 69:18 hawaii 34:8 hazard 50:16 hazards 25:6 hb472 91:6 he'll 9:17 headquartered 64:22 headquarters 35:25 headway 45:18 healing 20:21 health 10:11 26:18 healthcare 41:19 42:5 hear 14:15 79:17 heard 58:25 96:20</p>	<p>hearing 8:11 95:23 96:1 heart 20:25 22:12 46:20 47:1 held 1:3 21:24 22:18 80:7 82:3 helicopter 30:21 help 15:19 19:11 20:5,19 21:1 31:13 45:6 50:17 65:23 68:15 94:24 helpful 9:4 helping 42:1 96:17 heritage 22:6 heroes 48:18 hesitate 21:2 61:21 hey 34:17 35:22 39:24 50:20 hiatus 66:5 high 13:18 30:14 58:7 86:22,23 87:3 87:11,18 88:2 higher 10:8,15 19:6 highest 75:10</p>
---	--	--	--	---

[highlight - initiative]

<p>highlight 9:11 43:19 84:13 85:1 86:18 88:24 89:17 highlighted 32:14 42:22 highlights 74:19 75:6,25 highway 29:9 90:9 hilferty 90:19 hispanic 55:2 history 10:14 22:8 hit 18:1 88:22 hokanson 38:22 60:13 hold 22:14 61:3 80:15 holiday 33:8 holy 18:23 home 19:11 homes 17:20,21 17:23 18:1,6 honestly 41:22 honor 11:4 14:10,13 22:7 94:9 honorably 19:14 hood 30:16 hoops 48:8 hopeful 62:9 hopefully 26:24 42:4 64:4 66:1</p>	<p>73:22 79:23 hoping 62:4 horizontal 32:20,23,25 33:7 hospital 82:23 82:23 host 14:9 69:21 hosted 12:17 hot 21:16 79:19 hotel 94:19 hotels 65:25 house 43:19 44:14 63:7 71:16 73:13,19 73:25 74:9,17 75:1 91:20 housing 37:3,7 howitzer 12:10 howze 35:8 huge 29:1 33:9 33:25 43:1,14 62:1,11 75:24 huh 53:12 54:13 58:9 67:1 hundred 37:9 hurricane 20:6 50:10,11,15 hyde 74:12 hypersonic 68:20</p>	<p>i ida 20:6 50:10 50:15 ida's 50:11 idea 63:20 94:16 ideas 36:8 80:14 identified 40:16 56:13 97:8 identify 45:25 78:11 ii 22:25 32:16 32:21 94:11,17 iii 3:8 image 100:3 imagine 63:18 immediately 91:12 impact 50:3,3 impacts 81:6,8 81:9 implications 93:5 important 4:12 10:6 12:1,4 28:4 impression 81:12 improvements 17:11 incidents 35:2 include 63:8 70:20</p>	<p>included 77:7 including 65:3 65:5 71:24 income 37:3 increase 17:24 75:8 76:1 increasing 75:20 index 26:18 indicate 39:1 indirect 76:3 indiscernible 95:9 individual 31:3 individuals 27:25 33:22 infantry 33:14 38:9,10 39:9 50:11 58:5,5 influence 80:3 information 21:18 55:15 57:19 85:7 91:15 informed 97:1 infrastructure 10:5 69:6 77:17 84:18 90:8 initial 48:13 initiated 90:14 initiative 16:5 24:10 72:2 77:18 88:10,17 88:21 89:4</p>
--	--	--	--

[initiatives - kids]

<p>initiatives 72:19 89:18</p> <p>innovative 31:24</p> <p>inside 37:1 86:15,20 87:4</p> <p>installation 9:8 46:1,9 84:25</p> <p>installations 35:14 45:20 46:20,24,25</p> <p>institutions 19:3</p> <p>insurance 20:9 44:18,25</p> <p>integrated 62:23</p> <p>intent 78:25</p> <p>interest 11:23 12:7 14:4 47:15 90:5 93:10,25 94:15 94:21</p> <p>interested 21:11,14 63:16 99:21</p> <p>interesting 91:16 93:5</p> <p>interface 9:5 11:15</p> <p>interfacing 70:24</p> <p>internal 66:20</p> <p>international 66:3</p>	<p>interred 16:10 16:13,16,19,24 17:1</p> <p>interrupt 61:21</p> <p>intersect 28:5</p> <p>intersects 12:4</p> <p>intimately 71:18</p> <p>introduced 64:2</p> <p>intrusion 31:9</p> <p>invest 72:17</p> <p>investment 10:16 42:24 75:13,16</p> <p>invitation 77:23</p> <p>invite 89:25</p> <p>involved 13:12 35:3</p> <p>involves 47:25</p> <p>irt 33:9</p> <p>issue 35:12 57:11 74:24 77:12 81:24 82:20</p> <p>issued 91:8</p> <p>issues 74:18</p> <p>item 8:5 14:23 85:20</p> <p>items 27:2 45:18</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">j</p> <p>j 3:6</p> <p>jack 35:18</p> <p>jacking 43:24</p> <p>jade 25:23</p> <p>jakes 3:7 6:6,7 8:13 84:6</p> <p>jay 35:19</p> <p>jealous 45:14</p> <p>jennings 16:22</p> <p>jensen 25:21 38:23</p> <p>jersey 33:15 41:23</p> <p>jinx 68:21</p> <p>job 9:8 22:1,2,3 28:2 43:3 47:23 56:25 59:17</p> <p>jobs 80:25</p> <p>joel 3:15 7:24</p> <p>joey 3:4 7:12 15:10</p> <p>john 3:8 6:10</p> <p>johnson 11:3 33:13 34:6 46:6 76:23 77:5,14,15 90:9</p> <p>johnson's 48:11</p> <p>join 4:7 39:13</p> <p>joined 39:15,16 46:21</p>	<p>joint 12:24 52:2 83:17</p> <p>jonesboro 35:16,17</p> <p>jr 3:2,16</p> <p>jrte 34:13 56:6</p> <p>july 13:5,17 22:5 30:17 32:11 33:8 73:21</p> <p>jump 48:7 70:19 75:24 84:10</p> <p>june 1:3 11:5 15:22 46:22</p> <p>junior 86:22 87:3,11</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">k</p> <p>k 10:9</p> <p>keep 30:3 37:23 40:3 42:6,7,14 45:5 56:23 96:16 97:1</p> <p>keith 3:14 7:20 24:24 50:21</p> <p>keithville 16:16 17:8</p> <p>kelly 1:12 3:23 41:24 99:2 100:7</p> <p>kept 56:15</p> <p>key 72:2 77:21</p> <p>kick 37:18</p> <p>kids 53:17,19</p>
--	---	--	---

[kim - little]

