

S. HRG. 117-834

**NOMINATION OF ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN,
NOMINEE TO BE COMMANDANT,
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

APRIL 28, 2022

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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**NOMINATION OF ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN,
NOMINEE TO BE COMMANDANT,
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2022

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m. in room SR-253, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Maria Cantwell, Chairwoman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Cantwell [presiding], Klobuchar, Blumenthal, Peters, Baldwin, Hickenlooper, Wicker, Cruz, Fischer, Sullivan, Blackburn, Young, and Scott.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA CANTWELL,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WASHINGTON**

The CHAIR. The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee will come to order.

Today, we are having a hearing on the Nomination of Admiral Linda L. Fagan to be the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard.

So welcome to Admiral Fagan. Admiral Fagan assumed the role of Vice Commandant on June 18, 2021, where she executes the Commandant's Strategic Intent, manages international operations, and serves as the lead acquisition officer overseeing the largest modernization of the coastal fleet since World War II.

She has served in the Coast Guard for nearly 36 years and beginning her career as a sailor on the POLAR STAR, a 399-foot Polar Icebreaker, which has since served on all seven continents.

She has led numerous leadership and safety positions, including as Commander for the New York Sector, more than 15 years as the Marine Inspector, and recently as the Commander of the Pacific Area in Charge of Coast Guard Operations and Personnel on the West Coast and Indo-Pacific.

She has extensive interagency and inter-governmental experience, having worked with the International Maritime Organization, the International Labor Organization, and she has an impressive science background with a Bachelor's Degree in Marine Science, something everybody is excited about here, from the Coast Guard Academy, and two Masters' Degrees, one of which is from the University of Washington in Marine Affairs, which we're very proud of, and so she is the longest-serving Active Duty Marine Officer and has earned numerous distinctions across her years of service.

But beyond that, beyond that impressive resume, this is a historic moment for our country and for women in the Armed Services. It will be the first time that a woman will lead one of the six branches of the Armed Services.

So I am hoping that your leadership will also lead to more progress on getting women recruited and retained in the Coast Guard, that with your help and focus on important issues, like childcare, health care, and education, that "Coasties" like your daughter can have a long career in the Coast Guard.

So we are excited about this historic moment and so glad to have you and your daughters here and thank you so much for your willingness to serve our country.

Now I'll turn to my colleague Senator Wicker.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI**

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Senator Cantwell, and absolutely this is a historic moment. This is an important hearing for the Nomination of Admiral Linda Fagan to be Commandant. So welcome and welcome to the family as the Chair just stated.

Admiral Fagan is well qualified to lead the Coast Guard. She excelled in each of her previous posts, all of which were highly visible and very demanding. In her current assignment as Vice Commandant, she has led the Coast Guard through the acquisition of much-needed assets, like the Polar Security Cutter and Offshore Patrol Cutter.

Admiral Fagan understands the needs of the public, of the Coast Guard, and those who will be under her charge. She has the experience, judgment, and poise this Nation expects of its leaders and, yes, this is an important step for all women as she takes command of one of the branches of the Nation's Armed Services.

Today, the Coast Guard is being asked to do more than ever and yet it continues to be challenged by being under-resourced. It's time for Congress to step in and provide more support.

Recently, Admiral Fagan and I traveled to the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore along with Senator Cardin. I was dismayed to learn that the Yard could not even accommodate the new National Security Cutter because of insufficient and outdated infrastructure. This is just one example of the Coast Guard's dire infrastructure needs. Its current infrastructure recapitalization backlog is roughly \$2 billion and deferred maintenance projects amount to another \$1 billion.

Cutting this backlog and getting the Coast Guard fully supplied has been a top priority of mine and I look forward to working with Admiral Fagan toward that end. I'm especially proud of Mississippi's role in modernizing the Coast Guard. The National Security Cutter is able to operate anywhere in the world and the Polar Security Cutter will be an essential asset in the ongoing great power competition in the Arctic.

Both of these Mississippi-built vessels are critical to our national security. The Coast Guard needs these shore-side facilities, infrastructure, and advanced systems to support its new fleet.

To address this need, last year I introduced the Unwavering Support for our Coast Guard Act, USCG Act. This would provide full

funding for shore-side infrastructure, ensure needed renovations at Coast Guard facilities around the country, pay Coast Guard members during a government shutdown, as we do other service members, and require the service to evaluate the facilities and assets needed to complete its mission.

Our committee has the privilege of overseeing the Coast Guard. It is therefore our duty to make sure this branch of the Armed Forces has the leadership, policies, personnel, and resources it needs to succeed.

I look forward to our discussion today with Admiral Fagan and I trust that the Committee and the Full Senate will complete her confirmation process without delay.

Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. I like that. I like that. Thank you, Senator Wicker, for those comments highlighting those issues.

Admiral Fagan, welcome. Please take a moment, if you'd like, to introduce your family or any other guests that are with you, and we welcome your statement.

**STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN, NOMINEE TO BE
COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. Thank you and good morning, Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and Distinguished Members of the Committee.

I request that my written testimony be submitted for the record, and I'm honored to appear before you today and humbled to have the confidence of President Biden as well as Secretary Mayorkas as their nominee to serve as the 27th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard.

I'm grateful for the unwavering support of my family throughout my Coast Guard journey and excited to have my two daughters joining me here today.

I'm also grateful to our Commandant, Admiral Karl Schultz, who has served this Nation with distinction for nearly four decades. Under his leadership, the Coast Guard has made great strides to improve our readiness, resiliency, and responsiveness, and I celebrate the progress we have made and look forward to building on this success.

For nearly 232 years the Coast Guard has provided safety and security to ensure America's national and economic prosperity. Today, your Coast Guard oversees the waterways that power our Nation's economy, ensures the safety of our cargo and passenger vessel fleets, and watches over our marine natural resources. Americans can be proud of their Coast Guard.

However, the world we operate in is changing rapidly. Advances in technology, new demands in the polar regions, pressures on maritime supply chains, and threats to the global rules-based order are changing demand for Coast Guard missions, and changing the communities where our people live and work.

The Coast Guard must keep pace with these changes to uphold our proud tradition of service. The heartbeat of the Coast Guard is our workforce and without them we cannot execute missions.

If confirmed as the 27th Commandant, my highest priority will be to transform the way we recruit, train, and retain our workforce through a 21st Century talent management system.

We will recruit people who reflect the diversity of the public we serve, are service-oriented with a high sense of purpose and are committed to our core values of honor, respect, and devotion to duty.

Once an individual joins the Coast Guard, we will retain them by providing them and their families the support that they need and deserve, access to high-quality housing, health care, and childcare.

We will provide greater flexibility and eliminate barriers that deter people from continuing to serve. Our leaders will provide our increasingly diverse workforce a strong sense of belonging so every individual is valued, safe, and able to deliver their best service to the Nation.

We will provide our teams the right tools, including a modern fleet of vessels and aircraft, and the resilient shore infrastructure facilities that support them. Applying new technologies will incorporate data systems into our operations so our leaders can make the best decisions across every mission.

We will continue to flawlessly execute our core missions at home while we meet global demand for the Coast Guard by applying our assets where they provide the American people the greatest benefit. From the Arctic to Antarctica, throughout the world's oceans, and along the entire coastline of the United States, we will protect the Nation's safety, security, and prosperity.

If confirmed, I recognize and am humbled by the immense responsibility I will assume as the 27th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. I'm committed to the service, our workforce, and the Nation. I look forward to working with this committee as we navigate the Coast Guard into the future.

Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and Distinguished Members, it's truly a privilege to appear before you today. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement and biographical information of Admiral Fagan follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN, NOMINEE TO BE COMMANDANT,
U.S. COAST GUARD

Introduction

Good afternoon, Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you today. I can think of no greater privilege than to continue my service to the Nation as the 27th Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard. I am humbled and grateful for the confidence and trust President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas placed in me with their nomination. I look forward to sharing my views and vision for our Service and I look forward to answering your questions. The work required to build tomorrow's Coast Guard has already begun. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing this work with you.

I want to acknowledge and thank Admiral Karl Schultz, who led our Service with distinction through historic challenges. Under his leadership, and with the help of the Administration and this Committee, the Coast Guard is making great strides to improve our readiness, responsiveness, and resilience. He redoubled our focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion; improved our ability to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault; as well as identified and removed numerous leg-

acy barriers to recruitment and retention of a talented workforce that more closely mirrors the Nation we serve. I celebrate the progress we have made over the past four years, however there is still much work to be done. I am committed to continuing to move the organization forward to ensure we have the workforce and readiness the Nation expects.

The Journey

My 37 years of Coast Guard service prepares me well to serve as the Commandant. I have operated on all seven continents, across the breadth of our missions, and among international, federal, state, tribal, and local partners. Those experiences instilled in me a deep understanding of this Service's value to the Nation. I have a deep foundation in our role in the domestic marine transportation system, including regulation, oversight, and partnerships with the commercial maritime industry. I have held Joint Service positions in the Department of Defense and led global operations supporting National Defense and Homeland Security. I have commanded front line Coast Guard operations, managed national emergencies and responses, negotiated international standards, and collaborated at the most senior levels of government. My career has been dedicated to keeping the American people and our maritime commerce safe and secure at home and abroad. I remain committed to that purpose.

The Coast Guard has fought in every armed conflict that the United States has engaged in for nearly 232 years. Our dedicated and professional workforce has served in harrowing conditions during war, peace, and times of change. The Coast Guard frequently led as our society moved forward. More than one hundred women served as lighthouse keepers beginning in the 1830s, like Ida Lewis in Rhode Island. In 1880 Richard Etheridge took command of Pea Island Lifesaving Station, the first African-American to command a Federal installation. During World War II, Dorothy Stratton led the 10,000 volunteers of the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve (the "SPARs") who performed critical wartime duties. Our history is full of pioneers who paved the way, for not just me, but for our entire workforce. I am fully committed to providing opportunity to our entire workforce and creating a sense of belonging as we serve the Nation.

America's Coast Guard Today

Our total workforce of over 57,000 Active Duty, Reserve, and Civilian personnel, supported by 21,000 Auxiliary volunteers, serve around the globe. They are the heart of the Coast Guard and live by our core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty. I am committed to upholding these values, which implicitly include a culture of inclusion and respect.

As America's maritime first responder, the Coast Guard is woven into communities along the Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic, and Gulf Coasts as well as the Great Lakes and navigable inland rivers. I embrace the many ways we contribute to our Nation's safety and prosperity: we rescue mariners in distress, protect vital marine natural resources, break ice to facilitate commerce, inspect ships to verify safety and pollution controls, deliver aid after a disaster, mark navigable waterways to keep mariners safe from hazards, secure our ports and harbors, and interdict illegal drugs far from our shores.

As an operational Component within the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard is committed to the Secretary's priorities, including maritime border security, full participation in crisis response, and the protection of critical infrastructure, particularly in the cyber domain. I am committed to being a leader in the Department who will collaborate as we work to ensure that the Coast Guard and Department of Homeland Security are ready for the next emerging threat.

In our role as the only military Service within the Department of Homeland Security, we are aligned with the Department of Defense to reduce risk across numerous homeland security and national security challenges. The Coast Guard's unique authorities and capabilities complement our sister Services in the Department of Defense and enrich our relationships with international partners and allies.

Increasingly, the demand for Coast Guard services is global and comes from many levels of government. As a leader among the Coast Guards of the world, we model and uphold the rule of law at sea, contribute to our country's global standing, and counter both state and non-state malign actions. Our strong partnerships with international governments and organizations are critical to addressing transnational maritime threats. In an increasingly connected world, our global partnerships protect Americans' interests at home.

The Coast Guard America Needs Tomorrow

The Coast Guard advances America's national and economic security. We will not waver from our core missions that keep Americans safe. We will respond to mari-

ners in distress and to incidents of pollution that threaten our waters. We will uphold the security of our ports and critical infrastructure. As a former icebreaker sailor, I am committed to our Nation's icebreaking fleet as it protects our sovereignty in the Arctic, our interests in Antarctica, and keeps our Great Lakes and Northeast ports open for safe navigation every winter.

And as the Service's most senior Marine Inspector, I am committed to the Coast Guard's role as a regulator to protect the resilience of our marine transportation system that facilitates more than \$5 trillion in economic activity every year. A resilient maritime industry requires safety for mariners, who have the right to work in an environment free from sexual assault and sexual harassment. I am committed to preventing these occurrences and responding to allegations within our jurisdiction.

We will continue to reinforce the maritime norms on the world's oceans that keep America safe. The racing stripe painted on our ships will remain a symbol of professionalism, good governance, and hope. A global Coast Guard presence creates security at home and strengthens partners and allies as they counter threats to their sovereignty and prosperity. I will continue to foster partnerships and capacity with nations who uphold maritime governance to prevent the flow of narcotics, and to deter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

However—the world is changing rapidly and the Coast Guard must keep pace. The new forces influencing our operating environment are numerous. The global pandemic reshaped our economy and maritime supply chains. Climate change is creating new demands in the high latitudes and resilience challenges at home. Rapid advances in technology, increased reliance on data, and growing cyber threats created an entirely new domain of operations. The ongoing attack on democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine, and the pacing threat China presents, are changing the international security landscape. All of these factors are changing not only demand for Coast Guard missions, but also the communities where our people live and work. If confirmed, I will focus on several areas of emphasis.

My highest priority will be to modernize our talent management system, which has not significantly changed in 75 years, to best recruit and retain our people in the 21st century. Without our people we will not be able to maintain or operate our cutters, boats, aircraft, or technology, or uphold standards for commercial vessel safety or pollution prevention. The Coast Guard workforce of tomorrow must reflect the American public we serve and requires the tools, policy, training, and support to succeed across all our mission areas.

The people joining our Service today have expectations different from those who served in the past. Therefore, we must adjust the way we recruit, train and retain them and their families. We will seek expanded opportunities for our workforce and their families to access high quality healthcare, housing, and childcare. We will remain relentless in our effort to eradicate harmful behaviors, such as sexual assault and sexual harassment, from our Service. We will continue to revisit policies that deter otherwise qualified members from continuing their careers, and instead we will actively pursue means to encourage our brightest talent to stay. Similarly, we will pursue new training designs to engage our workforce in meaningful learning, whether in a classroom or in the field. These actions will advance mission excellence and enhance our workforce's sense of belonging. I am committed to pursuing transformational change in the way we recruit, retain, and support our workforce.

To accomplish the broad spectrum of Coast Guard missions, we will provide our workforce the assets they need to maintain a competitive edge over malign actors. This includes a modern fleet of cutters, small boats, and aircraft that will be supplemented by unmanned systems and sensors. Equally importantly, we need data systems to enable rapid sharing of information and provide our operational commanders decision advantage. Smart application of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence will allow us to make the best decisions as we inspect new commercial vessels, search for overdue recreational boaters, or seek to disrupt the flow of illicit drugs across our maritime border.

