May 4, 2020

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Smith, and Ranking Member Thornberry:

On behalf of the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence (NSCAI), the Cyberspace Solarium Commission (CSC), and the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (NCMNPS), we write to ask that you consider taking action on our respective Federal defense and national security workforce recommendations in the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

The United States is in a fierce competition to maintain its role as the leading world innovator. Losing our edge jeopardizes U.S. national security, U.S. global leadership and alliances, and, importantly, our values. In this strategic, global competition, the advantage will go to the competitor that can best attract, train, and retain world-class talent. However, as we identify in our respective reports, the Department of Defense and other parts of the Federal government face systematic challenges to attracting and retaining top talent, particularly technical talent. The Federal government must reform how it recruits, trains, and educates its workforce, otherwise it will continue to struggle to modernize and maintain its lead in the world.

To attract top talent, the government must streamline its hiring processes and recruit beyond conventional pathways into government. Most, if not all, of the hiring authorities to do so are already in place, but institutional and cultural barriers reduce their use. To improve, we should encourage the use of existing authorities in a manner that maximizes flexibility to hire personnel for select billets and position descriptions. We should also collect better data and promote research on workforce dynamics to inform our next steps.

In addition, the Federal government needs to increase the public's awareness of opportunities for public service, particularly for those with digital talent. Public servants are vital to the security and well-being of the nation, yet outdated rules and practices make it difficult to hire and retain the best talent. To address these challenges, our Commissions make recommendations to fix hiring, engage the next generation in public service, and empower agencies to build their workforce to meet evolving needs and better serve the American people.

The Congress should direct the Secretary of Defense, through the secretaries of the military services, to increase the public's understanding of opportunities with the military and in national security departments and agencies by reinforcing programs that target digital talent, especially those with proven success. The Congress also should instruct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to increase the use and effectiveness of the Pathways Internship Program by making the application process more open and reducing the requirements to convert an internship to a full-time position.

Once talented, service-minded individuals accept an offer to work in government, we must take steps to retain them. Those steps begin with better understanding and mitigating the impact of the current security clearance process on recruitment and retention. As federal employees progress in their career, we should take further action to strengthen skills and retain talent by building innovative opportunities for ongoing professional development and on-the-job learning.

Though our commissions' mandates focus on different topics, we have come to shared conclusions concerning the federal government's human capital needs. We enclose here our respective defense and national security workforce recommendations for which we seek your consideration for the NDAA.

Thank you again for your leadership and support. We look forward to working with you on these critical and urgent recommendations, which are foundational to U.S. national security and prosperity.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eric Schmidt
Chairman
National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence

The Honorable Robert Work
Vice Chairman

The Honorable Angus King Jr. (I-ME)
Co-Chairman
Cyberspace Solarium Commission

The Honorable Mike Gallagher (WI-8)
Co-Chairman

The Honorable Joseph J. Heck
Chairman
National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service

The Honorable Mark Gearan
Vice Chair for National and Public Service

The Honorable Debra Wada
Vice Chair for Military Service

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence
Quarter One Recommendations to Strengthen the AI Workforce

The National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence (NSCAI) was established in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 "to consider the methods and means necessary to advance the development of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and associated technologies to comprehensively address the national security and defense needs of the United States." The Commission is composed of 15 Commissioners appointed by the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Committees on Armed Services, Intelligence, and Commerce, as well as by the Secretaries of Defense and Commerce.

As required by Congress, the NSCAI released its Interim Report in November 2019 and will submit its final report in March 2021. However, due to the pace of AI development and the urgent emerging geopolitical situation, NSCAI Commissioners submitted their first set of recommendations to Congress and the Executive Branch on April 1, 2020.

The first set of recommendations focus on areas the Commissioners identified as being most in need of attention, ripe for action, or foundational—and, therefore, important to act now. One of those areas of action is ***Strengthening the AI Workforce***.

The Commission's initial workforce recommendations, which begin on page 21 of the First Quarter Memorandum, target recruiting experts and developers, training end users, identifying internal talent, and educating those in support roles--at the DoD and other national security agencies. They are premised on the belief that if the government cannot improve hiring practices, baseline knowledge, recruitment, and talent exchanges, we will struggle to accomplish any significant AI progress.

Overall, the workforce legislative recommendations are heavily focused on actions within the jurisdiction of the Armed Services Committees. For the recommendations that require an inter-agency approach and inclusive of multiple jurisdictions, the Commission is ready to work with the Armed Services Committees and the other congressional committees on multi-jurisdiction legislative recommendations. Each workforce recommendation includes legislative text in Appendix B of the memo, beginning on page 86.