<p>kim 41:23 kind 20:12 26:11,22 27:11 28:10,12 30:6 36:5 37:8 44:7 74:6 76:17 79:20 90:21 kindly 4:20 knew 39:17 knoll 25:14,17 know 4:11 5:8 13:11 14:4 25:2 31:13 35:9 36:15 38:10 40:3,22 41:3 43:10,15 43:25 45:9 50:19,24 51:4 51:22 53:3,9 53:15,23 54:6 54:8 56:2,11 56:15 57:6 59:16 60:22 62:3,12 65:8 68:25 70:10 74:17 76:4 79:1,19 80:24 81:23 84:11 88:7 94:16 95:7,9,12 96:7 known 30:15 71:8 korean 12:11 kuwait 27:9 30:18 65:17</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">I</p> <p>I 3:12 laborious 83:19 ladies 49:4 71:5 lafa 77:14 lafayette 33:16 33:19 37:17 lake 11:25 12:2 36:13 land 39:19 landscape 72:3 langley 59:3,5 language 93:19 large 11:18,21 13:18 32:17 larger 86:10 largest 55:1 64:21 lasalle 1:4 late 35:5 lately 47:9 latest 16:21 launch 11:17 88:23 launched 83:22 lavetcorps 18:7 18:9,13 law 9:18 90:21 lazy 68:14 leaders 18:11 18:16 48:14,14 leadership 69:13 78:16 84:21 85:23</p>	<p>league 94:23 lean 94:16 learning 85:11 85:15 86:14 87:5,9,12,17 leave 58:5 66:9 66:10 81:20 leaving 54:6,7 led 10:15 14:5 84:20 86:24 88:21 led's 16:5 leesville 16:10 17:6 77:18 86:22,23 87:3 87:11 left 28:11,17 30:14 32:14 35:3 52:8 86:9 96:9 legacy 56:14,15 legal 25:8 legislation 63:25 90:6 legislative 9:14 10:25 37:25 41:17 42:21 72:3 90:1 legislators 37:12 legislature 36:2 96:25 letter 82:21 84:24</p>	<p>letters 46:12,14 level 13:23 72:8 levels 72:10 75:10 liaison 71:16 85:24 licensing 90:23 licensure 91:2 lieutenant 3:4 25:21 40:18 life 18:17 78:11 85:17 likely 73:14 76:19 limit 72:8 line 9:9 28:10 28:12 38:20 42:2 61:1,4 67:18 lined 67:21 link 3:18 69:7 70:10,20,22 71:6 79:5 84:9 84:13 93:18 link's 68:24 list 5:4,6 31:5 41:21 listening 57:17 little 5:11 28:18 28:19 31:23 35:20 42:10 47:8 52:8 65:7 65:22,23 66:20 67:13 71:25 72:24 73:9</p>
--	---	--	--

[little - maneuver]

<p>74:25 86:10 live 18:17 llc 1:16 lmac 3:17 4:8 5:5 96:3 97:2 loans 19:12 local 48:14 84:15 located 16:6 17:21 location 94:8 97:8 locations 31:12 lockheed 11:16 11:19 loh 40:18,23 41:4 56:12 57:18 58:13 long 26:12 27:13,15 31:14 33:3 47:22 74:7 92:12 longer 46:1 longevity 42:24 look 5:6 13:24 26:5 28:10 34:18 54:22 70:25 79:18 84:2 97:9 looked 58:1 looking 18:18 26:10 48:5 58:22 68:18 70:4 74:19,20 77:3 78:14</p>	<p>79:14 lose 42:13 57:7 57:21 losing 39:17 loss 38:19 lost 20:23 32:6 33:3 38:15 39:12 lot 4:13 11:24 12:6 13:10 14:2,15 23:4 27:6,9 31:17 32:20 34:13,16 36:7 38:25 39:13,17 42:15 43:24 44:9 45:13,15,16 51:3 53:19 54:21 60:10,10 75:6 76:10 80:19,21 louisiana 1:2,7 1:16,18 10:14 10:21 12:8 13:14 15:8,15 15:17,24 16:9 16:12,15,18,23 18:20,22 19:13 19:20 22:9,12 22:18 24:25 25:3,19 26:5,9 26:13,15,20 27:2,19 28:7 28:14,24 29:7 29:14 31:16</p>	<p>32:2 37:10 39:2,7 40:5,22 41:2,9 42:16 42:24 43:5,20 44:6,8,10,19 45:6,17,23 46:18 48:7 49:20 51:1 55:1 62:24 63:1 65:5,11 70:19,21 72:21 75:14 76:3,5 89:3 91:2 93:21 95:8 99:4,17 louisiana's 19:5 louisianans 89:10 love 33:10 low 37:3 lsu 13:17,25 44:1,3 luneau 35:19 lutton 82:12,14</p>	<p>maintain 25:11 maintenance 27:8 62:16 major 6:22 7:20,21 24:18 39:23 49:12,16 50:5 51:9,16 51:25 52:6,15 52:25 53:4,8 53:13,22 54:5 54:14,19 55:5 55:9,14,19,23 56:10 57:15,24 58:10,18 59:2 59:9,13,22 60:4,19 61:8 65:2 90:4 95:5 95:16 make 5:9 21:12 21:14,18 24:1 24:21 47:6 48:25 56:7 60:24 69:3 89:14,25 91:18 makes 67:12 making 32:7 37:14 41:16 45:17 49:22 96:18 management 47:10 62:23 managers 28:2 maneuver 38:13 39:15</p>
		m	
		<p>m 3:2,16 machine 99:8 machines 66:2 made 9:11 21:4 35:7 41:7 42:8 45:23 58:14 89:17,20 mail 1:20 main 46:11 66:7 90:10</p>	

[manion - mispronunciations]

<p>manion 3:8 6:10,11 manner 63:22 manship 23:1 manufactures 11:20 manufacturing 12:13,19 63:16 march 25:13,20 66:6 67:25 68:3 85:21 86:17 88:22 mardi 11:11 marin 34:1 marine 65:9 83:16 maritime 62:25 63:5,11 mark 88:22 market 28:22 29:14 marketing 25:23 88:23 markets 36:5 markup 73:19 73:20 married 67:20 martin 11:16 11:19 maryland 93:23 massachusetts 62:7 matt 62:22</p>	<p>matter 31:19 45:4 52:9 60:22 mayor 5:15,18 35:17,21 36:7 mays 25:23 mccain 33:2 mcfarland 35:18 meade 34:23 mean 23:23 34:18 54:2,16 54:20 56:7 57:16,19 83:15 measure 62:14 medal 11:4 14:9,12 94:8 median 37:3 medical 13:8 76:24 78:6 meet 11:10 47:14 meeting 4:8,9 8:6,8,9,25 10:23 14:19 52:9 60:12 65:15 66:10 78:18 95:6,10 97:2 98:3 99:5 meetings 4:19 member 43:20 44:5,19 45:5 65:9 73:25 91:9,9</p>	<p>members 5:5 18:4 22:7 24:23 29:1 41:20 50:14,25 71:5 85:17 89:11 memorial 22:10,13,19 men 43:16 mention 66:11 88:16 mentioned 24:9 42:23 80:2 84:14 88:16 mentioning 93:18 menu 96:16,18 mess 82:15 messaging 86:25 met 22:1 52:7 85:24 88:18 metrics 26:20 62:14 miami 55:3 michoud 11:19 11:20 mid 77:22 middle 75:19 87:14,17 miguez 91:20 mike 3:10 7:8 40:18 89:24 milcon 42:11 70:9 76:3,9,17</p>	<p>77:2,7 mile 33:3 milestone 88:19 89:7 military 1:2 9:8 11:25 18:17 19:6 36:11 51:15 61:16 65:9 75:11 81:15 82:23 83:22 85:17,18 89:6 90:7 91:1 91:8 92:6 96:22 million 9:23,25 10:1,2,4,7,8,9 10:10 16:2 17:6,7,7,8 19:5 21:5 37:9 63:6 76:7,16,25 77:19 78:5 85:9 90:14 96:11 mincey 91:6 mind 4:21 57:13 81:11,12 96:14 minden 12:7 47:21 minister 34:1,1 minute 42:10 minutes 8:6,8 66:9 71:21 mispronuncia... 5:14</p>
--	--	--	--