As important as digital systems are to our future, we will still depend on brick and mortar. Every Coast Guard mission begins and ends on shore. Our facilities, piers, and runways are as critical for operations as our ships and aircraft, and the buildings where our people eat and sleep while standing duty are as important to workforce retention as our talent management policies. With your help, I will ensure our shore infrastructure supports our operations at sea, and that every member of our Service has the safe and resilient workplace they deserve.

Given the dynamic threats and evolving national security priorities, we must also transform how we employ our forces. The Coast Guard will be a leader in global maritime governance by enforcing the rule of law, facilitating safe and secure maritime commerce, and protecting people and natural resources regardless of the

changing geopolitical landscape. We will employ our assets and people to optimize mission excellence, finding new and innovative force employment models. The Coast Guard will best serve the Nation by applying our resources to the highest priority missions that only we can uniquely perform.

Conclusion

I am grateful to Congress, and this Committee in particular, for your interest, dedication, and support of our Coast Guard and its workforce. Your commitment to them, and their dedication to the mission, ensures the Coast Guard continues to answer the Nation's call. I hope to be able to work together with you in the future to move this great service forward. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I look forward to your questions.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Name (Include any former names or nicknames used): Linda L. Fagan (Maiden Name: Keene).

2. Position to which nominated: Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard.

3. Date of Nomination: 1 April 2022.

4. Address (List current place of residence and office addresses):

Residence: Information not released to the public.

Office: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, SE, Washington, DC 20593-7000.

5. Date and Place of Birth: July 1, 1963; Columbus, Ohio.

6. Provide the name, position, and place of employment for your spouse (if married) and the names and ages of your children (including stepchildren and children by a previous marriage).

John J. Fagan; not working; Moira E. Fagan, 29; Aileen I. Fagan, 28

7. List all college and graduate degrees. Provide year and school attended.

2007-2008 Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University; MS in National Resource Strategy.

1998-2000 University of Washington, School of Marine Affairs; Masters in Marine Affairs.

1981-1985 United States Coast Guard Academy, BS in Marine Science.

8. List all post-undergraduate employment, and highlight all management-level jobs held and any non-managerial jobs that relate to the position for which you are nominated.

June 2021 to present Vice Commandant

June 2018-June 2021 Pacific Area Commander

June 2016-June 2018 USCG HQ Deputy Commandant for Operations Policy and Capabilities (DCO-d)

June 2014-June 2016 Commander First Coast Guard District, Boston MA

June 2012-June 2014 NORTHCOM-Deputy Director for Operations (J3D)

June 2010-June 2012 Commander, Sector New York;

May 2008-June 2010 Executive Assistant/Executive Secretariat to the Commandant and Vice Commandant;

July 2007-June 2008 Duty Under Instruction; Industrial College of the Armed Forces;

July 2004-June 2008 Executive Officer, Activities Europe, Rotterdam, NL;

June 2000-July 2004 Division Chief, Foreign and Offshore Vessel Compliance; CG Headquarters, Washington DC;

Aug 1998-June 2000 Duty Under Instruction; University of Washington;

July 1995-Aug 1998 Chief of Port Operations; Marine Safety Office Savannah, Georgia;

Nov. 1991-July 1995 Marine Inspector; Marine Safety Office New Orleans;

May 1991-Nov. 1991 Duty Under Instruction, Industry Training; Passenger Vessel Association, New Orleans Steamboat Company;

July 1989-May 1991 Marine Casualty Investigator; Marine Safety Office Mobile, AL;

July 1987-July 1989 Marine Inspector; Marine Safety Office Puget Sound, Seattle, WA;

July 1985-July 1987 Deck Watch Officer; USCGC POLAR STAR, Seattle, WA.

9. Attach a copy of your résumé.

My official Coast Guard biography is attached.

10. List any advisory, consultative, honorary, or other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed above, within the last ten years. None.

11. List all positions held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, company, firm, partnership, or other business, enterprise, educational, or other institution within the last ten years. None.

12. Please list each membership you have had during the past ten years or currently hold with any civic, social, charitable, educational, political, professional, fraternal, benevolent or religiously affiliated organization, private club, or other membership organization. (For this question, you do not have to list your religious affiliation or membership in a religious house of worship or institution.) Include dates of membership and any positions you have held with any organization. Please note whether any such club or organization restricts membership on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability. None.

13. Have you ever been a candidate for and/or held a public office (elected, non-elected, or appointed)? If so, indicate whether any campaign has any outstanding debt, the amount, and whether you are personally liable for that debt. None.

14. List all memberships and offices held with and services rendered to, whether compensated or not, any political party or election committee within the past ten years. If you have held a paid position or served in a formal or official advisory position (whether compensated or not) in a political campaign within the past ten years, identify the particulars of the campaign, including the candidate, year of the campaign, and your title and responsibilities. None.

15. Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$200 or more for the past ten years. None.

16. List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, military medals, and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievements.

Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit (5), Defense Superior Service Medal (DSSM), Meritorious Service Medal, Commendation Medal (3)

17. Please list each book, article, column, Internet blog posting, or other publication you have authored, individually or with others. Include a link to each publication when possible. Also list any speeches that you have given on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated. Do not attach copies of these publications unless otherwise instructed.

Podcasts & Television Interviews

“Let’s Talk Coast Guard,” The IMC Podcast with Master Chief Jason Vanderhaden, January 19, 2022, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-ime/id1567584082>

“Coast Guard’s first female four-star admiral reflects on her journey and the service’s mission.” CBS This Morning, television interview, August 2, 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/coast-guards-first-female-four-star-admiral-reflects-on-her-journey-and-the-services-mission/#x>

“The Coldest War: Toward a Return to Great Power Competition in the Arctic,” *Great Decisions*, Foreign Policy Association, television interview, March 19, 2021, https://www.fpa.org/great_decisions

“Global Maritime Security,” *Smart Women, Smart Power* with Bev Kirk, podcast audio, October 21, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/node/58567>

“Show 662,” *Frontlines of Freedom* with Denny Gillum, podcast audio, August 29, 2020, <http://frontlinesoffreedom.com>

ThinkArctic Podcast with Sinead Lykins, podcast audio, June 11, 2019, <https://www.uberconference.com/thinkarctic>

Publications

Service Above Self: ADM Linda Fagan ’85, the first CGA alumna to fill the role of Vice Commandant and first woman to make 4-star in the Coast Guard, reflects on her career, time at the Academy and current priorities. US Coast Guard Academy Alumni Bulletin, September/October 2021.

Q&A with Pacific Area Commander, Navigator, The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Magazine, 2020.

Significant Social Media Videos

#Backstory: Episode 2 SPARs (Review on historical footage featuring the USCG Women’s Reserve from World War II), <https://fb.watch/b:frowOgbzs/> 2/17/22

#Backstory: Episode 1 Coast Guard Rescue (The first in a series that examines the stories behind famous Coast Guard events.), <https://fb.watch/bfsm4OrWxS/10/14/21>

Parental Leave Program (policy program that allows parents to take extended parental leave), <https://fb.watch/bfsYCctSeU> 08/26/21

We are stronger together (Message on diversity, equity and inclusion) <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/759391/we-stronger-together> 7/7/2020

The health, safety, and operational readiness of our crews and their families is paramount during the ongoing pandemic <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/758222/health-safety-and-operational-readiness-our-crews-and-their-families-paramount-during-ongoing-pandemic> 6/22/2020

Coast Guard Workforce Resilience (suicide prevention and resilience) <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/753253/coast-guard-workforce-resilience> 5/15/2020

Respect yourself and respect each other (Joint Pacific and Atlantic Area message on sexual harassment and assault) <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/735480/respect-yourself-and-respect-each-other>. 1/17/2020

U.S. Coast Guard cutter departs for Western Pacific Ocean (Indo-Pacific deployment during government shutdown) <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/655426/us-coast-guard-cutter-departs-westem-pacific-ocean>. 1/20/2019

Speeches & Panels

“Actions Now for a Better Tomorrow,” Women’s Leadership Initiative, Puerto Rico Chapter, panel, November 30, 2021.

“US Coast Guard Meeting,” *National Cargo Bureau Board of Directors*, remarks, October 6, 2021.

“September Special Topics Breakfast,” *Navy League of the United States*, keynote, September 21, 2021.

“IUU Fishing: a Strategic Overview,” *2021 Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange (IMSE) Conference*, virtual keynote, September 8, 2021.

“Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing: The New Piracy at Sea,” *Sea Air Space Convention*, panel, August 4, 2021.

“Coast Guard Global Operations in the Indo Pacific,” *Center for Naval Analysis Women Peace & Security Workshop*. virtual speech, December 2, 2020.

“Coast Guard Operations in the Arctic,” *UC Berkeley Master Class*, virtual speech, November 18, 2020.

“Maritime Safety and Security: The Admiral Perspective,” *American Geographical Society’s Geography 2050: The Future of the World Ocean*, virtual panel, November 17, 2020.

“Coast Guard Pacific Area Surface Fleet Operations,” *Surface Naval Association’s Waterfront Symposium*, virtual speech, August 27, 2020.

“Leadership and Diversity in the Coast Guard,” *Coast Guard Academy Women’s Equality Day Celebration*, virtual speech, August 26, 2020.

“Journey to a Road Less Traveled,” *Women’s leadership Institute Stronger Together Leadership Summit*, virtual speech, August 14, 2020.

“Accessing Alaska’s Arctic: Ports and Icebreakers,” *Commonwealth North Arctic Study Group*, virtual panel, July 22, 2020.

“COVID–19 Impacts on Coast Guard Operations in the EPAC,” *Navy League’s NatSec2020: Coronavirus and Beyond*, virtual panel, June 30, 2020

“COVID–19 Impacts in the Arctic,” *Naval War College Arctic Symposium*, virtual panel, May 19, 2020.

“Reflections on Progress,” *Bay Area Women’s Leadership Symposium*, virtual speech, May 18, 2020.

“Are We Ready to Fight and Win in Fully Contested Zones?,” *AFCEA Western Conference and Exposition*, Panel, San Diego, CA, March 2, 2020.

“Rising to the Challenge . . . Exercising Leadership in an Increasingly Complex Arctic Geo-Strategic Environment.” *Alaska Command Arctic Symposium*, Speech, Fairbanks, AK, November 13, 2019.

“Arctic 2020 . . . Becorning the Great Game of the New Millennium?” *Alaska. Command Arctic Symposium*, Panel, Fairbanks, AK, November 14, 2019.

“Marine Safety in the Maritime Transportation System,” *American Waterways Operators Fall Convention*, speech, San Diego, CA, October 17, 2019.

"Coast Guard Global Operations in the Indo Pacific," Strategic Discussion Group, virtual speech, October 14, 2020.

"Operational Way Ahead for Naval Forces in the Pacific," *47th Annual National Naval Officers Association Symposium*, panel, San Diego, CA, August 8, 2019.

"Indo-Pacific Security Strategies," *2019 Navy League Sea Air Space Symposium*, panel, Washington DC, May 6, 2019.

"Sea Service Update-Vice Chiefs," *2019 Navy League Sea Air Space Symposium*, panel, Washington DC, May 7, 2019.

"Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook," *6th Annual Arctic Encounter Symposium*, speech, Seattle, WA, April 26, 2019.

"Security Innovations: Oceans & Air Space," *6th Annual Arctic Encounter Symposium*, panel, Seattle, WA, April 26, 2019.

"VIP Panel Dialogue: Arctic Cooperation in the North Pacific," *6th Annual Arctic Encounter Symposium*, panel, Seattle, WA, April 26, 2019.

"Opening Remarks: Profiles in Courage," *Bay Area Women's Leadership Symposium*, speech, Alameda, CA, March 20, 2019.

"Joint & Federal Arctic Maritime Forces," *Alaska Command Arctic Maritime Symposium*, panel, Anchorage, AK, August 14, 2018.

18. List all digital platforms (including social media and other digital content sites) on which you currently or have formerly operated an account, regardless of whether or not the account was held in your name or an alias. Include the name of an "alias" or "handle" you have used on each of the named platforms. Indicate whether the account is active, deleted, or dormant. Include a link to each account if possible.

Personal Accounts

Facebook: Linda L Fagan (active)

Instagram: LLF85 (active)

LinkedIn: Linda Fagan (active)

Professional Accounts

Twitter: @VComdtUSCG

Facebook/Instagram: @ViceCommandantUSCG

19. Please identify each instance in which you have testified orally or in writing before Congress in a governmental or non-governmental capacity and specify the date and subject matter of each testimony.

07 July 2016 CGMT Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction

07 March 2018 CGMT Implementing Coast Guard Programs

20. Given the current mission, major programs, and major operational objectives of the Coast Guard, what in your background or employment experience do you believe affirmatively qualifies you for appointment to the position for which you have been nominated, and why do you wish to serve in that position?

My diverse background in operations across the breadth of our missions, including a deep grounding in our regulatory and oversight functions, uniquely qualifies me for Commandant. I have led from the front line of operations, managed emergency responses at all levels of our organization, negotiated standards at the international level, and worked in-depth with our interagency partners, most notably the Department of Defense, at the most senior levels. I have a deep respect and understanding of the key role the U.S. Coast Guard plays in ensuring our national economic prosperity and security. I am a collaborative leader who is committed to transparent communications and taking care of our people. I am honored to be offered the opportunity to continue to serve the women and men of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Nation.

21. What do you believe are your responsibilities, if confirmed, to ensure that the Coast Guard has proper management and accounting controls, and what experience do you have in managing a large organization?

- a) I remain fully committed to establishing transparent, efficient financial accounting controls. If confirmed as the Commandant, as the USCG Chief Financial Officer (CFO) I will work to achieve our CFO Audit goals, while continuing to update our organizational financial management systems. Appropriate controls and procedures are a critical element of fiscal responsibility and stewardship of Federal money. I commit to continually improve and mature our organizational fiscal stewardship.

- b) As the Vice Commandant, I have served as the Chief Acquisition Official, responsible for overseeing all acquisitions across the USCG portfolio. I am fully engaged with the CFO and senior leadership to ensure proper execution and development of the USCG's approximately \$11 billion budget. As an Area Commander and District Commander, I led large teams and executed fiduciary oversight of significant operating budgets. I accept full responsibility for my own actions and hold my subordinates accountable for their actions in ensuring compliance with all accounting and oversight requirements. I am familiar with the controls in place and am committed to full transparency of how Federal dollars are used to operate the Coast Guard.

22. What do you believe to be the top three challenges facing the Coast Guard, and why?

Work Force Readiness/Resiliency: The operational readiness of the organization is increasingly stressed as the workforce reacts to the on-going impacts from COVID-19, increased uncertainty, reliable access to health care (particularly mental health), and increasing operational demands. Coast Guard members are energized by the mission, but the stress across numerous fronts is taking a toll. Ensuring pay and entitlement parity with our fellow military service members is not something we take for granted and must be maintained to preserve readiness. In addition, we must increase our focus on recruiting and retaining service members who reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. Creating a culture of inclusion and respect is an all-hands/everyday endeavor and requires leadership at every level in the organization, Department, and Administration.