To strengthen the AI workforce, the NSCAI proposes:

3-1 Expanding the Cyber Excepted Service (Page 22, Legislative Text Page 86)

The Cyber Excepted Service (CES) should be expanded to explicitly include AI positions. Expanding the CES rather than creating a new hiring authority avoids contributing to the confusing proliferation of authorities and avoids delays in establishing and using a new hiring authority. The government should also allow personnel hired under CES to be appointed to competitive service positions without competing as external, non-federal applicants.

3-2 Establishing AI Literacy course for Human Resource (HR) professionals (Page 24, Legislative Text Page 89)

The Department of Defense, along with other Departments such as the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Intelligence Community (IC), should establish a training and certification program for HR professionals that ensures: familiarity with their organization's goals regarding

AI; hiring practices outside of the competitive service; and software development, AI, and AI workforce literacy for HR teams, hiring managers, and recruiters.

3-3 Rebalancing the relationship between HR professionals, hiring managers, and organizational leaders (Page 25, Legislative Text Page 91)

The Department of Defense should provide referral bonuses to software development, data science, and AI experts. DoD already authorizes the use of referral bonuses for recruitment and hiring, but it is unclear how often it is used and to what effect. Performance metrics should include the number of times performance bonuses are awarded per year, both in gross numbers and as a percentage of hiring decisions for positions involving software development, data science, and AI.

3-4 Creating exemptions from OPM qualification policies (Page 26, Legislative Text page 93)

The Department should allow two-star commands and civilian equivalents to exempt individual billets and position descriptions from Office of Personnel Management (OPM) qualification standards without approval from the OPM or any more senior authority within the Department of Defense. Separately, the OPM should create and execute a process by which federal agencies can apply for exemptions for billets of position descriptions.

3-5 Accelerating security clearance reviews for AI practitioners (Page 27, Legislative Text Page 94)

The Defense Counterintelligence Security Agency should establish an accelerated security clearance timeline for personnel being hired under the Cyber Excepted Service and for AI, data science, and software development positions .

3-6 Expanding unclassified workspaces (Page 28, Legislative Text Page 95)

National security departments and agencies need to establish facilities where employees waiting on security clearances can perform unclassified work until they receive a clearance. This will allow organizations to quickly hire new employees, even when their security clearance process takes longer.

3-7 Expanding use ePorfolio reviews (Page 29, Legislative Text Page 96)

When hiring AI practitioners, the Department of Defense, along with the Department of Homeland Security and the Intelligence Community should use resumes for their initial screening process, then during the remainder of the evaluation process replace resume reviews with an ePortfolio review designed to evaluate data science, software development, and AI competency.

3-8 Mandating AI Training (Page 30, Legislative Text Page 97)

The Department should require training designed to improve baseline AI literacy. The training should focus on end users and their ability to collect and manage data, and include a short introduction to AI with an emphasis on machine learning, data management, the capabilities and limitations of AI, software decision-making, probabilistic reasoning, and an introduction to the responsible and ethical development and fielding of AI.

3-9 Incentivizing self-development AI courses (Page 31, Legislative Text Page 99**)**

The government should reward and track employees that successfully complete certified AI training and courses. Completion of these courses builds familiarity and skills directly related to adopting, integrating, and

using AI capabilities inside the government. Online courses in data science, data engineering, and AI are readily available to meet individual interests, abilities, and goals (for example, Coursera and Udemy offer free courses from leading experts and colleges).

3-10 Incentivizing programming proficiency (Page 33, Legislative Text Page 100)

The Department of Defense should measure and incentivize computer programming proficiency. As with foreign language proficiency, the Department should pay bonuses for different, quantified levels of comprehension and skill. The military services should also document programming proficiency and take it into account when making assignments.

3-11 Including computational thinking in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, or ASVAB (Page 34, Legislative Text Page 101)

The Department of Defense should adjust the ASVAB to measure computational thinking. Once adjusted, the test should be made available to civilian employees who are interested in voluntarily demonstrating aptitude for additional training.

3-12 Hiring professors part-time in government research labs (Page 36, Legislative Text Page 102**)**

The Department of Defense should hire university faculty with relevant STEM expertise to serve as part-time researchers in government laboratories. Faculty members would work during sabbaticals, summer breaks, or limited hours throughout the year. The effort should include the creation of at least ten part-time researcher billets, five of which are specifically for AI researchers, at DoD laboratories and research facilities.

3-13 Utilizing the pathways internship program (Page 38, Legislative Text Page 109)

The government should increase the use of the Pathways Internship Program as a mechanism to screen and hire new employees. To do so, caps on the number of applicants should be eliminated; agencies should create their own, position-specific qualification standards rather than relying on OPM qualification standards; and conversion from internship to full-time position should be allowed in a shorter period of time.

3-14 Expanding the Cyber Corps: Scholarship for Service program (Page 39, Legislative Text Page 111)

The scope of the CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service should expand to pay for up to four years and to include fields falling under digital engineering. This should include the set of skills involved in the creation, processing, transmission, integration, and storage of digital data, including data science, machine learning, software engineering, software product management, and artificial intelligence product management.