[mission - negotiation]

<p>mission 23:7 31:22 56:3,4,6 58:23 missioning 56:16 missions 39:11 49:21 mississippi 31:10 41:24 53:24 mitigated 36:22 mitigation 30:2 mobile 38:6,15 mobilizations 30:9 modern 12:19 modernization 60:18,20,25 61:4 75:13 modernizing 78:25 modules 91:21 92:1 moment 14:17 24:16 31:23 38:1 71:1 89:24 momentum 40:8 money 21:6 36:3 37:21 60:2 74:23 75:22 76:10 92:23</p>	<p>monitor 9:16 monroe 32:9 month 16:14,17 16:19,25 17:3 59:4,4 month's 32:5 months 16:11 28:17 29:25 30:19 77:16 monument 22:6,9,19 moral 25:8 mothers 22:16 motion 8:12 motions 97:15 move 5:12 8:5 57:23 80:23 84:12 89:22 95:22 97:17 moved 8:14 17:17 90:12 movement 30:18 moving 73:18 mps 39:25 multipurpose 77:4 municipality 36:9 murray 3:13 7:16 68:9,10 70:18 71:24 76:12 78:3 museum 94:11 94:18</p>	<p>mustin 3:18 71:3,6 79:9,13 80:9,17 82:5 82:13,16 83:3 83:7,12</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">n</p> <hr/> <p>n 2:1 4:1 name 64:13 76:22 95:13 named 11:3 25:14 nation 25:15 26:21 nation's 14:11 22:8 national 24:25 25:3,20,22 26:5,19 27:3 27:19 28:7,15 28:24 29:7 32:2 34:2 37:11 38:22,24 39:14 40:20 41:20 42:3,20 43:21 44:6 45:24 46:18 49:21 50:14 60:16,17 62:2 62:15 72:4 93:13 nature 96:9 navigators 18:10 navy 71:13 74:21,21,22</p>	<p>75:20 76:7 80:19,24 94:23 navy's 78:24 nc3 92:15 93:12 nco 25:15,23 ncr 93:24 ndaa 40:20 71:20 72:23,25 72:25 73:7,18 74:2,3,16 nearly 17:1 18:4 19:19 28:22 nebraska 93:19 93:21 necessarily 81:13 need 11:9 19:7 19:10,10,19,23 20:8 21:7,22 24:16 35:10 38:10,13 39:18 40:6 41:5 42:15 50:22 51:1 57:8 60:6 63:8,12 69:4 73:11 92:2 94:25 needs 39:3 70:3 78:19 79:18 negative 49:19 50:3,6 negotiation 72:8</p>
--	--	---	--

[negotiations - opportunity]

<p>negotiations 73:8 neighbors 29:11 net 38:19 network 93:11 never 23:4 59:25 77:1 new 14:8 21:16 22:6,12 33:15 41:23 46:14 61:3 64:6,17 64:22 65:11 73:16 76:22 84:1 87:25 89:7,23 94:12 94:24 news 23:2 70:14 nextdoor 29:11 ngr 59:25 60:2 60:9 nice 12:4 65:23 94:19 nicely 67:18 niches 17:10 nine 30:19 nodes 93:12 nominations 83:15 nonbinding 72:10 norfolk 80:21 normal 74:17</p>	<p>north 1:6 31:16 northeast 16:12 northrop 11:16 11:24 northwest 13:14 16:15 18:20 31:21 northwestern 18:21 note 11:23 13:4 13:15 14:7 notes 24:21 59:1 notification 31:3 november 14:8 69:19,22 94:13 nuclear 13:21 39:8 75:12 92:16 number 4:12 9:6,10 11:12 11:18 13:18,20 14:12 25:16 26:17,21 27:25 28:1,1 41:21 62:10 85:5 91:17 95:13 numbers 16:8 17:23 18:3 26:11 27:12,16 29:6,16 39:1 54:11 58:2,11 74:20</p>	<p>nursing 91:4</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">o</p> <hr/> <p>o 4:1 99:1 objectives 25:3 observer 34:9 obstacles 38:12 obtaining 78:5 obviously 62:4 92:2 occasions 91:18 occupational 90:23 91:5 occur 93:4 october 14:8 94:13 office 84:15,22 85:24 officer 54:23 71:12 80:16 85:24 99:4 officers 82:2 officials 11:13 13:19,20 41:25 offline 52:17 55:11 56:19 60:7 66:14 67:10 oh 59:7 64:12 67:16 okay 8:3,11 24:3,19 44:20 51:8 52:5 54:18 57:20 58:17 61:9,11 64:12 67:16</p>	<p>95:23 96:1 old 42:16 62:8 oldcc 85:10,22 omb 63:8 once 26:10 36:21 46:14 66:16 73:4 81:7 83:20 88:21 97:7 ones 9:17 71:24 online 21:12 23:11,16 57:9 91:22 onward 30:18 open 29:8 60:21 95:24 opened 16:21 operate 18:7 operation 12:13 31:14 operations 13:12 25:6 30:24 33:24 34:20 35:24 38:14 opinions 99:19 opportunities 12:20 13:3 78:12 opportunity 4:17 9:5 15:13 20:18 33:13 34:3 71:10 79:16 83:24 87:7 89:10</p>
--	--	---	---

[opportunity - phone]