Capital Asset support and maintenance: New capital assets are game changers across our maritime missions. Cutters, aircraft and boats require access to adequate shore-side infrastructure and predictable multi-year funding to ensure they are reliably maintained for operational readiness. Aging and deteriorating shore-side infrastructure along with increased maintenance cost for the new assets has created a significant budget challenge. Our Enterprise Mission Platform underpins all missions, but we cannot fully leverage technology or data without continuing our Technology Revolution.

Increasing operational complexity and demand signal: We are in an era of Coast Guard ascendancy. Coast Guard services are in high demand, and the demand signal is growing. Peer competitors are leveraging their Coast Guards with a globally deployed approach. International Coast Guards need partnership, leadership, and capacity building. This coupled with expanding high latitude operations, creates a significant demand for engagement across the western Pacific. DOD interoperability and OPLAN commitments creates both opportunity and risk. Our commitment to homeland security is unwavering. The safety and security of the marine transportation system, search and rescue, and contingency response remain no fail missions. In order to balance this increasing demand, we must remain nimble in our operational concepts and leverage new technologies.

I am confident that the agency is poised to meet these challenges and I am grateful for the enduring support of our overseers.

B. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. Describe all financial arrangements, deferred compensation agreements, and other continuing dealings with business associates, clients, or customers. Please include information related to retirement accounts.

Please see my nominee PFDR.

2. Do you have any commitments or agreements, formal or informal, to maintain employment, affiliation, or practice with any business, association or other organization during your appointment? If so, please explain. None.

3. Indicate any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other relationships which could involve potential conflicts of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

None, but should one arise I will obtain advice from a Coast Guard ethics official and will follow that advice.

4. Describe any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction which you have had during the last ten years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that could in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

None, but should one arise I will obtain advice from a Coast Guard ethics official and will follow that advice.

5. Identify any other potential conflicts of interest, and explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

None, but should one arise I will obtain advice from a Coast Guard ethics official and will follow that advice.

6. Describe any activity during the past ten years, including the names of clients represented; in which you have been engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration and execution of law or public policy. None.

C. LEGAL MATTERS

1. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics, professional misconduct, or retaliation by, or been the subject of a complaint to any court, administrative agency, an Inspector General, the Office of Special Counsel, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If yes:

- a. Provide the name of agency, association, committee, or group;
- b. Provide the date the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action was issued or initiated;
- c. Describe the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action;
- d. Provide the results of the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action.

No.

2. Have you ever been investigated, arrested, charged, or held by any Federal, State, or other law enforcement authority of any Federal, State, county, or municipal entity, other than for a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain. No.

3. Have you or any business or nonprofit of which you are or were an officer ever been involved as a party in an administrative agency proceeding, criminal proceeding, or civil litigation? If so, please explain. None.

4. Have you ever been convicted (including pleas of guilty or *nolo contendere*) of any criminal violation other than a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain. None.

5. Have you ever been accused, formally or informally, of sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), age, disability, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, engagement in a protected Equal Employment Opportunity/Equal Opportunity (EEO/EO) activity, whistleblower activity, or any other basis? If so, please explain.

When I commanded the First Coast Guard District, a board recommended a petty officer's separation with an honorable discharge for assault and sexual harassment. I recommended a general discharge and he filed a complaint in June 2016 alleging discrimination. While the discrimination investigation proceeded, the Final Reviewing Authority in Washington approved an honorable discharge and discharge followed in September 2016. The complainant did not respond to the investigator's request for testimony and he did not respond when the agency sent him the investigation in December 2016 and asked whether he desired a final agency decision. A final agency decision on April 26, 2017 concluded that the investigative file did not demonstrate discrimination by a preponderance of the evidence.

6. If you ever served as a general court-martial convening authority involving sexual misconduct or assault, have you ever disapproved the findings of a court-martial related to the offense(s) or reduced the sentence adjudged by a court-martial, other than in connection with a pre-trial agreement. No.

7. Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be disclosed in connection with your nomination. None.

D. RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMITTEE

1. Will you ensure that your department/agency complies with deadlines for information set by congressional committees, and that your department/agency endeavors to timely comply with requests for information from individual Members of Congress, including requests from members in the minority? Yes.

2. Will you ensure that your department/agency does whatever it can to protect congressional witnesses and whistleblowers from reprisal for their testimony and disclosures? Yes.

3. Will you cooperate in providing the Committee with requested witnesses, including technical experts and career employees, with firsthand knowledge of matters of interest to the Committee? Yes.

4. Are you willing to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress on such occasions as you may be reasonably requested to do so? Yes.

5. Do you agree, if confirmed, to keep this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records-including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided?

Yes, in accordance with law and DHS policy and guidance.

6. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this Committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request?

Yes, in accordance with law and DHS policy and guidance.

7. Do you agree, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, Federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this Committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Yes.



Admiral Linda L. Fagan
Vice Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard



Admiral Linda L. Fagan assumed the duties as the 32nd Vice Commandant on June 18th, 2021. As the Vice Service Chief and Chief Operating Officer, Admiral Fagan executes the Commandant's Strategic Intent, manages internal organizational governance and serves as the Component Acquisition Executive.

She reports to Coast Guard Headquarters from a tour as the Commander, Pacific Area, and Commander, Coast Guard Defense Force West. Prior flag assignments include Deputy Commandant for Operations, Policy, and Capability; Commander, First Coast Guard District; and a joint assignment as Deputy Director of Operations for Headquarters, United States Northern Command.



Admiral Fagan has served on all seven continents, from the snows of Ross Island, Antarctica to the heart of Africa, from Tokyo to Geneva, and in many ports along the way. Operational tours include Commander, Sector New York, more than 15 years as a Marine Inspector, and sea duty in USCGC POLAR STAR, a 399ft heavy polar icebreaker. Staff assignments include Executive Assistant to the Commandant and Vice Commandant, and Division Chief of the Foreign and Offshore Compliance Office.

Possessing extensive interagency as well as intergovernmental experience, Admiral Fagan has worked with both the International Maritime Organization and International Labor Organization on flag state and port state issues. This work includes the development of the International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS), and the Consolidated Maritime Labor Convention.

Admiral Fagan holds a Bachelor of Science in Marine Science degree from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, a Master of Science in Marine Affairs degree from the University of Washington, and a Master in National Resource Strategy degree from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. She has earned numerous personal and team awards during her 36 years of Coast Guard service. Admiral Fagan is the longest serving active duty Marine Safety Officer, which has earned her the distinction of being the Coast Guard's first-ever Gold Ancient Trident.

ADMIRAL Linda L. Fagan**Current Assignment**

June 2021 – present Vice Commandant and Chief Operating Officer, USCG HQ, Washington, DC

Assignment History

June 2018 – June 2021 Pacific Area Commander, Alameda, CA
 June 2016 – June 2018 Assistant Commandant for Operations, Policy, and Capabilities; USCG HQ, Washington, DC
 June 2014 – June 2016 District Commander; USCG District One, Boston, MA
 June 2012 – June 2014 Deputy Director of Operations; U.S. Northcom, Colorado Springs, CO
 June 2010 – June 2012 Commander; USCG Sector New York, New York, NY
 June 2008 – June 2010 Executive Assistant/Executive Secretariat to the Commandant and the Vice Commandant; USCG HQ, Washington, DC
 July 2007 – June 2008 Duty Under Instruction; Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, Washington, DC
 July 2004 – June 2007 Executive Officer, Activities Europe, Rotterdam, Netherlands
 June 2000 – July 2004 Division Chief; Foreign and Offshore Vessel Compliance, USCG HQ, Washington, DC
 Aug 1998 – June 2000 Duty Under Instruction; University of Washington, Seattle, WA
 July 1995 – Aug 1998 Chief of Port Operations; Marine Safety Office, Savannah, GA
 Nov 1991 – July 1995 Vessel Inspector; Marine Safety Office, New Orleans, LA
 May 1991 – Nov 1991 Duty Under Instruction; Industry Training, Passenger Vessel Association, New Orleans Steamboat Company, New Orleans, LA
 July 1989 – May 1991 Marine Casualty Investigator; Marine Safety Office, Mobile, AL
 July 1987 – July 1989 Marine Inspector; Marine Safety Office Puget Sound, Seattle, WA
 July 1985 – July 1987 Deck Watch Officer; USCGC POLAR STAR, Seattle, WA

Educational Summary

2007 – 2008 Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University; MS in National Resource Strategy
 1998 – 2000 University of Washington, School of Marine Affairs; Masters in Marine Affairs
 1981 – 1985 United States Coast Guard Academy; BS in Marine Science

Military Personal Awards and Significant National Recognition or Achievement

2016 Legion of Merit
 2014 Defense Superior Service Medal
 2012 Legion of Merit
 2010 Legion of Merit
 2007 Meritorious Service Medal
 2004 Legion of Merit
 1998 Commendation Medal
 1995 Commendation Medal

Significant Current Professional Credentials or Recent Activities

2017 USCG Gold Ancient Trident
 2001 USCG Marine Safety Insignia

The CHAIRWOMAN. Admiral Fagan, did you want to introduce your daughters?

Admiral FAGAN. Sure. So behind me is Lieutenant Eileen Fagan who's serving here in Washington, D.C. She's a Coast Guard Academy graduate. And then my oldest daughter Moira, who is working with the Pew Research Center here in D.C., as well, and it's really exciting to have them both here with me.

Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you. Welcome. I'm sure you're very proud of your mom.

Admiral Fagan, one of the issues obviously that's brought even more attention and focus since Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the Arctic and the importance of being able to have icebreakers to move through the Arctic.

The Arctic Security Cutter, the next class of medium icebreakers, will be critically important to America's interest in the Arctic Region.

What is the Coast Guard doing to speed up the acquisition of the Arctic Security Cutter?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you, Chair. We're focused on the Polar Security Cutter and are really excited about the opportunity to build and operate the Polar Security Cutter for the nation, and as we now, you know, are on budget and moving forward that acquisition, we're working now to determine the requirements and capabilities that are needed for an Arctic Security Cutter.

I share the same sense of urgency as the Committee that as a nation we need that capacity and ships in the Arctic. We're an Arctic nation and creating that presence is important as we move forward.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Would you say we're under-resourced at the moment?

Admiral FAGAN. We are on a trajectory that gets us—you know, the Polar Security Cutter—you know, the need is now and we need to continue with a sense of urgency to build those ships to ensure that we can protect our own national sovereignty as it pertains to the Arctic.

The CHAIR. Well, I think compared to where the Russians are and the interests that we've shown in this level of aggression, I think you have to assume that there could be other aggressions and clearly having claims to the Arctic as we do and other countries do, I think we need to get these resources in place.

Another resource issue, you know, the Columbia River Bar has been referred to as "The Graveyard of the Pacific," and you've been out there. You know how dangerous those waters are.

I appreciate that you'd like to take me out on one of the 52-foot motor lifeboats. I'm not sure I'm ready to go. You'll have to pick a very calm day on these heavy-duty vessels, but p—

Senator WICKER. I want to put that in the form of a motion.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIR. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

But the Columbia River does support about \$24 billion in shipping activities. So getting this safety vessel, getting more safety vessels, like the 52-foot motor lifeboats because of their inability to operate now, is critical.

So what will you do to support the 52-foot motor lifeboat?

Admiral FAGAN. So, Chair, thank you. The 52-foot motor lifeboats were taken out of service because of overall safety and reliability issues. They were no longer safe for our crews to operate and did not meet safety requirements for the mariners that we would use to save and tow.

I'm committed to replacing the 52s. We're working hard on the requirements and identifying what asset we can, you know, move to to replace the 52s. I share your sense of urgency to mitigate the gap. When the 52s came out of service, we added additional 47 assets, but understand that is not the final solution and look forward to working with the Committee to being in position to acquire and field replacements for the 52s.

The CHAIR. Thank you. And last, I heard you say that when you recruit a Coastie but you retain a family. So I know that you get that the Coast Guard needs to have these additional issues to make sure that we are an inclusive and supportive environment.

What are you going to do to work on childcare issues for Coast Guard families?

Admiral FAGAN. Childcare is a critical issue and need for Coast Guard families. Having access to quality childcare is one of the, you know, primary needs for many of our families.

I'm committed to working with the Committee to ensure that Coast Guard members have access to childcare. We're excited about some of the child development centers that are being built and really excited about the subsidies that the Committee has helped support. It allows a flexible ability for families to meet those childcare needs and obviously, you know, health care is also important for families as they serve our Nation.

The CHAIR. Since obviously you have a big footprint in Seattle, are you committed to getting good facilities there for the Seattle Coast Guard community?

Admiral FAGAN. So we're excited about what's going on in Seattle. We look forward to working with you to ensure that, you know, childcare is a primary area of focus as we move to home port the Polar Security Cutters there and look forward to working with you on making sure that Coast Guard families have access to the childcare that they need.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. OK. Well, let's just make sure we understand on the icebreakers.

Going forward, Admiral, are we going to have enough icebreakers and what do we really need?

Admiral FAGAN. So we're on record that as a nation we need six icebreakers, at least three of which are heavy and we need one now, and we are on that path forward.

I share the sense of urgency with regard to creating that actual presence in the Arctic so that we can ensure our national sovereignty and security. We are an Arctic nation and it is important that we have ships to do that.

As I said, we're continuing to look at what an Arctic Security Cutter and what requirements and capabilities it needs but look forward to having that conversation with the Committee.

Senator WICKER. Other members may come and go during this hearing, depending on their schedules, and bring this up, also, but you've heard the Chair of the Committee and the Ranking Member begin with this. So I think we've made our position clear that we view this as very important.

So let's talk about the sort of thing you and I saw in Baltimore: facilities, piers, boat stations, housing units. More than half of these facilities are beyond their service life. We regularly see crumbling buildings and pier faces, flooded-out structures.

What are the types of safety hazards, operational, and personnel that we face with this \$3 billion infrastructure and maintenance backlog?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. Obviously the backlog of infrastructure in the Coast Guard is well known to the Committee. I'm committed to working to reduce that backlog and ensure that our Coast Guard members are not just operating from operational infrastructure that is adequate and meets the needs of the state of our Coast Guard but that also includes the buildings and facilities that we're asking members to work from and it is vital that we continue to make those investments to ensure that Coast Guard members have safe, adequate access to working facilities as they help operate our Coast Guard.

Every Coast Guard operation starts and ends from a shore facility and we need to invest in those facilities.

Senator WICKER. Thank you. Clearly this Congress needs to look in the mirror on items such as that.

Let's talk about diversity. Interesting that the Coast Guard Academy is the most diverse of our service academies and yet the enlisted ranks are the least diverse.