<p>96:22 opposed 81:13 opposing 33:17 optimistic 41:10 72:18 options 78:11 order 4:9 5:11 62:20 71:7 organization 48:17,18,23 49:1 organizational 29:23 orion 11:20 orleans 14:9 64:23 84:1 94:12,24 osd 92:20,23 93:1 outcome 99:22 outdated 78:23 outdoor 85:14 86:14 87:5,12 87:17 outfitted 85:15 86:8 outlook 72:6 outreach 21:23 outside 87:8 93:13,17 overall 9:21 16:25 17:2 overview 14:24 own 65:10</p>	<p>owned 89:5,8</p> <hr/> <p>p</p> <hr/> <p>p 3:7 4:1 99:1 p5 90:15 package 45:2 86:9 packages 23:10 23:15 85:16 packet 5:2,3 24:20 page 2:2 70:4 100:4 pages 99:6 paid 38:25,25 43:14 83:1 painful 83:19 paint 81:8 painted 74:5 palletized 31:12 pandemic 17:25 parents 87:1 paris 11:8,14 parish 31:8,20 32:6,21 84:23 85:12,25 96:12 park 22:10,13 22:19 parking 47:3 parks 10:7 part 9:16 33:25 35:19 44:21 45:2 53:9 70:21 86:24</p>	<p>participated 33:23 participating 89:8 99:20 particular 33:5 57:10 62:20 particularly 9:7 61:24 partner 33:21 43:11 partners 47:7 47:17 86:1 partnership 24:12 43:6 78:9,18 84:21 88:12 parts 27:13,15 63:17,19 pass 24:20 73:1 73:4 97:8 passed 44:23 73:1,12,23,24 75:5 76:16 past 4:10 31:8 73:15 pat 3:19 patriotic 14:12 pax 33:17 pay 9:24 75:10 81:15 82:22 83:2 paying 81:19 81:20 83:10,11 payments 16:2 19:1,4,11</p>	<p>pcs 80:23 peers 27:24 pension 15:21 pentagon 71:15 74:10 81:5 people 10:13 11:9,12 29:13 38:17 50:8,25 58:4 80:23 83:18 percent 26:6 27:4,7 28:22 29:19,22,22 30:6 44:17,24 58:2,12 75:9 85:4 86:2,3,16 performances 62:18 performed 82:25 period 65:18 periods 65:20 perrin 1:12 3:23 99:2 100:7 person 15:16 20:1 99:20 personal 99:10 personnel 12:23 26:3,20 pete 95:7,7 pete's 95:13 phase 32:16,21 phone 1:19</p>
--	--	--	---

[photo - procedure]

<p>photo 87:14 physical 91:4 pickering 87:18,22 88:2 picture 74:5 81:8 piece 58:15 88:15 pieces 12:4,5 pierson 3:2 6:14,15 9:1,2 24:22 46:5 94:10 95:2 96:4,5 97:5 pilot 84:19 pilots 65:20,21 pineville 36:24 37:4 45:24 46:3,10 47:21 pioneered 76:23 pistol 32:22 place 11:5 12:14 25:13 29:5 31:17 45:10 46:4 54:4 93:3 placed 10:1 17:18 placement 22:3 places 60:2 placing 17:16 plan 50:16,16 72:11</p>	<p>planning 22:21 78:14 95:11 plant 12:9 plants 40:5 plaquemines 31:8 platforms 74:21 platoon 40:1,10 please 5:8,13 8:20 14:4 20:3 21:2 61:21 97:23 pleased 62:21 pleasure 4:7 pledge 4:20,22 4:23 5:12 plus 59:16 80:6 point 21:5 25:9 28:21 57:14 59:12 63:2 75:7 80:22 81:18 points 28:5 57:19 police 35:24,25 91:25 police's 91:22 policy 74:10,24 83:2 politics 81:23 polk 11:3 49:25 84:25 90:9 popping 26:22</p>	<p>population 55:1 position 41:3 56:18 57:17 68:17 81:10 positions 38:12 74:18 positive 30:2 possible 34:19 73:11 90:25 post 11:6 17:25 potential 51:20 51:21 78:12 powder 12:13 precision 17:18 prefer 68:12 preferential 47:3 prepared 99:13 preparedness 50:4 preplaced 17:9 present 4:4 6:16 7:6 14:15 45:3 74:13 presentation 25:10 40:19 49:8 51:13 56:18 61:24 62:13 79:22 presents 73:16 president 32:18 94:23 president's 72:4</p>	<p>press 21:17 89:1 pressure 63:10 81:3,11 83:21 prestigious 14:11 pretty 4:14 39:4 54:16 63:4,22 88:8 prevent 75:4 prevention 22:15 previous 8:5 primarily 21:4 90:10 principal 64:2 printing 63:17 63:21 prior 8:7,9 priorities 37:25 41:12,17 priority 10:3 90:13 privilege 71:6 probably 21:19 37:5,5 42:1 45:21 56:14 57:8,20 60:6 68:18 70:5 79:5 81:2,10 94:16 problem 92:22 procedure 81:17,17 83:10 83:14 99:18</p>
---	---	--	---

[procedures - reached]

<p>procedures 82:24</p> <p>proceed 14:23</p> <p>process 17:11 17:15</p> <p>processes 71:18</p> <p>produce 63:17</p> <p>production 25:15 28:21</p> <p>productions 65:13</p> <p>products 17:5</p> <p>profiling 33:5</p> <p>program 11:18 18:7,9,13,14 19:8,21 20:4 20:13,15,17 21:3,23 43:6 47:19,23,25 48:6 77:17 84:18,19 89:9 96:15</p> <p>programmed 92:20</p> <p>programs 21:16 43:2,4 47:18 48:20</p> <p>progress 32:7 85:1 86:18 88:9 89:17,20</p> <p>prohibition 99:16</p> <p>project 17:8 33:7 36:14 72:19 77:19</p>	<p>84:14 85:3 86:18 90:14,16</p> <p>projections 30:25</p> <p>projects 10:4,5 32:12,15 33:9 37:14,19,23 76:21 78:13</p> <p>promising 77:4 77:9</p> <p>promote 81:2 89:4</p> <p>promotion 94:14</p> <p>promotions 80:16</p> <p>property 90:19</p> <p>protection 10:8</p> <p>prototyping 93:16</p> <p>proud 19:8 26:1 59:18 61:24 96:6,11</p> <p>proven 43:9</p> <p>provided 9:24 20:20,23 85:7</p> <p>provides 19:9 89:9</p> <p>provision 75:2</p> <p>public 95:25</p> <p>pull 24:16 56:9 71:1</p> <p>purchased 90:11</p>	<p>purple 22:12 46:20 47:1</p> <p>purpose 35:23 79:6</p> <p>pursue 96:10</p> <p>pursued 22:1</p> <p>push 77:15 92:25</p> <p>pushed 31:17 40:19 76:23</p> <p>pushing 56:17 63:11</p> <p>put 32:11,25 35:10 38:12 50:25 53:19 54:7 93:1,19</p> <p>putting 12:9 51:6</p>	<p>28:8 49:5 55:20 61:20 66:8 70:12 79:24 95:24</p> <p>quick 71:11 89:1 94:6</p> <p>quickly 19:22 20:7 21:8 84:12 88:8</p> <p>quite 44:8 62:3</p> <p>quorum 8:4</p>
		q	r
		<p>qualified 27:24 28:6</p> <p>qualify 44:24</p> <p>qualitative 63:16</p> <p>quality 49:1 78:10 85:16</p> <p>quantities 63:22</p> <p>quarterly 52:7</p> <p>question 36:20 49:9 59:21 66:13 80:12,18 94:6</p> <p>questions 8:7 14:19 23:8</p>	<p>r 3:15 4:1 99:1 99:1,1,1</p> <p>radar 42:14</p> <p>radiological 39:8</p> <p>rainy 10:2</p> <p>raise 75:11</p> <p>randolph 3:9 6:18,19</p> <p>range 32:22</p> <p>ranked 26:17</p> <p>ranking 13:18</p> <p>rather 21:8 56:23</p> <p>raving 34:4</p> <p>raymond 5:21</p> <p>rayville 16:13 17:6</p> <p>reach 29:23,25 34:16 53:19 54:8 95:17</p> <p>reached 88:18 89:7</p>

[read - rep]

<p>read 81:4</p> <p>readiness 25:5 25:12 26:3 27:1,22 31:24 35:15,16 36:6 36:13,24 37:17 81:5,8,9,21,24 82:1 83:20,22</p> <p>readjusting 27:11</p> <p>ready 27:19 35:9 36:25 46:16 48:3 50:21 87:24 88:3</p> <p>real 47:16 59:18</p> <p>realignment 38:4</p> <p>reality 37:15</p> <p>really 5:10 13:23 14:11 17:19 25:9 26:9 27:7,25 28:25,25 29:15 29:20 35:4 40:19 41:13 42:16 43:12 46:17 47:9 48:2,25 50:9 51:3,4 57:16 62:1,14,17,19 63:13 68:17,17 69:17 79:7 81:22 85:16</p>	<p>90:25 91:22 93:14 96:11</p> <p>rear 3:15 7:24 7:25 64:7,9,14 64:16 65:1 66:23 67:2,6 80:11 94:5,22 95:14,19</p> <p>reason 32:13 49:23 92:20</p> <p>reasons 66:6</p> <p>rebuilding 17:25</p> <p>recap 42:7</p> <p>recapping 90:1</p> <p>receive 19:3 77:22</p> <p>received 20:12 84:24</p> <p>recension 29:5</p> <p>recent 9:12 65:8,15 72:8</p> <p>recently 19:4 29:8 71:15 74:1 76:14 81:4</p> <p>recipient 11:4</p> <p>recipients 14:13 47:2</p> <p>reciting 4:22</p> <p>recognition 22:16,17</p> <p>recognize 91:12</p>	<p>recognizing 46:18</p> <p>recovered 31:19</p> <p>recovering 18:2</p> <p>recruit 45:3 58:4</p> <p>recruiter 25:13 28:21 55:2</p> <p>recruiters 28:25</p> <p>recruiting 28:9 55:4</p> <p>red 58:23 59:8</p> <p>redeployed 25:6</p> <p>redesignation 11:2 45:22 46:7</p> <p>reduction 35:15 44:18,24 50:7</p> <p>reengage 57:10</p> <p>reese 3:10 7:8,9 9:13 10:24 24:22 43:16 49:7,14,18 50:7 51:7 70:13 89:24 90:2</p> <p>referenced 72:7 84:14</p> <p>referral 22:3</p>	<p>reflect 18:3</p> <p>reform 42:18</p> <p>region 12:3 93:14</p> <p>regional 86:1</p> <p>regionalized 58:1</p> <p>register 14:1</p> <p>relate 9:7</p> <p>related 49:10 93:12 99:20</p> <p>relationship 12:22</p> <p>relationships 99:17</p> <p>relative 10:25</p> <p>relay 89:1,16</p> <p>release 89:2</p> <p>reliable 76:11</p> <p>remain 24:11 24:12</p> <p>remanufactur... 63:20</p> <p>remarks 9:1 10:24 96:4</p> <p>remember 55:2</p> <p>remission 40:16</p> <p>remote 35:6</p> <p>renegotiated 72:14</p> <p>renovation 37:8</p> <p>rep 76:23</p>
---	---	--	---

[repaint - roosevelt]

<p>repaint 46:15 replace 78:23 replacement 64:12 78:22 replacing 62:7 report 4:13 14:17 23:8 24:15 49:5 51:23 66:8 70:22 84:11,13 92:13 reportable 27:2 reported 1:12 3:22 34:22 65:16 99:7 reporter 3:23 99:3 reporter's 2:6 reporters 1:16 reporting 15:3 reports 4:16 9:10 10:5 14:24 89:22 represent 46:19 representative 5:21 35:18 63:24 91:19 representatives 69:15 represented 14:6 25:19 representing 3:4 15:10</p>	<p>request 63:8 72:4 77:8 requests 34:13 71:20 93:20 require 72:15 required 99:15 requirements 33:1 requires 63:5 91:7 rerack 37:22 60:14 research 13:7 reserve 10:22 42:20 60:16 89:6 reserved 60:17 reserves 29:10 reservist 80:20 reshaping 33:5 resident 19:13 resolution 73:15 resource 23:24 62:23 resources 22:3 respond 19:22 20:7 27:20 49:20 response 5:16 5:19,22 6:4,23 39:8 50:4 responses 31:7 responsibilities 39:11</p>	<p>responsible 93:7 restrictions 47:12 restructured 38:6 result 28:6 resulting 16:1 retention 29:18 45:2 retired 64:10 64:16 retirement 9:25 10:1 retirements 74:21 retroactive 16:2 revel 71:23 reviews 19:16 revisions 5:7 8:7 revolve 25:4 ribbon 13:6 29:12 36:18,23 richard 6:22 64:8,16 rick 5:15 rifle 32:22 right 4:3 9:23 10:19,20 15:6 23:18 24:21 27:1,4,9,15,23 28:13 29:4,9 29:11 32:13</p>	<p>33:18 36:12 37:10,16 42:17 43:1,13,21 44:1 45:8 47:13,18,21 48:10,16 51:2 53:5 56:6 61:9 64:25 65:10 69:1 77:4,11 79:10,14 82:3 83:4 86:3,6 rights 70:1 rising 4:21 risk 40:14 51:6 river 31:10 road 10:4 33:4 33:4,6 roads 10:6 robbie 11:1 14:20 15:7 71:4 92:5 robby 3:16 robert 3:6,16 5:24 6:3 robust 75:12 role 13:22 roll 2:5 5:12 rollout 71:19 ron 65:14 ronald 6:22 ronnie 3:12 7:4 65:8 room 1:5 roosevelt 3:18 62:24 68:15</p>
--	--	---	---

[roosevelt - served]