Do you have any idea why this is, and have you had a chance to look through my USCG Act and the proposals, such as working with the HBCUs or Junior ROTC to increase our and broaden our outreach and diversity in the enlisted ranks?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. Diversity is absolutely a primary focus area. We are stronger as an organization with a diverse workforce and I do not intend on shying away from focusing on the recruiting that we need to do to ensure that we have that diverse workforce.

We're excited about some of the JROTC programs that have been stood up. There's just great opportunity there to help improve diversity across the ranks.

We are looking to recruit from the same pool that the other services are and recruiting is really a primary focus area and done well, includes bringing the diversity into the organization that we need then to retain and help grow into the senior leadership ranks on both the officer and enlisted side.

Senator WICKER. You know, the recruiting challenges we have in the services are much like the workforce challenges we have in the private sector. It is certainly something that we wrestle with, Madam Chair.

Let me say this about Junior ROTC. There's a Rand study from several years ago extolling the effectiveness and virtues of Junior ROTC and until I was made aware of this I didn't realize that even in poorly performing secondary schools there are a subset of stu-

dents who excel, who make better grades, who graduate at a higher rate and who go on to higher education and that subset is Junior ROTC.

We can also utilize the services for compensation of former members of the service, many of whom are former enlisted, retired enlisted. It is a hugely successful program that we've added to also in the National Defense Act each year for the last several years and so I'm glad to know that you have paid attention to that, that you are interested in that.

It is a program that works and is not quite receiving the acclaim that it should.

So with that, I'll yield back, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Klobuchar.

**STATEMENT OF HON. AMY KLOBUCHAR,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA**

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much, Senator Cantwell, Senator Wicker, for holding this important hearing, and I'm very excited about your nomination, Admiral.

We spoke yesterday and we talked about the fact that my state includes the Port of Duluth. I was just actually there, as I mentioned, last week at the Duluth Coast Guard Station, at the Port of Duluth with Lt. Commander Joel Wright, and we are very excited about the new Cutter Spar which is, as you know, named after the U.S. Coast Guard Women's Reserve that was so active in World War II and a big part of our world up there.

We've got more than 35 million tons of cargo moving through the Port of Duluth each year. When it comes to the Great Lakes, actually that port is the largest port by tonnage and one of the Nation's top 20 ports. So we always find a way to be Number 1 and that is tonnage.

So in your testimony and in our discussions, you mentioned your commitment to our Nation's icebreaking fleet and the work in keeping the Great Lakes ports open and safe.

Do you have the necessary resources and could you talk about the importance of these ice-cutters for transporting goods to the rest of the world and bringing things in in the Upper Midwest?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you, Senator. I am committed to fielding the icebreaking capacity that we need as a nation, particularly as it pertains to the Great Lakes and the inland waterways system.

Our priority is an icebreaker that is at least as capable as the current *Mackinaw* and we are working the requirements document for that investment and look forward to working with the Committee to ensure that we're on a timeline to, you know, begin the acquisition on a cutter to ensure access to the critical ports in the Great Lakes, particularly during the challenging winter months.

That icebreaker is part of a system and again just look forward to having that conversation with the Committee and we're committed as a priority to a heavy icebreaker in the Great Lakes.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK. Just with the supply chain issues, Senator Thune and I just passed a bill out of the Senate on this. I'm not going to focus on that right now, but what are some of your

big challenges the Coast Guard's facing when trying to manage shipping vessels?

There's been congestion, as we know, at some of the ports and what more should Congress be doing?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. We're all familiar with particularly the congestion that was experienced along some of the ports on the West Coast, and the Coast Guard, you know, in our roles as captain of the port to ensure that the safety and security of our waterways has been working with the port community to reduce that congestion by, you know, getting earlier notice of ships departures so that time can be adjusted and they arrive then just in time for their berth and not needing to queue for extended periods of time.

We've got a great set of authorities and great set of port partners around the country and are committed to ensuring the reliable safety operation of our maritime transportation system.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. As part of our turning to the international broader efforts to help the country of Ukraine defend their democracy against an unprovoked attack by Russia, the President recently banned Russian-flagged ships from coming to U.S. ports.

Can you talk about how under your leadership the Coast Guard will enforce this mandate?

Admiral FAGAN. We are actively engaged and monitoring that mandate. We're working with the interagency. We're aware of the ban on Russian-flagged vessels and should one attempt to enter, we would use our authorities, captain of the port authorities to deny entry to Russian vessels.

I'm confident that the system is in place to ensure we are able to not allow Russian-flagged ships to enter the U.S. and enjoy a great interagency partnership on that.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you. Yesterday we talked about— one last question here on Canada. I co-chair with Senator Crapo the U.S.-Canada Interparliamentarian Group, worked a lot on Canada, care a lot about it. In Minnesota we can see Canada from our porch.

Could you talk about the efforts of the Coast Guard to coordinate with our friendly neighbor to the north?

Admiral FAGAN. We enjoy an incredible relationship with our Canadian counterparts, whether it's Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada, or other Canadian officials. We've got a great partnership, you know, in the Great Lakes as it pertains to the St. Lawrence Seaway in the Pacific Northwest. We could not have better partners with Canada and we, the Coast Guard, look for every opportunity to strengthen that partnership and work alongside our Canadian counterparts.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. All right. Well, thank you very much, Admiral, and I look forward to supporting you. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Senator Blumenthal.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,
U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT**

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your service and let me begin with the easiest part of my questions which relates to the Coast Guard Museum. I know the Coast Guard is committed to it. We have made it a pri-

ority among the Connecticut Delegation. We think that the Coast Guard Museum is long overdue. It's the only service that lacks one, and it is essential as a tribute well deserved to the Coast Guard but also to tell the Coast Guard's story in recruiting and it is important to diversity, inclusion, and to the state of Connecticut.

So perhaps, first, do you agree that building the museum has to be a priority?

Admiral FAGAN. We're excited about the opportunity to build the Coast Guard Museum and seeing it come into life there in New London. It is a priority for the organization. We appreciate the budget support to help the last service to get a museum.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. And will you continue to advocate and invest in it?

Admiral FAGAN. We absolutely—I am committed to the museum as a priority. I'll continue to advocate and invest and we look forward to being able to tell the Coast Guard story to a broader audience through the museum.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. We're happy that the 2022 budget has \$50 million for building the National Coast Guard Museum in New London, but we have to continue that momentum, particularly raising funds privately.

Can you suggest some additional next steps that we should take to keep that momentum going?

Admiral FAGAN. We appreciate the support of the Committee. We'll continue to work with you as we, you know, look at what investments and financial support need to happen next.

We internal to the service are focused on, you know, our piece which is helping build out the actual story and what we're going to showcase and highlight and look forward to the partnership and team effort as we move forward to realizing the museum.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Let me turn to the Coast Guard Academy. I know that Senator Wicker touched on it somewhat.

What steps are you prepared to take to increase the diversity of the entering class this year and next year in the immediate future? As you know, the Coast Guard still is predominantly male. The percentage of black cadets I think is about 5 percent.

You would agree that it is very much a work in progress. What specific steps can you commit to do?

Admiral FAGAN. So we've made great strides at the Coast Guard Academy with regard to the diversity of the entering class. You know, the classes are coming in actually close to 40+ percent women. We've increased the numbers of African Americans and underrepresented minorities entering the class.

I do not intend on wavering from the commitment we have made to diversity at the Academy and will continue to focus on, you know, bringing the best talent possible into the organization as it pertains to the entering class at the Coast Guard Academy.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Do you have a goal? Right now I understand the Academy's 62 percent men, 38 percent women. Do you have a goal, 50/50?

Admiral FAGAN. My goal is the best talent we can recruit. It's what make us great as a service and an organization and we'll continue to focus on making sure that talent to the best extent pos-

sible reflects the diversity that we carry in society and committed again to the best talent to bring into the service.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I'm told, I think it's in the Improving Gender Diversity in the Coast Guard Study by Rand in 2019, that women are exiting the service at a rate 12 to 13 percent faster than men at the 10-year mark of their careers. There's some obvious explanations relating to raising a family and childcare and housing and two careers in the Coast Guard.

What can be done to retain more of the women talent, and I agree with you we want talent and dedication in the Coast Guard, but what can be done in that area?

Admiral FAGAN. So the women's retention study does tell us that we lose women at an increased percentage, particularly at the mid-grade point. We have been focused on that.

Currently, under Admiral Schultz's leadership, I intend on continuing to focus on it and looking at what policies, whether it's assignment policies or other personnel policies, that we can adjust to be more responsive as not just women but men, as well, particularly at mid-career points, have family challenges, and do not intend on backing away from the journey that we've been on there.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thanks very much, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you.

I see Senator Blackburn. Are you ready to ask a question?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator BLACKBURN. Yes, Madam Chairman, I am.

Admiral Fagan, thank you so much for your time yesterday and then also for today.

I want to kind of pick up where we left off yesterday and talk a little bit about the multilateral facilities, the organizational structures, these partnerships we have with other nations, especially in the Indo-Pacific, and I think the future fusion centers are really important, especially when we're talking about the Counterterrorism Information Facility there in Singapore and the Oceana Fusion Facility and the Indo-Pacific Maritime Coordination Center.

So talk to me a little bit about the Coast Guard's role. How do you see that role expanding and if you don't have a specific role, how are you going to develop something in your longer-term strategy?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you, Senator. The Coast Guard does quite a bit of work both multi-nationally and bilaterally across, you know, a number of key partners internationally and obviously the INDOPACOM is a key area of focus for many of the issues we chase, you know, we are involved with as it pertains to homeland security requires a strong partnership and bilateral approach.

We engage with particularly partner Coast Guards and in some cases Navys not just only throughout the INDOPACOM but also Europe and Africa. We are stronger together and having great strong partnerships really helps ensure our own national security.

Senator BLACKBURN. Excellent. And then when you look at workforce and you mentioned a bit earlier diversification in the workforce, and I want you to touch on your plans to create geographic

flexibility for workers while you're trying to do the staffing allocations, especially as you rely more on technology.

Admiral FAGAN. So my priority is absolutely recruiting, so ensure we bring members in in the numbers that we need, but then, it's not even a second, equally as important is retaining that workforce and we're in the process of looking at policies and processes that we have in place as it pertains to our talent management system and need to look to create opportunity for those who want to serve and that will by its general nature require us to look at ways to improve flexibility and stability for our workforce.

Senator BLACKBURN. And I appreciate that Senator Wicker mentioned to you the facilities and I can't let it go without saying we are thrilled with the new facility there in Memphis and we're pleased to receive that attention to that facility.

I think that goes a long way in helping with that workforce, the geographic flexibility, the opportunity for a more diverse workforce to be able to serve. So we thank you for that.

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you.

Senator BLACKBURN. Let me ask you this. Would you agree that it's important for the Coast Guard to work closely with USACE, USACE when there are permitting issues that would negatively impact safe navigation on our waterways?

Admiral FAGAN. The U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers enjoys a long and strong partnership and relationship and we remain committed to working with the Army Corps of Engineers on waterways issues.

That partnership is strong and together we ensure the safe, reliable transportation of commerce and have no intention of walking away from that great long relationship.

Senator BLACKBURN. And I would imagine that you would agree with me that it is the Coast Guard that has the expertise when it comes to assessing those safe navigation corridors for vessels?

Admiral FAGAN. The Coast Guard is committed to our role in ensuring, you know, safe navigation corridors. There's obviously a lot of complexity to that, but we play a key role and will continue in that role.

Senator BLACKBURN. And I think that if the Coast Guard identified a potential vessel navigation safety issue with a USACE permit application and then made a navigation safety-related recommendation to them, would it be fair to say it would be your expectation that they would follow that recommendation?

Admiral FAGAN. So we have a process with the Corps of Engineers. I'm not familiar with the specifics of, you know, particular permits, but we are engaged in the process. We'll continue to follow that process and we take our role of ensuring safe navigation—really it's a priority for us and we will continue to engage with the Army Corps of Engineers and to ensure that those permits are issued in a manner that's safe and responsible.

Senator BLACKBURN. And we appreciate that you take that leadership role with the Corps of Engineers and that you focus on that navigation safety.

Thank you so much.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Senator Blackburn.

Senator Hickenlooper.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN HICKENLOOPER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO**

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Thank you, Madam Chair, and, Admiral, thank you so much for your service, for being here today. It's really impressive.

Due to the drastic warming of our planet, natural disasters have been intensified and become more frequent. The Arctic is now warming at roughly double the rate as the rest of the world and the sea ice is declining to historic lows.

Can you discuss a little about the impact of climate change, particularly in the Arctic Region, and how that affects the Coast Guard's operations and responsibilities?

Admiral FAGAN. The warming climate has increased the amount of water that, you know, is available and amount of time it's available in the Arctic. The need for icebreakers to protect our national sovereignty is critical.

What we're seeing in the Arctic is an increased pattern of use, whether it's cruise ships or other vessels, and their ability to access those waterways, and we're committed to our role in ensuring the safety and security and protecting the environment in the Arctic as we do in the rest of the United States.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Yes. I couldn't agree more. The Government Accountability Office has identified a majority of the U.S. Coast Guard infrastructure as beyond its serviceable lifespan, which is obviously a threat, and when you add that with the compounding threat of climate change, it underscores the need for building in resiliency wherever we can.

So if you're confirmed, how would you ensure that the Coast Guard incorporates climate change in their assessments and their programs, their policies, operational decisions, et cetera?

Admiral FAGAN. You've correctly identified the infrastructure backlog that the service currently has. I'm committed to working with the Committee to reduce that backlog and as we are able to make investments in new infrastructure, resiliency particularly in mind toward the impact of changing climate are a big part of how we make those investments.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Great. I appreciate that. I think that's going to take a lot of work to figure out how to do that efficiently.

I also have a particular interest obviously in this committee overseas, space and science, the subcommittee does, which I chair, and obviously we have increased launches and as we know going up, what goes up does eventually come down, and during launches but also in re-entries, the Coast Guard plays a key role to keep our coastal waters clear of marine traffic through what they call limited access safety zones.

You're also a key component of the search and rescue, not to mention law enforcement duties in regard to these issues.

So, Admiral, as space launches increase in frequency, do you feel that the Coast Guard is sufficiently equipped with the expertise and resources to maintain safety in this regard?

Admiral FAGAN. So we remain committed to our role in ensuring that the safety and security of the waterways in and around, you know, the United States and, you know, we continue to work with

the space launch communities to ensure that that occurs and look forward to working that issue in the future.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Great. You're so concise. I have to say this is one of the first witnesses where I think I'll get in four questions.

Finally, let me just say that we recently passed the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, I'm sure you followed that, you know, to push back against foreign shipping abuses targeting American exporters. Many of our small businesses are victims of that.

In addition to the Federal Maritime Commission's work at the ports, U.S. Coast Guard monitors cargo traffic near our coasts and waterways.

So, if confirmed, could you describe how you'd go about continuing and maybe even expanding the Coast Guard's partnership with the Federal Maritime Commission?

Admiral FAGAN. So again, you know, the Coast Guard role in the safety of shipping and the commerce and flows of cargo come and go in the United States. We have a very specific role and authorities, but we continue to work with partners in that realm.

I remain committed to ensuring that we enjoy the economic prosperity that we do as a country as it pertains to maritime commerce that's entering and exiting the country.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Great. Terrific. I yield back 9 seconds to the Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you.
Senator Sullivan.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAN SULLIVAN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA**

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Admiral, good to see you the other day. I really enjoyed our discussion. Congratulations. I'm a big supporter of yours and I think it's historic in many ways, a great career. This is going to be important for a lot of people.

I have three daughters. I think it's great to see that, you know, we have the first female member of the Joint Chiefs. I think it's great. So congrats.

So obviously you're seeing the bipartisan support here in this committee on the issue of icebreakers. You haven't really talked yet about the gap. I mean, we obviously have a gap with the issue of the HEALY. We're finally building them both here and in the NDAA.

I worked with the Chairman but also worked with my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee about getting six authorized Coast Guard announced that, you know, the new ones that are being built will replace the current ones that are home-based in Seattle which makes sense, but to me strategically as we look for a bigger fleet than just two or three because we need a heck of a bigger fleet in my view, Russia has 54, we have two, one is broken, in terms of icebreakers, I also think it makes sense when we're looking operationally strategically to have some of our icebreakers actually based where the ice is, right, in the Arctic. We're an Arctic nation because of my state, the great state of Alaska.

So can you talk to me about some of the issues we talked about but particularly this gap, what we're looking at doing? I saw the President put forward, you know, essentially a gap-filler to purchase a commercially available icebreaker to help on that gap as we're building them, but also the importance, and then this issue of a study.

We've been working with you guys for about 5 years now on a study with regard to what areas in Alaska can handle icebreakers and need to finish that soon as we discussed, but can you talk to me about any and all those issues? You've seen a real bipartisan focus which is good in this committee and, by the way, the Armed Services Committee, as well, on icebreakers and the need. We clearly need them.

Admiral FAGAN. We are an Arctic nation and increased icebreaker capacity is critical and vital to our national interests and if we receive the appropriation and the acquisition relief we are looking forward to fielding a commercially available icebreaker, and I agree and commit that, you know, identifying a home port will be important for that icebreaker and it's logical that that ship should be near the operating area where it is needed.

With regard to the home port study, I am committed to completing the home port study and ensuring that with the Committee as we look at opportunities for home porting a commercially available icebreaker.

Senator SULLIVAN. When are you—I'd like kind of a sense of a timeline—

Admiral FAGAN. I can—

Senator SULLIVAN.—on that, Admiral. As you and I discussed, it has been a bit of a frustration. I think I have legitimate frustrations. It's an issue I've been talking to the Coast Guard for about 5 years now and the President put out a memo on this. President Trump, you know, writ large, kind of, hey, we need this broader strategy. Let's look at these studies. I think that's pretty good direction when you get it from the Commander in Chief.

So can you give me a timeline on that? I know that you are already working on it.

Admiral FAGAN. We are working on it. A lot of work has been done. After our discussions, I went back and have been working with the team. My goal is to have that team no later than this fall.

Senator SULLIVAN. OK. That's still—we can talk about it further. I think that's still—that's a long time and this is a really urgent issue.

Let me go to the other topic we talked about was the issue of shipbuilding capacity, ship maintenance capacity really throughout the whole country. We just came from Armed Services hearing and the need for industrial-based diversification is important.

As you know, there's a capacity in Alaska that we've talked about on ship maintenance and repair that actually would save the Coast Guard a lot of money.

Can I get your commitment to continue to work with me on that? We've passed language now in two different Coast Guard authorization acts that was given to us by the Coast Guard to fix an issue in Alaska and I want to get your commitment to work with me on that.

Admiral FAGAN. Yes. I am absolutely committed to continue to work with you on that issue, that the shipbuilding base is fundamental to our national security.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair and Admiral. Again, congratulations.

The CHAIR. Unless I see Senator Peters or Senator Tester on our side who are going to join us remotely, which I don't, so I think we'll go to Senator Fischer.

Thank you, Senator Fischer.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DEB FISCHER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEBRASKA**

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you, Admiral, for being here today, and congratulations on your nomination.

There have been a number of cases concerning unwanted sexual contact at the Coast Guard Academy. An anonymous 2018 Gender Relations Survey completed by cadets showed that 45 percent of women and 17 percent of men said they experienced sexual harassment.

Can you walk me through the protocols that are in place for a victim of sexual assault?

Admiral FAGAN. So I am committed to eradicating sexual assault from the service. It erodes readiness, it's a crime, and it does not have any place in the Coast Guard. It's inconsistent with our core values.

We have done quite a bit over the last several years to ensure when someone experiences sexual assault that they have confidence in the reporting system, that is has taken seriously and investigated, and, where founded, appropriate, you know, disciplinary action is taken.

I have confidence in that system. I'm committed to it and again any sexual assault is one assault too many, whether it's in the service or at the Coast Guard Academy. It's not consistent with our core values.

Senator FISCHER. With your protocols for victims, do you provide counseling? What kind of services do you offer?

Admiral FAGAN. We assign a victim advocate to victims to ensure that they're able to get all of the health care and support that they need in the aftermath of an assault, and we've made investments in that and are ensuring again that survivors have all the support that they need should they unfortunately experience an assault.

Senator FISCHER. And what protocols do you follow for the assailants?

Admiral FAGAN. Again, when reported, we use our Coast Guard Investigative Services to thoroughly investigate those reports. Every report is taken seriously and followed through and then we are, you know, aligning with the provisions across the military to ensure that the military justice piece of that is also followed through.

Senator FISCHER. OK. Thank you. Recent news reports note low recruitment numbers for the Coast Guard due in part to school closures and mitigation efforts during the pandemic.

The Coast Guard Recruiting Command has set a target for 4,200 new recruits this year. What actions is the Coast Guard undertaking to boost that recruitment numbers and how are you going to improve the recruiting strategy not only to recruit but also to retain?

Admiral FAGAN. Yes. Our recruiting challenge is not unique to the Coast Guard. All of the military services are recruiting from a shrinking pool of eligible people, people who, you know, have met the requirements for service and have a propensity to serve.

Recruiting is absolutely a priority area now and will be, if I'm confirmed as Commandant. We are beginning to move resources around to ensure that we are recruiting in a way that will allow us to continue to operate the Coast Guard and it's really Job 1 for all of us to ensure we're bringing that talent into the service.

Senator FISCHER. Admiral, we've also heard much discussion concerning the ongoing supply chain challenges, especially at our Nation's ports.

How do you view the Coast Guard's role in ensuring our supply chains are operating effectively and how do you view your part in working with partners in the maritime community to improve those supply chain issues that we're facing?

Admiral FAGAN. The Coast Guard is a key component of the maritime transportation system, particularly as it pertains to ports and potential, you know, port congestion.

Our captains of the ports regularly bring together all of the components of the large complex port system to ensure that we have safe, reliable maritime transportation and commerce. I'm committed to continuing those relationships and meeting whatever the next challenges are as it pertains to the supply chain.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you very much, ma'am. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR. Thank you. Senator Young, if you're ready.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TODD YOUNG,
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA**

Senator YOUNG. Admiral Fagan, congratulations on your nomination. I know from our conversation earlier this year, you're a dedicated public servant and look forward to supporting your nomination. I think you'll do quite well in this position.

There's obviously a difference of opinion between Congress, the Coast Guard, and industry about how to best tackle the challenge of maximizing transit on the Great Lakes during the winter months, but I'm confident that this year we'll be able to make progress in the legislation that Senator Baldwin and I have introduced on this issue.

I value your insight into ensuring the effectiveness of that legislation.

If confirmed, do you commit to making the design, selection, and construction of a new Great Lakes icebreaker a priority, given years of congressional support for this need?

Admiral FAGAN. Senator, I am committed as a priority to fielding the heavy icebreaker capacity that the Great Lakes need to supplement the current Great Lakes capacity up there.

It is a priority. We are working as an organization to identify the requirements and look forward to working with you and the Committee to ensure that we're able to move forward on that acquisition.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Admiral. Do you also commit to working with this committee and stakeholders to improve and make more readily available data on navigation during the icebreaking season?

Admiral FAGAN. To the extent we've got that information, we all need a reliable access to that transportation system. I understand the dynamics and challenges as it pertains to the winter months in the Great Lakes and will share whatever data we've got available.

Senator YOUNG. OK. Thank you. Can you speak, Admiral, to how repealing the current prohibition on a common design for both the GLIB and the POLAR Icebreaker will speed up the process for increasing icebreaking capacity in the Great Lakes while providing more value to the taxpayer?

Admiral FAGAN. Yes. So the Great Lakes is a system and it requires icebreakers. I am committed to, as a priority, fielding a heavy icebreaker that's at least as capable as the current *Mackinaw*. That is our first priority.

There will be other opportunity for additional ice-breaking capacity as it pertains to that system that enables safe commerce throughout the Great Lakes.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Admiral. I'm going to move on to the Indo-Pacific. When we last spoke, I found your insight as the previous Commander of the Coast Guard Pacific invaluable.

As you know, I believe we must use all the resources at our disposal to push back on China's course of Malign activities, including in the maritime domain. I believe it's inevitable that your service will have more work on its hands in the Indo-Pacific.

From your own experience, can you speak to how the Coast Guard's Title X authorities were incorporated into the mission and responsibilities of the Indo-Pacific Command?

Admiral FAGAN. So during my time as Pacific Area Commander, we always had a number of national security deployments into the Indo-Pacific Region under the operational control of the Pacific Fleet and Indo-PACOM Commander.

Those Coast Guard assets were doing Coast Guard work in partnership with partners throughout the region. We are really in our sort of the sweet space as a Coast Guard when we're in that competitive space working with like-minded partners in the region to counter China and other national actors and national threats.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Admiral. Last, if Congress and the President require the Coast Guard to increase its presence of both personnel and assets in the Indo-Pacific, as Commandant, would you seek to reallocate resources to the Pacific from other areas or would you feel the need to come to Congress to seek increased funding and a higher end strength?

Admiral FAGAN. We make those resource allocation decisions as a service now. As we look at the threats coming from the Pacific, we continue to, you know, look at how we can posture the Coast Guard to counter those threats.

I've focused on the large ship deployments. We have a lot that goes on short of the ships where we have sent training teams into regions and ports. At this point if, you know, there's congressional support for additional activity, we will look to do that.

The Coast Guard, with the assets and resources we have now, continue to be postured against, you know, threats from the Indo-Pacific and look forward to working with you as we ensure that we're countering that appropriately as a Coast Guard.

Senator YOUNG. So reallocation of resources and higher end strength and more resources?

Admiral FAGAN. Yes. At this point, we have the resources we need to counter the demand signal for our services in Indo-PACOM, and should that change we'll work with Congress on what that might need to look like.

Senator YOUNG. I understand you don't want to commit to a particular path.

Thank you so much, Admiral.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Senator Young.

Senator Peters.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GARY PETERS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MICHIGAN**

Senator PETERS. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. Admiral, congratulations on your nomination, and thank you for your years of service to the Coast Guard.

I would first like to discuss with you a longstanding priority of mine and that's the U.S. Coast Guard's Great Lakes Center of Expertise for Oil Spill Preparedness and Response which was going to be co-located at Lake Superior State University and NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory.

Back in 2017 the then-Commandant of the Coast Guard informed me after some questions that I had related to another oil disaster that the agency or the Coast Guard was not really prepared for a major oil spill in the Great Lakes, saying that more science and research was needed to clean up in freshwater, which is a whole lot different than cleaning up in saltwater, and in response to this conversation, I led the legislation to establish the center signed into law in 2018.

It has now received funding after a lot of effort to establish it and I have also confirmed that the center was programmed into the Coast Guard's base budget for Fiscal Year 2022 based on previous year's spending levels, meaning \$3.4 million will be expended to operate this critical center.

The Great Lakes, as a Michigander, I can say, are not just an economic engine and an ecological treasure. They're really part of our DNA, something that we're very passionate about, and we know that an oil spill in the Great Lakes would be absolutely catastrophic for Michigan, for the country, and a body of a water that provides drinking water for 40 million people.

So we need to do everything we can to protect them, prevent a disaster, including how to effectively respond to a potential spill, particularly when we have pipelines traversing the Lakes that present a risk.

The center's going to play a vital role in doing that and Lake Superior State University in Sioux Ste. Marie will serve as the formal hub and a home to a supervising lieutenant commander and certainly I believe it's an ideal location that's in close proximity to oil transportation, infrastructure, pipelines, navigational locks. The Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory in Ann Arbor also brings incredible resources.

So bottom line, I look forward to working with you, with Lake Superior State University, and the Great Lakes Research Institute in Ann Arbor.

My question for you, Admiral, is could you provide me an update on when you believe there will be a formal opening of the center?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you, Senator. I'm absolutely committed to that Great Lakes Center of Expertise. There's plenty of work and opportunity there. I'll need to get back with you on when a date for a formal opening may be. I don't have that.

Senator PETERS. Well, I appreciate that. I know there has been some ongoing work. We just want to kind of get that formalized and so would appreciate to having you get back to me on that.

If you could also address then your kind of view as to why it's important for the center to operate and how important it is for us and for the working closely with the Coast Guard to protect all freshwater ecosystems and oil preparedness and response, of course, is vital in there. How do you approach that mission?

Admiral FAGAN. Yes. Obviously, I mean, you've stated the impact and, you know, how important the Great Lakes is and the ecosystem is, and the Great Lakes Center of Expertise will help us understand that and protect it and again this is in our role, the Coast Guard role in ensuring the safety, security, and environmental protection of our waterways and really, really look forward to the opportunity that the Center of Expertise provides for us.

Senator PETERS. Right, right. I'd also like to bring to you an issue that is a priority for me and for folks living in the Upper Peninsula where the Lake Superior State University is, but many folks up there are Federal employees working for the Coast Guard. They work for the Soo Locks and elsewhere and they lack federally-owned and operated childcare facilities.

My staff has been told that one reason why there aren't any of these childcare facilities in the UP is because it's not financially prudent for the Coast Guard to own and operate one in the area, but failing to do so makes the jobs of these Guardsmen and women clearly more difficult, on top of their roles patrolling the area that's home to an international border and significant cargo that goes through the Soo Locks.

So my question for you, Admiral, is, if confirmed, would you commit to help us seek options to expand childcare access for families that are serving in the UP, including perhaps a pilot program or a public/private partnership with childcare providers in the area that could help not only Coast Guard personnel but other Federal folks who are up there who are really finding it very difficult to access this essential service?