<p>69:8 70:22 78:17 96:17 rosedale 62:3 rotation 33:25 34:6,7 rotational 34:16 rotations 33:12 rouge 1:7,18 22:5,22 23:2 84:1 rounds 12:10 row 25:17 rules 99:15,18 run 48:20 running 88:7 runway 77:19 78:1 96:19 russia 75:20</p>	<p>save 45:1 74:22 97:9 saw 29:6 50:19 62:13 saying 68:5 says 20:17 35:8 scary 74:6 school 30:14 48:3 53:16 84:23 85:6,12 85:12,24,25 86:12,22,23 87:18,19,20,25 88:2,4 96:12 schools 87:19 scout 32:6 33:3 sea 71:13 seal 100:3 seat 61:20 seated 4:25 secdef 92:14 second 8:16,18 25:17 39:21 80:13,20 88:15 97:19,21 secretary 3:2,4 6:14,15 7:12 7:13 8:25 9:2 14:22 15:10 24:22 40:25 46:5 82:21 94:7,10 95:2 96:4,5 97:5,14 section 32:17</p>	<p>sector 65:4 sectors 45:16 security 34:2 41:6,8 45:1,9 57:7 85:7 see 5:6 11:9,11 17:15 26:2 27:25 28:11 30:25 31:5 32:13 33:18 34:18 35:2 36:11 37:16,24 41:17 43:13 46:12,25 52:12 54:10 56:2 60:13 72:12,18 73:14,22 74:6 75:10,16,18,23 75:25 76:18,19 77:10 86:5 89:19 90:15 91:18 94:14 95:17 seeing 18:15 41:1 71:22 97:10 seeking 97:6 seem 50:8 seems 31:2 seen 73:3 sees 81:21 sema 77:15 78:20 semester 53:24 54:1,1</p>	<p>senate 44:14 71:16 73:13,20 74:9,17 75:2 76:18,20 83:17 90:22 senator 3:10 7:8,9 9:13 10:23 24:22 35:19 41:22 43:15 49:7,14 49:18 50:7 51:7 70:13 80:15 81:6,9 83:21 89:24 90:2 92:8 senators 64:1 send 47:13 50:22,22 55:16 95:9 senior 69:13 73:25 sense 56:7 sent 20:15 31:11 33:21 september 22:14 40:9 65:18 69:14 77:24 85:8 88:4 sergeant 25:14 25:17,22 serve 18:11 62:9 79:6 served 43:17 62:19 71:13,15</p>
s			
<p>s 1:12 3:23 4:1 99:1,2 100:7 sacks 57:4 sacrificed 89:12 safety 62:16 91:22 sailors 81:16 sake 88:8 sally 85:23 salt 36:19 saltwater 31:9 sapper 38:7,16 saturday 30:13 30:14</p>			

[serves - south]

<p>serves 15:17 service 13:19 18:17,24 22:7 22:25 25:8 41:20 44:19 50:14 89:11 91:8 92:22 services 73:25 82:21,22 92:18 serving 30:19 43:20 45:4 session 9:14,21 10:25 47:20 90:1,6 92:6 set 27:10 72:8 93:11 seven 65:2,4 85:9 seventh 62:25 several 71:14 severe 31:16,22 shape 69:9 shaping 72:2 share 4:17 16:7 20:11 25:12 28:22 51:24 64:13 79:5 95:13 shared 53:15 shelf 63:19 sheriff 33:1 ship 74:20 76:7 ships 71:14 74:22</p>	<p>shore 76:7 short 20:14 34:15 shortage 50:9 shorthand 84:16 99:8 shortly 41:1 88:5 shot 65:23 show 11:8,14 41:15 48:21 66:4,14,24 67:11 68:1 85:21 86:5 88:9 showed 42:12 44:12 showing 4:10 8:4 shown 22:25 shows 66:15 67:3 shpo 76:5 shreveport 13:6 25:18 69:20 97:11 sic 82:4 side 28:11 29:3 29:18 30:5 32:13 42:22 43:15,18 54:15 54:23,23 86:6 86:9 87:15 sign 9:17 23:2 86:24</p>	<p>signature 9:18 100:3 signed 100:5 significance 20:13 75:14 significant 45:13 88:10,18 silbert 3:11 6:25 7:1 8:17 61:16,18 64:11 64:24 65:6 66:18,25 67:4 67:15,24 68:4 79:4,11 97:16 sir 35:22 49:6 49:17 51:10,11 51:17 53:1 55:6,10,22 57:25 59:10,23 70:16 80:10,18 82:6 83:8 92:10 94:4 95:20 97:4 sit 68:11 site 85:22 86:2 87:20 93:16 94:18 sites 85:5,12,13 86:12 87:23,25 88:6 situation 80:8 six 59:4 72:13 skeptical 73:6 skyrocket 29:6</p>	<p>slide 24:17 42:12 44:12,12 48:16 slidell 16:18 17:7 slides 68:25 72:22 77:13 slone 3:12 7:4,5 51:12,18 52:4 52:13,18 53:2 53:6,11,20 54:3,12,17,24 55:7,12,17,21 65:8 97:20 slow 23:4 small 31:4 34:8 72:12 snapshot 75:17 software 13:13 soldier 28:3 soldiers 28:6 30:10 35:11 36:16 39:13 58:5 81:16 solution 79:12 somebody 53:15 91:18 soon 50:21 sorry 60:16 66:24 82:10 83:13 sort 72:25 sourcings 31:5 south 18:21 40:4 95:8</p>
---	--	--	--

[southeast - strategic]

<p>southeast 16:17 55:1 61:16 65:11 southern 43:25 44:1 southwest 16:22,23 48:6 space 11:17,20 85:15 86:15 87:9,12,17 spaces 87:6 spare 63:17 speak 10:24 48:23 speakers 13:23 speaks 20:13 42:25 44:13 52:21 special 33:24 60:17 specific 36:12 65:22 specifically 22:20 76:9 92:1 speed 58:7 spend 30:18 71:21 72:17 spending 72:9 72:20 spent 80:5 spike 35:17 spoke 78:20 sponsoring 63:25</p>	<p>spouses 85:18 89:6 91:1 squad 58:19,23 squadron 41:3 41:6,8 75:1 square 36:16 sr 3:7 stabilization 36:19 staff 3:3 15:1,8 15:25 17:24 20:19 25:14 stance 78:25 81:6 stand 35:9 40:9 62:15 standard 91:15 standby 79:24 standing 71:7 99:3 standpoint 54:10 57:3 90:8 star 22:15,17 22:20 89:6 starbase 43:3 47:25 48:5,13 start 32:10 33:8 37:24 43:24 85:5 87:24 88:3 90:16 started 4:11 25:1 45:12 53:18 90:14</p>	<p>starting 65:18 92:19 starts 73:17 state 4:15,18 9:7,22,24 10:3 10:7,12,16 11:12 16:7 17:21 18:21,25 22:10 25:7 26:9,11 27:18 27:21 29:14 31:7 32:16 33:20 35:8,10 37:12 38:9 39:7,22,24 43:6,15,18,22 44:12,19 45:17 47:7 48:14 50:3,15 51:2,6 51:19 54:6,7 54:21 57:1 58:15 60:1 72:21 76:9 82:24 91:2,10 91:11,21,25 92:3 99:4 100:3 state's 48:9 89:15 states 25:16 45:14 50:17 64:22 65:3 statewide 15:20 stations 65:4</p>	<p>statistics 52:1 52:10 status 16:4 42:18 statute 99:15 stay 26:24 39:4 56:25 68:19 staying 65:25 steal 68:24 stealing 9:9 steam 85:14 86:10,13,15 87:10,13,16,21 87:22 88:1 stellar 13:5 stenographic 99:8 step 42:4,4 91:19 stephanie 90:18 stephenson 13:5 stick 5:1 sticking 81:18 sticky 74:23 83:14 stood 84:20 stop 60:24 storefront 29:8 29:9,15 stories 25:25 stratcom 93:11 strategic 25:3 45:11 71:25</p>
---	--	---	---

[strategic - tell]

<p>75:14 78:14 strategy 27:11 street 1:6 86:23 strength 26:4 26:18 stretch 33:4 strickland 3:5 7:12,13 15:4 15:10 stride 41:16 strike 13:9 69:12,16,21,23 93:6 strong 9:22,23 10:12,21 47:15 structure 26:8 26:13 38:2,5 38:20 39:20 40:6,13 41:14 49:10 51:4 structures 39:2 student 18:10 18:11 19:2 students 86:25 stuff 58:7 61:3 subject 49:5 64:4 91:14 submit 43:7 submitted 77:20 success 25:24 29:2 successful 65:10 91:3</p>	<p>successfully 96:23 suicide 22:15 91:23,24 suite 1:17 summer 36:15 36:18 48:1 summit 22:15 super 57:4 supervision 99:10 support 26:12 34:9,17 35:1 36:9 37:14 50:23 59:7 64:1 70:3 77:1 84:24 96:24,24 supported 12:11 33:17 supporting 25:5 30:23 44:15 65:2 95:11 supposed 40:9 46:13 60:11,23 supposedly 63:3 sure 21:14,18 24:1,1 55:13 60:24 69:3 90:3 surface 71:12 surrounding 33:19</p>	<p>sustained 40:22 symposium 13:16,25 14:5 97:11 system 5:9 11:18 53:16 62:24 85:13 systems 10:6 69:5</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">t</p> <hr/> <p>t 99:1,1,1 tacp 40:15,22 41:5 56:17 58:3,6 tag 50:19 take 13:1 14:18 20:18 27:20 40:11 41:4 44:6 45:18 46:4 64:19 69:3 81:19 92:23 taken 37:22 46:8,10 88:11 99:5 takes 26:19 40:12 talent 45:16 talk 13:10 31:23 34:3 41:19 42:10 47:14 56:19 60:12 67:10 71:25 72:22 77:14 88:13</p>	<p>talked 46:5 47:7 59:25 71:24 74:25 76:12 78:21 79:20 90:4 talking 28:23 37:25 50:20 56:15 59:7 60:9 74:2 79:12 81:5 tall 71:6 tankers 46:12 targets 96:22 tax 90:19 teacher 91:7 teacher's 9:25 teachers 87:1 teaching 91:11 91:13 team 13:1 30:3 33:15 45:5 84:5 teams 47:13 technical 18:20 technicians 27:10 technology 85:11,14,16 86:7,9,13,20 87:2,4,12,15,23 88:1 96:11 tell 17:12 28:13 31:1 45:13 94:7</p>
---	---	---	---

[tending - total]

<p>tending 75:21 term 31:14 terms 15:25 19:24 26:4,22 27:24 29:6 30:25 34:25 35:11 41:13 43:17 44:15 51:5 57:2 60:1 61:4 82:25 93:7 95:11 territory 25:16 testimony 99:7 texas 30:16 54:1 textron 76:8 thank 4:25 8:3 8:24 9:3 14:19 14:22 15:6,6 20:19,24 24:5 24:7,12 49:8 51:8 55:18 61:7,9,14,19 62:18 64:12 65:7,13 68:6,8 70:16,18 71:4 82:14 83:24 84:9 92:8 94:3 95:20 96:23 97:12,14 98:2 thankful 37:12 47:16 48:24 68:15 thanking 49:2</p>	<p>thanks 51:13 68:20 69:7 96:17 theater 30:19 theatre 23:1 therapy 90:23 91:4,5 thing 37:20 41:2,12 44:17 45:8 68:23 91:16 93:9,10 93:15 things 9:6 13:4 13:10 34:4 36:8 38:13 42:11 43:18 47:12 51:19 57:4,25 58:3 60:18 62:12,17 62:21 66:7 67:19 69:10 72:14 74:11 78:4,10 92:13 93:4,6,7,12 95:10 think 4:10 9:21 28:19 29:19 30:4 34:22 35:24 36:3,17 37:2 41:21 42:1 44:11,13 45:21 46:6 50:6,23,24 51:3 52:21 54:8,22 57:16</p>	<p>58:2,19 60:3 64:7 65:21 66:4,7,19,20 68:14,23 73:3 75:3 76:5 77:25 80:3 81:2,7,12 83:15,20 97:1 thinks 81:14 third 1:6 thought 92:24 93:25 thoughts 80:14 thousand 28:18 three 17:5 20:1 25:9 28:17 29:25 30:21 32:1 43:18 46:23 48:10 50:13 59:4 61:2 65:3 66:9 66:19 77:13 79:7 85:2 thresholds 19:24 thunder 9:10 68:24 tigers 84:7 tim 64:8 time 8:10 9:3 10:23 13:15 27:9 28:8 33:11 34:22 40:12 53:17 61:11 73:4,11</p>	<p>73:23 75:22 76:11 79:23 83:25 84:12,25 86:2 88:8 92:9 timeline 72:23 73:18 timely 63:22 times 19:13 20:8 34:16 timmy 64:8,10 64:16 tingle 35:7 today 4:15 9:4 9:8 15:4,11 31:20,22 44:9 46:19 49:22 72:7 96:3 today's 4:8,9 8:9 14:24 71:1 together 12:9 told 60:21 79:6 tom 69:12 tomorrow 79:16 took 11:5 25:12 29:5 31:17 tool 43:7 47:16 top 25:15 26:24 35:3 topic 92:2 topics 4:12 47:14 topnotch 13:23 total 17:1</p>
--	--	---	--

[touches - upgrade]