Admiral FAGAN. I am committed to improving access to childcare for our Coast Guard members and look forward to working with you on what might those solutions be in your region.

Senator PETERS. Great. Well, I appreciate it. Thank you very much, Admiral.

The CHAIR. Thank you, Senator Peters.
Senator Scott.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICK SCOTT,
U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA**

Senator SCOTT. Thank you, Chair Cantwell.

Admiral, congratulations on your nomination as the next Coast Guard Commandant, and thank you for your 36 years of dedicated service to this country.

I've been up here a little over three years and I've been blessed with two Coasties. My first one, Chelsea, this weekend, she's got a ship down in Key West, and Sasha. They're doing a great job. So thank you for the individuals you've led to my office to make sure we do our job better.

So I'm a huge supporter of the 56,000 Active Duty Reserve, and civilian men and women that comprise the Coast Guard and what they do on a daily basis, especially with the 25,000 volunteers you have. You have a big presence in Florida.

My understanding is every Coastie wants to be stationed in Florida, but I'm sure there are other states like Washington they like, also.

So thank you. I want to thank you for what you're doing.

Can you just talk about the vision for the Coast Guard, your vision for the Coast Guard over the next 4 years, any unique challenges you anticipate?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you, Senator. Obviously we have work to do. We're on a great path as a Coast Guard right now and really appreciate the continuing support of the Committee for the support we receive.

I believe the most critical issue facing us as a service moving forward is around workforce and how we recruit and retain members into the service, both enlisted and officer.

We are not the only service that is facing this as a challenge. I'm committed to, you know, getting after the recruiting and then looking at our talent management system as it pertains to retaining and training the workforce that we have and really look forward to moving that forward in my tenure, if I'm confirmed.

Senator SCOTT. The Coast Guard does an unbelievable job after hurricanes and, you know, we had four major hurricanes when I was Governor and the Coast Guard was instrumental in making sure we got our ports back open and our hurricane response was done properly. So thanks for that.

How do you see the Coast Guard's role in your response to combating the threats posed by Communist China?

Admiral FAGAN. So my job as the Pacific Area Commander, we deployed, you know, ships over into Indo-Pacific Region, Western Pacific, and the Coast Guard's, you know, committed to a free and open Indo-PACOM.

We represent the Rule of Law and good governance and just in our professionalism and then engagement with like-minded partners and countries. We represent a value, you know, basically proposition that counters some of China's Malign Influence.

Senator SCOTT. I'm a business person by background and we're expected to create efficiencies every year. Do you feel like there are efficiencies that you're going to be able to find in the Coast Guard so we can do more with less?

Admiral FAGAN. So I'm committed to fielding an operationally relevant and ready force and will continue to focus on readiness and our ability to execute operationally and do not intend on, you know, having a hollow force as we look to meet the expectations of the American public that we serve.

Senator SCOTT. So the Coast Guard's very committed to our border. I have a bipartisan piece of legislation to extend the Custom waters of the United States out to 24 nautical miles, giving the Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection increased control to enforce our drug interdiction and immigration laws. What do you think about that?

Admiral FAGAN. We have a great relationship with our Customs and Border Patrol, our counterparts within DHS, and look forward to working with you on that language.

Senator SCOTT. All right. Well, congratulations. You're going to do a great job.

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you. We've been joined by the Subcommittee Chair Senator Baldwin. Thank you for your leadership at the subcommittee level.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TAMMY BALDWIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN**

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I want to actually take a moment to consider the significance of this nomination. What an honor it is to be a part of your historic nomination to serve not only as the 27th Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard and the first woman to serve as the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard but also the first woman to ever serve as a service chief of a branch of the U.S. military.

I commend you on your strength, your courage, your hard work. You've earned this momentous role, and you're also going to be someone who sets a great example for young people and young girls and young women around the country and around the world to look up to.

So I didn't want this moment to pass without that acknowledgment.

Now the icebreaker, I know I'm not the first to ask you about this, but over the last 7 years we've seen the consequences of inadequate icebreaking on the Great Lakes. It's cost our economy roughly \$2 billion and more than 10,000 jobs that are related to Great Lakes commerce.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I've also worked with my colleagues to secure pre-acquisition funding for 6 years in a row and we have twice authorized the procurement of the ship within this committee's Coast Guard bill and in the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bill we funded a Great Lakes Icebreaker Program Office.

The Senate voted 85 to 13 in support of fully funding the icebreaker and last year Admiral Schultz confirmed support for fund-

ing during testimony before this committee. This is my top priority as Chair of the subcommittee that oversees the Coast Guard. We really need this ship and we need it as soon as possible.

So I know you've been asked previously at this hearing about support for the *Mackinaw*-equivalent Great Lakes icebreaker. I would ask if you support fully funding and getting acquisition funding in the 2023 Fiscal Year?

Admiral FAGAN. So I share your sense of urgency with the need for a heavy icebreaker, you know, at least as capable as *Mackinaw* in the Great Lakes. I'm absolutely committed to getting to the point where we field that icebreaker.

We did establish a program office in 2020. We have 15 people who are working preliminary design. I'm excited about the progress we're making and I'm committed to the heavy icebreaker as that top priority and then look forward to working with you as the next budgets are developed to bring a heavy icebreaker into reality.

Senator BALDWIN. Yes. And I would just note that I do have concerns about the discussion of the common hull and will express those in follow-up.

I wanted to turn to the area of housing for Coast Guard employees, especially in rural areas. I was pleased when you were able to join me in visiting the station at Sturgeon Bay and we had an informal discussion with Coasties who were there and one of the challenges that they expressed was the lack of housing, affordable housing.

The current calculation for the basic allowance for housing is not working. It doesn't account for differences in housing markets near large DoD installations versus smaller rural Coast Guard communities, and the system does not account for the popularity of short-term vacation rentals in beautiful communities, such as the Sturgeon Bay area that you visited, and oftentimes where the Coast Guard is located.

So I'm concerned that the Coast Guard is not yet taking a comprehensive approach to solving these housing challenges. I think we need to plan to help identify areas with housing challenges and craft solutions to meet those challenges, such as new construction, leases, changes to the housing allowance or other solutions.

And will you support developing a plan to address these housing challenges?

Admiral FAGAN. Yes. Housing has been a challenge certainly in the last just couple of years with regard to all just housing disruption as a result of the pandemic. Housing is critical. We do use the DoD system for determining BAH but look forward to working with you on, you know, creative ways to ensure that our Coast Guard members have access to adequate housing as we transfer them in and out of locations.

Senator BALDWIN. Great. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.
The CHAIR. Thank you. Senator Cruz.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TED CRUZ,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS**

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Admiral, welcome. Thank you for your service and congratulations on your nomination. As you and I have discussed earlier this

week, I am incredibly grateful for the heroism and service of the incredible men and women of the Coast Guard. My home state of Texas sees that every day but we saw it in clear relief in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey where the men and women of the Coast Guard demonstrated remarkable courage and saved an extraordinary number of lives and so thank you for your service and the service of your colleagues.

One topic I'm very concerned about and you know because we talked about this at length is the impact of the Biden Administration's policies of forced vaccines on the Armed Services across the board.

In August of last year the Secretary of Defense directed the Secretaries of the military departments to immediately begin full vaccination of all Active Duty and Ready Reserve members of the Armed Forces and consistent with that the Commandant issued an order for the Coast Guard to be vaccinated.

I'm hearing concerns from men and women of the Coast Guard about how that is being implemented and so I wanted to ask you, Number One, how many Coast Guard personnel have requested a medical exemption from the vaccine mandate?

Admiral FAGAN. So 96 percent of the workforce has been vaccinated. With regard to medical exemptions, we had about 45 people ask for those. Religious accommodation, we had over 1,300 people request religious accommodations.

Senator CRUZ. OK. And for both of those categories, how many have been granted, how many have been denied, and how many are still pending?

Admiral FAGAN. So we've granted 45 temporary medical exemptions. We are in the process of now working of the over 1,300 religious accommodations. Over 900 of those were subsequently appealed. We're still working through the appeal authority there. We've granted four religious accommodations and continue to work through very deliberately through the process so that each one of those requests is handled on its individual merits.

Senator CRUZ. So I want to make sure I understand the numbers. The 45 on medical exemptions, is that how many asked for them or how many were granted?

Admiral FAGAN. How many were granted. I don't know the total number that were asked for on the medical exemption. We can get you that number.

Senator CRUZ. OK. Yes. I would ask you to follow up with that number of how many were asked for, how many have been granted, how many have been denied, and how many are still pending adjudication.

On the religious exemption, you gave the number 1,300. Is that how many were asked for or how many—you said 900 were appealed. So were those denied or what does that number reflect?

Admiral FAGAN. 1,333 were asked for. Those were processed and then all of those have been notified back and 942 of those were subsequently appealed. They were denied.

Senator CRUZ. So of those—

Admiral FAGAN. The original religious accommodations were denied.

Senator CRUZ. Of the 1,300 requests for religious exemptions, how many were granted?

Admiral FAGAN. There were four granted.

Senator CRUZ. That's a fairly stunningly low rate. Why is the Coast Guard only granting four requests for religious exemptions out of 1,300?

Admiral FAGAN. So we've got a process that considers each request on its merits. I don't have the specifics of each of the cases, but if there was no grounds for the request, then they were not approved and then the appeal again another process that looks through is there merit for the religious accommodation.

Senator CRUZ. Let me ask you how would you respond to a young man or woman serving in the Coast Guard or considering serving in the Coast Guard who looks at those numbers out of 1,300 requests, sees only four granted, how would you respond to that person and said, well, it's obvious that the Coast Guard doesn't put a whole lot of priority, a whole lot of emphasis on my religious liberty if they're granting four out of 1,300. That doesn't sound like a fair and straight-up process just on the face of it.

Admiral FAGAN. The Coast Guard is committed to our workforce and to those who want to continue to serve. The vaccine mandate was a general lawful order. Here we have an obligation to continue to operate the service in a ready and responsible manner. We've been focused on doing that.

We have a culture of respect in the service and we look forward to welcoming all to the service.

Senator CRUZ. Well, our military branches have had a consistent challenge dealing with religious liberty for service men and women. It has been a priority for Congress. It has been a priority for me. I've multiple times introduced and passed legislation with bipartisan support directing the military branches to protect the religious liberty of the men and women who defend the Nation and I will say on the face of it the numbers you're reporting are deeply, deeply concerning and it suggests a confluence between two misguided political priorities of this Administration.

The vaccine mandate, even if the consequence of it is—and these 1,300, if the appeals don't succeed, is it your intention to fire these men and women, and how will that impact readiness of the Coast Guard?

Admiral FAGAN. We are working through the appeal process and, you know, subsequent sort of employment determinations, but the priority being the operational readiness of the service and we will not move forward with this in a manner that erodes the readiness and ability to operate the service.

Senator CRUZ. Well, I very much hope that you do not. Thank you.

The CHAIR. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Cruz.

I think that ends our first round. I intended to just ask a couple of quick questions. I don't know, Senator Baldwin, if you have a second follow-up question or not.

But I wanted to get your commitment. Obviously the Southern Resident Orcas are a very big part of the sustainability issues for us in Puget Sound. Vessel noise has been identified by NOAA scientists as a significant threat facing that endangered population.

Will you commit to work with us on a system for Puget Sound similar to what the Canadian Coast Guard has established to reduce vessel strikes, noise impacts, and other issues?

Admiral FAGAN. We remain committed to working with you on the issue of preservation of the killer whales as it pertains to Puget Sound.

The CHAIR. But on noise reduction plans?

Admiral FAGAN. Absolutely committed to those conversations.

The CHAIR. Thank you. In the last Coast Guard Reauthorization Act, we included a provision to allow fishermen to use technology to mark their nets. This will reduce pollution and help fishermen with fish sustainability.

The FCC is slow at working this rulemaking with the Coast Guard. So will you work with all of those interests, you know, the FCC, fishermen, and others to get this done?

Admiral FAGAN. We're committed to working with the process to move that issue forward.

The CHAIR. OK. Senator Baldwin, do you have any additional—I'm going to give her the closing script and see if she has any other additional questions.

Thank you so much for your nomination.

Senator BALDWIN. Outside of the Coast Guard, my top defense priority is strengthening Buy America policies. I've been pushing for years to get the Navy to make their ships a hundred percent American-made.

The Administration is now requiring all major programs to be at least 75 percent domestic content in order to be Buy America-compliant, but as we saw with the Navy's new Wisconsin-made frigate, if you require a ship to be 100 percent American-made and give enough lead time, industry steps up and that's great news. For the frigate, 100 percent domestic content requirement even resulted in onshoring a new engine manufacturer in the United States and so created a lot of new manufacturing jobs.

Would you support ensuring that the future Coast Guard fleet is as close to 100 percent American-made as possible?

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you, Senator. Coast Guard is committed to free and open competition and we adhere strictly to the requirements of the Buy America requirements and committed to being in alignment with all those requirements as we field the new assets.

Senator BALDWIN. OK. That, I believe, concludes our hearing.

Thank you again, Admiral Fagan, for appearing before the Committee today and for your continued commitment to public service.

Senators will have until Monday, May 2, at the close of business to submit additional questions for the record to the Committee, and, Admiral Fagan, you will have until the close of business on May 6 to respond to those questions.

And thank you again and that concludes today's hearing.

The gavel is down there, but I'll call the meeting—

[Laughter.]

Senator BALDWIN. There we go.

Admiral FAGAN. Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

[Whereupon, at 11:46 a.m., the hearing was concluded.]

A P P E N D I X

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MARIA CANTWELL TO ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN

Base Seattle Child Development Center. I am pleased that Seattle was named as the homeport of the three new Polar Security Cutters. With the increase in personnel from these new ships also comes a higher need in support services such as childcare. A 2019 RAND Corporation study titled, “Why Do Women Leave the Coast Guard, and What Can Be Done to Encourage Them to Stay?” found that women leave the Coast Guard at a higher rate and at an earlier point in their career than men. Access to finding quality, affordable childcare was cited as a primary reason for this trend. These support services are critical to retain a diverse and talented workforce needed by the Coast Guard to carry out their critical missions of saving lives, enforcing laws, and safeguarding maritime commerce.

Question 1. Admiral Fagan, I have heard from Coast Guard families in Puget Sound about the challenges of finding childcare. These challenges will only grow with more cutters being stationed there. Admiral Schultz committed to construct a Child Development Center at base Seattle. Will you commit to me that the Coast Guard will construct a Child Development Center to serve families stationed in Seattle?

Answer. Once the Coast Guard is able to finalize its ongoing expansion of the force laydown in Seattle, I can commit to building a Child Development Center in the Seattle area. This will be a critical component of my intent to provide the best support for our service members and their families stationed in Washington and everywhere the Coast Guard workforce serves. As I described at the hearing, we must balance organic childcare capability with other options like subsidies, and expanding authorities to cover in-home care (e.g., au pairs and nannies), this is especially true in major metropolitan areas where the Coast Guard’s workforce is geographically dispersed.