<p>touches 32:12 tower 33:6 46:16 track 27:3 tracked 10:15 tracking 10:19 51:22 trade 39:22,25 traded 40:1 trail 22:12 46:21 trailing 90:15 train 65:17 training 27:5 27:22,23 28:2 28:4 31:24 32:4,10 33:12 34:22 37:4 40:11 45:24 46:2 47:20 60:23 65:19 66:2 90:11 91:21,25 transaction 39:6 transcribed 99:9 transcript 99:11,13,14 100:2 transcription 99:9 transferred 35:16</p>	<p>transitioned 71:11 transportation 30:12 63:7,12 travel 11:8,11 14:2 47:11 82:22 83:2,11 83:14 tremendous 88:11 89:13 trend 28:13 triad 13:16,25 97:11 tribute 89:13 tricky 74:23 trigger 74:11 trophy 69:24 69:25 troy 63:24 true 99:10 try 26:7,15 27:11 39:18,22 40:7,21 41:2 46:2 48:5 58:3 63:13 64:1 69:2 90:24 trying 36:21 41:14 44:25 45:25 50:1 61:3 78:8 93:11 tuberville 83:21 tuberville's 80:15 81:6,10</p>	<p>tuesday 11:7 tuition 43:23 44:2,4 tulane 18:22 turn 8:25 turnout 46:6 two 25:24 27:25 28:1,5 28:10 32:2,3 32:14 34:21 42:4 46:24 47:19 49:17 57:19 65:18 66:19 67:7,8 72:22 74:7 82:2 87:19 88:6 90:17 97:7 type 60:18 types 12:19 typically 4:19 76:10</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">u</p> <hr/> <p>uh 53:12 54:13 58:9 ukraine 43:11 43:13 74:19 ukrainian 65:20 unable 71:9 unanimous 44:15 under 14:18 84:21 99:9</p>	<p>understand 38:24 50:2 understanding 40:2 49:24 99:12 unfortunately 18:1 unit 29:1 30:20 31:4 33:19 34:16 36:17 40:4 units 25:6 26:8 27:6 34:11 39:10 58:5 60:22 universities 43:24 university 18:8 18:21,23,23 62:23 uno 64:3 unprecedented 81:15 unsung 48:17 unveil 22:6,11 unveiling 46:22 update 5:9 9:5 36:12 45:20 62:21 68:10 71:1,22 updated 21:17 updates 5:7 70:20 upgrade 37:8</p>
---	---	--	---

[upgraded - water]

<p>upgraded 69:5 69:6 upgrades 78:6 upstairs 66:10 use 26:13 43:25 60:3 used 30:7 35:20 53:16 usually 76:10</p>	<p>vetaffairs.la... 21:11 23:3 veteran 16:4,6 16:9,12 18:8 18:10 19:12,13 19:18 20:16 65:9 89:8 91:23,24 veterans 15:2,9</p>	<p>visit 78:9 85:22 visited 17:12 visiting 17:14 visitors 27:21 voices 60:10 volume 23:22 42:25 volunteers 18:5 48:25 votes 73:21</p>	<p>walked 36:25 want 10:24 12:15 13:4 18:16 20:3,11 21:8,14,18 24:21 25:1,2 25:12 33:4 37:20,21,22 42:13,13 52:17 56:9,12,20,21 56:21,22,24 62:18 84:13 86:5,17 88:25 89:22 93:2 95:6 wanted 16:7 58:6 66:7,11 85:1,21 88:9 88:15 89:16 93:23 wants 36:8 war 11:4 22:24 94:11,17 warfare 71:12 wars 12:11 75:19 washington 11:11 39:6,24 70:23 71:23 watch 96:18 watching 73:5 74:15 79:3 96:16 water 31:12,18 46:15 77:3,10</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">v</p>			
<p>va 15:11,18 17:4 vacancies 18:19 vaccine 29:5 vacs 15:22 16:3 valid 100:1 valuable 43:8 57:3 value 40:3 48:22 85:17 values 46:19 variety 26:20 various 10:3 74:18 vehicles 27:4 venice 31:11 venture 12:24 verified 16:4 vermilion 33:6 vernon 84:23 85:12,25 87:14 87:16 96:12 vertical 33:1</p>	<p>15:15,17,19,23 15:25 16:5,15 16:18,23 17:20 17:20,22,25 18:4,11,15 19:2,9,20,23 20:5,7 21:7,9 21:24 22:1,4,9 22:13,19,22 24:9,10 47:4 88:17,20 89:3 89:5,14 90:20 vetoes 9:19 vice 3:5 victories 71:23 victory 62:1,11 vietnam 12:11 viewed 9:19 virginia 30:23 34:24 80:21 93:22,23 virtually 14:3 viser 3:13,19 7:16,17 68:9 68:13 70:15 81:25 82:9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">w</p> <p>w 3:13 47:22 waddell 3:14 7:20,21 12:23 24:15,18,24 49:12,16 50:5 51:9,16,25 52:6,15,25 53:4,8,13,22 54:5,14,19 55:5,9,14,19,23 56:10 57:15,24 58:10,18 59:2 59:9,13,22 60:4,19 61:8 74:25 78:21 90:4 95:5,16 waddell's 61:23 wages 10:15 wait 57:5,14 77:10 waiting 41:6 76:17 81:1 walk 9:9 86:1</p>	

[waves - years]

<p>waves 65:19 way 24:21 44:21 49:19 52:19 57:13 61:21 92:15,21 94:25 99:21 ways 83:17 we've 9:12 12:20 20:4 26:23 29:20 32:1,4,14 35:2 38:3 39:9,12 47:8 48:10 62:1 63:3 73:3 83:15 88:10 89:17,18,20 90:12 96:8 weapons 68:20 76:15 weather 31:17 31:22 web 94:17 website 21:10 23:23 52:11 week 22:22 26:22 31:2,6 31:15 50:19 60:6 64:19 65:20 77:20 95:7 weekend 20:12 31:13,15 weeks 26:23 29:12 32:4 33:14 34:21</p>	<p>48:20 59:17 97:12 welcome 68:11 95:4 went 32:17 39:21,23 44:14 44:22 56:11 58:24 59:3 86:24 west 18:19 wheels 27:3 whitehead 3:15 7:24,25 64:9 64:14 65:1 66:23 67:2,6 80:11 94:5,22 95:14,19 win 33:25 43:1 54:9 58:20 78:2,4,22 wind 75:19 winding 96:8 window 60:25 windows 60:20 61:5 wing 30:4 42:25 76:25 78:6 winning 61:25 wins 33:10 women 43:16 wonderful 69:17 work 4:14,17 9:15 11:24</p>	<p>13:9 17:24 20:21 21:1 24:8,11 29:24 32:5,20,24 35:1,6 37:1 45:14 53:16 70:24 85:2 96:6,10 worked 16:1 41:11 43:12 workforce 52:24 working 12:22 13:2,9 17:4 22:2 28:25 31:14 36:20 42:6 45:11 48:13 62:1,22 63:4,14 84:2 84:22 89:18 works 40:2 world 11:4 22:24 30:11 94:11,17 worth 32:5 93:18</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <hr/> <p>x 2:1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">y</p> <hr/> <p>y'all 4:7 21:1 34:17 41:4 71:22 79:23 84:2 95:18</p>	<p>yeah 52:14,19 64:15 67:7 68:5 82:1,17 83:13 95:3 year 10:21 15:22 16:3 18:15 19:17,18 22:23 25:17,23 28:15,16 29:3 29:20,24 30:6 32:23 36:3 40:10,21 41:22 48:3 59:3 65:18 66:16,17 67:8,12,14,19 71:13 73:1,2,7 73:15 74:7 75:23,23 76:1 76:14 80:5 85:2,6,22 87:24,25 88:4 88:22 91:7,13 92:14 97:2,7 year's 75:9 years 12:8,18 29:21 32:18 35:21 39:12 42:25 61:2 62:8 66:19 67:7,8 68:19 70:5 71:14 72:13 73:2 79:7 89:19 90:17</p>
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[youth - zoom]

youth 43:3 47:19
z
zelden 62:22 zero 41:19 44:5 zoom 14:3