Question 2. The Coast Guard has three ways to help their members with childcare including a subsidy program, childcare care centers at large bases, and Family Childcare Centers. While you have invested in the first two options significantly, what more can you do to incentivize the development of Family Childcare Centers?

Answer. I appreciate Congress’s continued support for the Coast Guard workforce and their families. The \$4 million increase provided in the FY 2022 Appropriation for childcare fee assistance helps to defray the rising costs our families are facing; however in terms of childcare there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. As you know, the Coast Guard’s workforce is geographically dispersed, which requires childcare solutions other than CDCs in areas with high concentrations of Coast Guard personnel. In regards to Family Childcare Centers (FCCs), assisting Coast Guard spouses with daycare business start-up costs would eliminate a potential barrier to entry and help incentivize FCC providers. Expanding fee assistance authorities to include full-time in-home childcare provides another option for service members, particularly for those serving in locations without CDCs or Coast Guard housing (required for FCCs). I look forward to working with you and your staff as we continue to explore better ways to support the Coast Guard’s greatest resource, our people.

Southern resident orcas. Orcas are extremely important ecologically and culturally to the Pacific Northwest and the state of Washington. Southern resident orcas are endangered with only 74 animals left in the population. The population is under stress due to many factors including vessel strikes and noise. In the 2020 Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act, the Coast Guard was directed to submit a report and action plan in consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration related to Southern resident orca vessel buffer zones.

The report submitted to Congress did not address the Coast Guard’s efforts in relation to Quiet Sound, coordination with Canada, or how it was working with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration to reduce vessel noise on Southern

resident orcas. In addition, the Coast Guard has chosen to attend Quiet Sound meetings in an advisory role but has failed to contribute to discussion.

Question 1. Admiral Fagan, the Canadian Coast Guard has established a whale desk to reduce vessel strikes and noise impacts to Orcas. Will you commit to work with me to setup a similar system in the Puget Sound?

Answer. I am fully committed to the protection of marine habitats, marine mammals, and endangered species and I look forward to engaging more with the Committee, Coast Guard operational commanders, and other federal, state, local, and Tribal stakeholders on any legislation pertaining to Southern Resident Orcas. The Coast Guard's ongoing work with interagency and international partners on conservation and enforcement is a top priority and I am open to evaluating additional measures to safeguard these endangered marine mammals.

Question 2. NOAA, the Port of Seattle, the Makah Tribe, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and other Federal and state agencies are working together through the Quiet Sound initiative to reduce vessel impacts to orcas. Unfortunately, the Coast Guard is the only Federal agency that participates in an advisory role. This means the Coast Guard often sits silently in meetings, even when asked for feedback. Will you commit to elevating the Coast Guard's participation by ensuring that the Coast Guard meaningfully contributes to the Quiet Sound Program? Will you ensure any Coast Guard representative participating has decision-making authority and is able to contribute to discussion?

Answer. I am committed to continued, active Coast Guard participation in the Quiet Sound initiative. Our goal is to provide navigational safety and maritime law enforcement expertise, maritime traffic data, and communication tools to reduce impacts on Southern Resident Orcas. Through the recently launched operational working groups, I am confident the Coast Guard's role will increase. I know the local leadership from Sector Puget Sound and District 13 eagerly await the next leadership meeting in July, 2022.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA TO
ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN

Arctic and Icebreakers. As you are aware, Russia has over 40 icebreakers in its Arctic fleet, including nine nuclear-powered icebreakers. In light of Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, we must ensure our defenses are prepared for possible hostile actions by the Russian military. The United States currently has two icebreakers in operation and both have been in service for decades, and only one of those ships is a heavy-duty polar icebreaker. Congress has taken steps to allocate funding towards the construction of the Polar Security Cutter class of ships over the past several years.

Question 1. Could you provide an update on the Polar Security Cutter program? Will you prioritize ensuring the Coast Guard has the ability to counter potential Russian aggression in the Arctic Ocean?

Answer. The Polar Security Cutter (PSC) is one of the Coast Guard's top acquisition priorities, and is vital to project U.S. sovereignty in the Arctic and protect U.S. interests in the Antarctic. The Contract Delivery Date for the first PSC remains May 2025. While we anticipate that the start of construction may be delayed until the second quarter of FY 2023, it is premature at this point to definitize a correlating delivery delay, as the Coast Guard has not granted contractual schedule relief. I am committed to working closely with Halter Marine to reduce program risk and deliver this capability to the Nation at best speed.

Sexual Assault within the Coast Guard. I have concerns about the increase in reported sexual assault allegations year over year from Fiscal Year 2019 to Fiscal Year 2020 within the Coast Guard's ranks. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy has also faced challenges with sexual assault and harassment, with the Command Master Chief of the Academy relieved of his duties for inappropriate conduct.

Question 2. What steps will you take to ensure that sexual misconduct allegations within the Coast Guard are taken seriously and properly adjudicated? Will you also commit to producing sexual assault and harassment reports in a timely manner? What resources does the Coast Guard make available to survivors of assault or harassment, even after their tenure with the Coast Guard has concluded, and will the Coast Guard take steps to expand the availability of such services?

Answer. Sexual assault is a crime and not tolerated in the Coast Guard. If Confirmed, I will ensure the Service continues training programs, follows policies to protect victims, and has robust processes for reporting crimes such as sexual assault.

The Coast Guard is working to release our annual report to Congress on sexual assault at the beginning of September, 2022.

While this is the first year we will release our report at the same time as the other Armed Services, I am committed to doing so moving forward. In August 2021, the Coast Guard expanded access to Sexual Assault Prevention Response and Recovery (SAPRR) services, to include Coast Guard civilians and all former members of the Coast Guard who were sexually assaulted while serving on active or reserve duty. Civilians and former members now have the option to meet with a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) or Victim Advocate (VA) to receive information, discuss reporting options, and receive referrals for care. If confirmed, I will seek ways to expand the availability of these critical support services.

Diversity at the Coast Guard Academy. At present, minority groups are underrepresented in the cadet population at the Coast Guard Academy, particularly among Native American cadets.

Question 3. Does the Coast Guard have any plans to conduct outreach among Arizona's 22 federally recognized tribes to find qualified candidates to expand minority representation?

Has the Coast Guard's College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative sent any recruiters to tribal colleges and universities located in Arizona?

Answer. As I laid out in the hearing last week, I am committed to the Coast Guard workforce. That includes continuing to improve the diversity and inclusion at every level of the Service. While I cannot speak definitively on Arizona's tribal colleges and universities being recognized as Minority Serving Institutions, I can tell you that the Coast Guard recently formed a dedicated Officer Recruiting Corps focused on recruiting at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other MSIs. I have directed my staff to update me on the MSI status of tribal colleges and universities and look forward to working with you to ensure we do not miss any opportunity to recruit, train, and retain a diverse workforce and grow the Coast Guard's Recruiting Corps to access new markets and talent.

Childcare Programs. A 2019 RAND Corporation study suggests that improving access to childcare would help address the issue of female attrition within the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard operates nine child development centers at its largest bases and also offers subsidies to service members to offset the cost of private sector childcare services. The president's Fiscal Year 2023 budget provides \$17 million to the subsidy program, which was the same funding level for Fiscal Year 2022. Meanwhile, the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* provided \$120 million to the Coast Guard to construct four new child development centers and expand two existing centers.

Question 4. Do you think the Coast Guard should continue to prioritize the child care subsidy program?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will continue to look for opportunities to help Coast Guard families. As I described in the hearing, we must balance organic childcare capability with other service options like subsidies, and expanded authorities to cover in-home care (e.g., au pairs and nannies). I look forward to working with you and your staff as we continue to explore better ways to support the Coast Guard's greatest resource, our people.

Question 5. What other steps should Congress consider to address the issue of affordable, quality childcare for Coast Guard families?

Answer. I appreciate Congress's continued support for the Coast Guard workforce and their families. The \$4 million increase provided in the FY 2022 Appropriation for childcare fee assistance helps to defray the rising costs of childcare our families are facing; however in terms of childcare there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Building Child Development Centers (CDCs) are critical to providing the support our service members and their families need. However, the Coast Guard's workforce is geographically dispersed, which requires childcare solutions other than CDCs in areas with high concentrations of Coast Guard personnel. In addition to building more CDCs and expanding childcare subsidies, the Service needs additional fee assistance authorities for full-time in-home childcare. Growing the number of Family Childcare Centers (FCCs) is also a priority and assisting Coast Guard spouses with daycare business start-up costs would eliminate a potential barrier to entry and help incentivize FCC providers.

Indo-Pacific. The Coast Guard plays a critical role in ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific and combatting unlawful Chinese activities and claims in the region.

Question 6. Can you provide an update on the Coast Guard's efforts to respond to China's "maritime militia" and its failure to prevent unregulated fishing in global

waters? What steps will you take to further strengthen the Coast Guard's engagement with affected nations to counter this threat?

Answer. The Coast Guard has an enduring and specialized role in Oceania and the greater Indo-Pacific to preserve the free-flow of commerce, protect natural resources, and enhance regional stability. The FY 2023 President's Budget expands the Coast Guard's capacity to conduct operations, engage in maritime governance activities, and participate in regional efforts to increase partner nation proficiency, self-sustainment, and local expertise in maritime security operations. I am committed to strengthening the Coast Guard's efforts in the Indo-Pacific and countering the threats of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing, which has replaced piracy as the leading global maritime security threat. If confirmed, I will continue to look for opportunities to support the White House Indo-Pacific Strategy and work collaboratively with our partners and allies.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTION SUBMITTED BY HON. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL TO
ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN

Parenthood ban at the Coast Guard Academy. Currently, cadets with parental obligations cannot enroll in the Coast Guard Academy, and cadets who become parents while enrolled will be expelled unless they give up their parental rights. The Fiscal Year 2022 NDAA directs the Secretary of Defense to develop policy that includes the option to preserve parental guardianship rights of cadets and midshipmen, but it omits the Coast Guard Academy from the academies covered. No person should be denied entrance to or be forced to leave the Coast Guard Academy on the basis of parental obligations.

Question. Will you work with the Coast Guard Academy Superintendent to develop policies that allow Coast Guard Academy cadets with parental obligations to enroll in or remain enrolled at the Academy? If not, please explain why you think this policy is necessary to maintain going forward.

Answer. As noted, Section 559A of the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act does not directly apply to the Coast Guard Academy. However, I am committed to collaborating with our fellow military service academies to develop these policies that maintain appropriate parity with the DoD services.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. DAN SULLIVAN TO
ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN

Question 1. As part of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress passed legislation exempting vessels that primarily operate within the Alaskan-region from certain GMDSS requirements. I have been closely monitoring the implementation of this law and am concerned that the implemented rule may vary significantly from the intent. Specifically, the intent was to allow vessels primarily operating in Alaska to operate in much the same fashion as they have for years. I am concerned that the final rule will require equipment that possesses little to no functional value. Can you commit to working with the FCC to ensure that the original legislative intent is adhered to and that these vessels are not required to install unnecessary equipment?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with the FCC to implement the provisions of 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, including section 8336 of the Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020. As required by Section 8336, the Coast Guard has provided DHS a recommended definition for the term "Alaskan Region." The Coast Guard and DHS will continue to work with FCC to implement this statute in alignment with legislative intent.

Question 2. As you mentioned in your testimony, you intend to improve the Coast Guard's access to childcare and housing. Child care is an important issue and one that looks slightly different throughout the country. In some areas, the Service can explore increased subsidy payments thus allowing service members to utilize non-military childcare. In other regions, such as Sitka, Alaska, the issue is not as simple as increasing subsidy payments as the community is lacking in both civilian and military childcare capacity. Similarly, commercially available housing is challenging for many communities that are experiencing an increased demand from different sectors. As you look at addressing the child care and housing issues within the Coast Guard, will you commit to exploring options that do not displace the needs of local communities, or when feasible, exploring joint ventures that are mutually beneficial?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to look for opportunities to better support our Coast Guard families, to include improving access to childcare and housing. The \$4 million increase provided in the FY 2022 Appropriation for childcare fee assistance helps to defray the rising costs of childcare our families are facing; however in terms of childcare there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Building Child Development Centers (CDCs) is a critical component of my intent to provide the best support for our service members and their families. The same is true with housing, and I am committed to continuing to identify the best solutions to fit the needs of our workforce and the communities where we serve. While, we have not entered into public-private housing agreements, I am committed to continued investment in housing; projects like the Kodiak, AK housing—currently in phase IV of a complete rebuild. As we continue to improve access to childcare and housing, I will ensure local considerations, such as those in Sitka, Alaska, are incorporated into Coast Guard assessments and planning. All service members and their dependents need to have access to childcare as well as adequate housing. I look forward to working with you and your staff on this important issue.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN TO
ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN

Question 1. For good reason, I hear from Tennesseans about their concerns with the current supply chain situation and the effect it's having on their businesses. And this is not limited to any certain kind of company—the supply chain shortages are hurting everyone from Oak Ridge National Labs to small providers of home appliances. For this reason, I worked with Senators Peters and Scott to introduce a bill to direct the SelectUSA program to engage with states about how to attract foreign direct investment from non-adversarial countries for semiconductor manufacturing.

- How are you working with states and their economic development organizations—like the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development—to think about the role of foreign direct investment in helping fill gaps in the supply chain?
- And how do we make sure—like our bill contemplates—that those dollars are not coming from countries like China, but rather those who want to work with us and not against us to ensure the U.S. can stay a leader in manufacturing?

Answer. The Coast Guard works in concert with other Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial agencies, the marine industry, maritime associations and the international community to safeguard the efficient movement of \$5.4 trillion in annual economic activity and support 30.8 million American jobs across the Nation's Marine Transportation System (MTS). Recently, surging consumer demand, labor shortages, and overseas manufacturing delays have resulted in congestion at our Nation's ports. While the Coast Guard does not have a direct role in how local port infrastructure and other waterfront facilities are financed, I am committed to close and continued cooperation with local port partners in maintaining awareness and managing the risks resulting from port congestion. Our national security and economic prosperity are inextricably linked to the MTS, and the Coast Guard takes pride in its role managing the Nation's waterways in order to keep America's consumers, producers, manufacturers, and farmers connected to both domestic and global markets.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TED CRUZ TO
ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN

Question 1. Admiral in your written testimony you stated your “highest priority will be to modernize our talent management system.” This is laudable considering recruitment and retention of personnel is a recurring issue, especially among more specialized occupations. In your assessment, in which 20 specialties (“rates”) does the Coast Guard have greatest problems recruiting and retaining? Please rank them by greatest to least. In your assessment, what are the 20 most critical occupational specialties (“rates”) for the Coast Guard? Please rank them from most critical to operational readiness to least critical.

- a. Please describe why each of those 20 specialties are critical to the United States Coast Guard.
- b. Please describe why you believe Coast Guardsmen in those 20 specialties decide to leave the United States Coast Guard before reaching retirement.

- c. Please describe why you believe the Coast Guard has issues filling these 20 critical specialties. That is, an assessment of whether the issue is recruitment, retention, sharply increased demand, etc. If the answer is a mix, please provide a best-guess as to the principle factor at play and rank the contributing factors.
- d. For each of the 20 critical occupational specialties, what is the personnel margin? That is, how many extra (above the bare minimum needed to sustain operational readiness) active duty or reserve Coast Guardsmen are there in that rate?
- e. For each of the 20 occupational specialties, are any of them below the level needed for operational readiness? If so, please specify which specialties, how far below manning requirements, and the impact to operational readiness now, and in the immediate future.

Answer. The Coast Guard's missions cannot happen without all of our rates, and while we have enlisted rates designated as "critical", that designation does not directly correlate to a readiness impact. The rates currently designated as critical are:

- Aviation Survival Technician (AST)
- Boatswain Mate (BM)
- Culinary Specialist (CS)
- Gunners Mate (GM)

That list is updated frequently, and we take specific recruiting and retention efforts, such as re-enlistment bonuses or offering new recruits bonuses for entering those rates, to best maintain the readiness of the Coast Guard. If confirmed, I am committed to developing new strategies that sustain the Coast Guard as an employer of choice. We need to recruit, train, and retain the very best talent to ensure organizational success in an increasingly complex and dynamic maritime and national security environment.

To your question about why our people decide to leave the Service, the Coast Guard currently enjoys the highest retention rate of all the Armed Forces. We do not have a comprehensive dataset that allows us to identify trends or reasons for each member's departure. I feel that this is a gap in our talent management system and I am committed to developing the systems and processes necessary to better inform our retention efforts.

Admiral Fagan, during your hearing you and I discussed the administration's COVID-19 vaccine mandate and the impact that mandate is having and could have in the future on operational readiness of the Coast Guard. During that back-and-forth you were able to provide some detail, but didn't have other figures readily available. Specifically we had the following exchange:

Senator Cruz: I am hearing concerns from men and women in the Coast Guard about how that is being implemented and so I wanted to ask your number one, how many Coast Guard personnel have requested a medical exemption from the vaccine mandate?

Admiral Fagan: So, 96 percent of the workforce has a—has been vaccinated. With regard to medical exemptions, we had about 45 people asked for those, religious accommodation and we had over 1,300 people request religious accommodations.

Senator Cruz: OK and for both of those categories, how many have been granted, how many have been denied and how many are still pending?

Admiral Fagan: And so we granted 45 temporary medical exemptions. We are in the process of now working of the over 1,300 religious accommodations, over 900 of those were subsequently appealed. We are still working through the appeal authority there. We granted for religious accommodations and continue to work through very deliberately through the process, so that each one of those request is handled on its individual merits.

Senator Cruz: So, I want to make sure I understand the numbers. The 45 on medical exemptions, is that how many asked for them or how many were granted?

Admiral Fagan: That is how many were granted, I do not know the total number that were asked for a medical exemption. We can get you that number.

Senator Cruz: OK, I would ask you to follow up with that number of how many—how many were asked for, how many had been granted, how many had been denied and how many are still pending adjudication. On the religious exemption, you gave the number 1,300. Is that how many were asked for or how

many—you said 900 or appeal, so were those denied or what is that number looks like?

Admiral Fagan: 1,333 were asked for. Those were processed and then on—and all of those have been notified back and 942 of those were subsequently appealed, they were denied.

Senator Cruz: Of the 1,300 requests for religious exemptions, how many were granted?

Admiral Fagan: There were four granted.

As I said during your hearing, four out of 1,300 requests is a stunningly low rate, and I would like to get more information from you on the specifics on that process. And how this relates to on-going personnel challenges. For the questions 2 through 5 and their subparts, please break your answers down as follows:

- The total number
- The number as it relates to active duty Coast Guardsmen
- The number as it relates to Ready Reserve Coast Guardsmen
- A breakdown of the occupational specialty (“rates”), or Coast Guard equivalent, of requests. (That is how many rescue swimmers, how many pilots, how many aviation maintenance technicians, etc.)

Question 2. In total, how many Coast Guardsmen requested an exemption from the August 2021 requirement to be fully vaccinated against COVID–19?

- a. Of these, how many were denied?
- b. Of the denials, how many were appealed?
- c. Of the appeals, have any been fully processed and approved? Have any been fully rejected? If so, how many in each category?
- d. How many requested exemptions are still awaiting processing?

Answer. Coast Guard members may receive a medical exemption, administrative exemption, or religious accommodation from a mandated vaccine. A detailed breakdown of the current status of medical exemptions and religious accommodations for the COVID–19 vaccination is included in answers to questions three and four below.

Question 3. How many Coast Guardsmen requested a medical exemption from the August 2021 requirement to be fully vaccinated against COVID–19?

- a. Of these, how many were denied?
- b. Of the denials, how many were appealed?
- c. Of the appeals, have any been fully processed and approved? Have any been fully rejected? If so, how many in each category?
- d. How many requested medical exemptions are still awaiting processing?

Answer. A total of 25 service members requested a permanent medical exemption from the COVID–19 vaccination.

- a. 16 permanent medical exemption requests were denied.
- b. 7 permanent medical exemption requests were granted.
- c. 2 medical exemption denials were appealed and not approved.
- d. 2 permanent medical exemption requests are pending.

Question 4. How many Coast Guardsmen requested a religious exemption from the August 2021 requirement to be fully vaccinated against COVID–19?

- a. Of these, how many were denied?
- b. Of the denials, how many were appealed?
- c. Of the appeals, have any been fully processed and approved? Have any been fully rejected? If so, how many in each category?
- d. How many requested religious exemptions are still awaiting processing?

Answer. The Coast Guard received 1,335 religious accommodation (RA) requests.

- a. Four RA requests were approved and 1,242 were denied. 86 administrative exemptions were granted for members separating or retiring prior to 1 October 2022. Three members elected to receive the vaccine and withdrew their RA request.
- b. Coast Guard members submitted 944 appeals of their initial RA request.

- c. The Coast Guard's appeal process is ongoing. 137 service member notifications of appeal denial have been sent.
- d. 807 appeals remain in process.

Question 5. How soon does the Coast Guard expect to fully process all exemption requests and subsequent appeals?

Answer. The Coast Guard has begun notifications for all of the submitted religious accommodation appeals, and I can commit to having all 944 responses completed this summer.

Question 6. Admiral I appreciate you stating that you will not do anything that will put the operational readiness of the Coast Guard at risk with regards to the vaccine mandate, but absent this discretion what would the end result be for Coast Guardsmen who are denied an exemption, lose all appeals, and still refuse to get vaccinated?

Answer. I am committed to maintaining the readiness that the Nation expects from the Coast Guard. My goal is to retain every Coast Guard member. For members whose request for religious accommodation or medical exemption are denied and who remain unvaccinated, the Service retains the ability to determine their remaining time in the Coast Guard to best support mission readiness. As circumstances dictate, these members may naturally attrit, voluntarily separate, or may be involuntarily separated.

Question 7. What would the impact be to the readiness of the Coast Guard if all Coast Guardsmen seeking exemptions were separated? Would the Coast Guard still be able to succeed across all its mission areas?

Answer. If the scenario you posed became a reality, the Coast Guard would expect a mission readiness impact, which is why my goal is to retain every Coast Guard member. For members whose request for religious accommodation or medical exemption are denied and who remain unvaccinated, the Service retains the ability to determine their remaining time in the Coast Guard to best support mission readiness. Close to 98 percent of the Coast Guard's active duty workforce is vaccinated against COVID-19.

Question 8. With regards to retention, what impact does something like the Secretary of Defense's mandatory COVID-19 vaccination order have? Specifically, how is this impacting some of the more specialized occupations like marine safety inspectors, who are often hired away by industry, or fixed-wing aircraft pilots, who are sought after by the commercial airlines?

Answer. The Coast Guard currently enjoys the highest retention rate of all the Armed Forces. However, we do not have a comprehensive dataset that allows us to identify trends or reasons for each member's departure. I feel that this is a gap in our talent management system and I am committed to developing the systems and processes necessary to best inform our retention efforts. We are not currently experiencing shortages in the specialties that you mentioned above due to policies or any other known workforce driver or trend.

Question 9. We have heard anecdotal evidence of military personnel in some branches who report that adverse employment decisions have been made against them if they request a religious exemption (in some cases even before a decision on an application has been reached). Are you aware of any such instances in the Coast Guard? How do you plan on protecting Coast Guardsmen from such retaliation?

Answer. I am not aware of any situations where a member requesting a religious accommodation or medical exemption was subject to any decision counter to stated Coast Guard policy. There are existing policy and processes in place to protect and provide recourse for unsubstantiated adverse employment action. I am committed to ensuring that all processes and resources remain available to the entire workforce and that our actions remain within policy.

Question 10. What statutory or constitutional guidance does the Coast Guard consult when making decisions about religious exemption applications?

- a. Do you believe that these military personnel have First Amendment rights while on active duty? What about Ready Reserve personnel?
- b. Is the Coast Guard subject to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act?

Answer. The Coast Guard's long-standing policy covering a Service member's ability to request a reasonable accommodation to allow the practice of a sincerely held religious belief was developed in accordance with the Constitution and all applicable Federal laws. The Service is subject to, and meets all requirements of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Question 11. I want to turn to the Coast Guard's law enforcement mission, and specifically the work in the Gulf of Mexico combatting drug and human smuggling, enforcement of the maritime border, and illegal fishing. In your written testimony you stated the Coast Guard is committed to Secretary Mayorkas' priorities, including maritime border security. Having seen the Secretary's level of commitment to terrestrial border security, I have to admit this raises some red flags.

As you probably know the Biden Administration is pushing to end Title 42 restrictions in May. A Federal court in Louisiana seems poised to block that decision, but for now, Congress and the states have to continue to plan for the Biden administration to keep pushing to end Title 42 until that case has resolution. By the Administration's own estimates, this is going to cause a massive surge in illegal immigrants crossing the border with DHS estimates ranging as high as 12,000 or even 18,000 migrants per day. This is not just a migrant interdiction problem though, this is also a massive search and rescue issue as we were tragically reminded last week with the death of Texas National Guardsman Spc. Bishop E. Evans, who died trying to rescue two drowning immigrants illegally crossing the Rio Grande.

Admiral, the Coast Guard in South Texas already does a massive amount of work helping CBP interdict drugs and illegal immigrants coming into the United States, including performing search and rescue missions for migrants who get into trouble. They do an incredible job despite being under-resourced and despite an ever-increasing workload.

If Title 42 is repealed, do you expect the Coast Guard's job in South Texas to get easier or harder? From your perspective, is this the right time to repeal Title 42?

Answer. Smugglers have no regard for the lives of migrants and continue to take advantage of vulnerable individuals by spreading misinformation about our laws. The termination of the CDC's public health order issued pursuant to Title 42 will not affect the Coast Guard's ability to rescue and intercept individuals attempting this dangerous journey by sea. Individuals intercepted at sea attempting to enter the United States without proper documentation are, and will continue to be, subject to repatriation to their home country. Irregular maritime migration is always dangerous and often deadly. The Coast Guard is committed to ensuring the safety of life at sea and maintaining the integrity of our maritime borders.

Question 12. Admiral, I want to turn to the broader law enforcement mission now and particularly domain awareness in the Gulf. Does the Coast Guard have full domain awareness in its area of responsibility at the maritime boundary line between the United States and Mexico, and specifically the maritime border off the coast of Texas? That is—is the Coast Guard fully aware of all boats and barges in the Gulf moving from Mexico into the United States, and specifically off the Texas coast, at any given point? If not, why not and what would it take for the Coast Guard to have full domain awareness here?

Answer. While we strive for 100 percent maritime domain awareness (MDA), it is nearly impossible to achieve. However, I am committed to investments in capabilities (current and emerging) that will enhance MDA and improve effectiveness of our operations. Additional investments in technology that enable real-time use of imagery, data and intelligence, as well as investments in unmanned, autonomous systems, and artificial intelligence will enhance maritime domain awareness and mission effectiveness.

Question 13. Admiral as I raised with you in our private meeting, I have a lot of concern with regards to the Mexican lancha problem and the illegal fishing those vessels engage in. This is not just a natural resource issue—although it is also that—this is a border security, narcotics trafficking, and human smuggling issue as well. A number of these illegal fishing boats and their crews dabble in illegal red snapper fishing on Monday, illegal alien trafficking Tuesday, and drug smuggling Wednesday. And the problem has only continued to get worse and worse and worse. Should you be confirmed, what do you plan to do about this? What will it take to finally put a stop to this scourge?

Answer. The Eighth Coast Guard District is highly focused on the U.S.—Mexico Maritime Boundary Line (MBL) and currently maintains a persistent presence along the MBL with afloat assets to counter Mexican lancha activity. This Coast Guard presence boosts offshore detection and interdiction capability, and deters illegal fishing, drug and human smuggling, and other illicit activities that represent an immediate threat to U.S. sovereignty, border security, and our living marine resources. If confirmed, I am committed to strengthening Coast Guard's effort to counter the threats of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing on the U.S./Mexico border and throughout the 3.4 million miles of our Exclusive Economic Zone.

Question 14. Outside of resources, do you think NOAA's recent decertification of Mexico is sufficient or should Congress look at other areas where we can exert pressure like economic sanctions for the Government of Mexico, which seems to tacitly endorse this illegal activity, or criminal penalties for the captains of the lanchas?

Answer. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing is a pervasive global maritime security threat and rising priority for the U.S. Government. If additional sanctions are imposed by the U.S. Government, the Coast Guard would work in coordination with our interagency and other partners to ensure enforcement. In terms of the Coast Guard's role, in July of 2021, I signed the Implementation Plan for the Coast Guard's Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Strategic Outlook. If confirmed, I intend to continue implementing the Coast Guard's plan to combat IUU fishing by leveraging our authorities and capabilities to protect our sovereignty; support cooperative enforcement efforts; and advance stability, security, and order in the maritime domain.

Question 15. Would the Coast Guard benefit from additional information sharing with other agencies? For instance, my staff was recently at South Padre Island station and were informed that it can be difficult to receive information from CBP or utilize their resources, despite CBP being a frequent user of Coast Guard resources and intelligence. Should Congress mandate CBP share its information and resources with the Coast Guard?

Answer. The Coast Guard has been a member of the wider intelligence community since 2001 and has established partnerships with national, state, local, Tribal law enforcement, and international intelligence entities. The Coast Guard benefits from a productive relationship with CBP across many of our joint lines of efforts pertaining to maritime law enforcement and border security. This issue has my attention, and I will coordinate with my counterpart at CBP to ensure the continued sharing of intelligence and cooperation in executing our missions.