3-15 Increasing fellowships and partnership with industry (Page 42, Legislative Text Page 112)

National security departments and agencies should increase the number of fellowships and partnerships with industry, particularly fellowships with AI and software companies. The number of fellows in existing programs, particularly from the DoD, needs to increase significantly if service members and civilian employees are to garner and leverage the AI-related experience and expertise resident in the private sector.

United States Cyberspace Solarium Commission
Recommendations to Strengthen the Cyber Workforce

The U.S. Cyberspace Solarium Commission (CSC) is a bipartisan, intergovernmental body created by the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 to develop a strategic approach to defending the United States in cyberspace against cyberattacks of significant consequence. Its fourteen commissioners include four legislators from Congress, four senior executive agency leaders, and six nationally recognized experts from outside of government. In March 2020, the Commission issued its final report detailing a comprehensive strategic approach with specific policy recommendations for implementation.

The recommendations in the CSC report build on the foundation of a new approach to deterrence in cyberspace, which requires much more agility in government and collaboration with both the private sector and allies and partners beyond our borders. This sophisticated partnership requires a robust workforce with talent and experience. Currently, one in three public-sector cyber jobs is unfilled, creating an urgent need for action to **strengthen the federal cyber workforce**.

The Commission's recommendations for recruiting, developing, and retaining a stronger federal cyber workforce, which begin on page 43 of the CSC's final report, target creating alternative pathways into cyber jobs and opportunities for development while supporting and expanding existing programs with a demonstrated track record of success.

While the implications of these workforce recommendations reach beyond the DoD and national security agencies, the organizations within the jurisdiction of the Armed Services Committees stand to feel the greatest impact of the success or failure of these efforts because an outsized proportion of the federal cyber workforce serves the national security mission. The Commission finds that without significant action to develop, prioritize, and coordinate federal cyber workforce efforts, we will not have the talent needed to achieve that mission.

To strengthen the cyber workforce, the Cyberspace Solarium Commission proposes:

Assessing and expediting personnel security clearances for cyber positions (Legislative Proposals 1.5.b and 1.5.d)

> Security clearance processes must be adapted to better balance the two national security priorities of rigorously vetting personnel and filling cyber jobs. In an already competitive market for cyber talent, security clearance processes delay hiring far beyond acceptability, and delays and uncertainty likely deter promising candidates. The Government Accountability Office should investigate the impact of these delays on both retention of candidates in the hiring process and recruitment overall. The Department of Defense should also expedite clearances for candidates hired under the Cyber Excepted Service.

Expanding the CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service program (Appropriations Letter)

Congress should expand the CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service program. Since its inception in 2001, this proven program has partnered with colleges and universities to graduate a total of about 3,600 students. The program should be resourced to grow steadily and eventually reach as many as 2,000 graduating students per year, who will then go on to fill jobs in the Department of Defense and other federal departments and agencies.

Design cyber-specific upskilling resources for transitioning veterans (Legislative Proposal 1.5.d)

In coordination with the Department of Defense and other federal departments and agencies, the Department of Veterans affairs should establish a pilot program to provide cybersecurity-specific upskilling for veterans and transitioning military service members.

Build a "Civil Service Cyber" (Legislative Proposal 1.5.d)

Federal departments and agencies should develop a unified cohort of cyber professionals with career paths and tools that can move between different departments and agencies. Disparate authorities and policies for managing the cyber workforce between organizations only serves to increase bureaucracy and inflexibility. Standardizing these systems to reduce redundancy and conflicting policies between departments would create a single pool of talent that can move between organizations, offering more diverse development opportunities and more flexibility and agility in workforce management.

Support rigorous research into cyber workforce dynamics (Legislative Proposal 1.5.b)

Congress, through the National Science Foundation and other federal research agencies, should fund research on the cyber workforce. In order to strengthen the future workforce, we must understand the career pathways, demographics, educational backgrounds, and professional histories of the current workforce, as well as current and future employer needs. The current environment suffers from a severe lack of empirical data, but by galvanizing research nationwide, Congress can ensure future decisions are informed by rigorous study.

Develop apprenticeships and other work-based learning programs for recruitment (Leg Proposal 1.5.b)

The federal government needs new, scalable on-ramps for bringing people into the workforce. Expanding programs that rely on conventional educational pathways is critical, but we must augment these with additional alternatives, and particularly apprenticeships and other models that couple classroom learning and on-the-job training.

Clarify leadership roles in coordinating interagency efforts (Legislative Proposal 1.5.a)

Congress and the executive branch should reinforce and authorize the role of the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education in coordinating U.S. government efforts to advance cybersecurity workforce development nationwide, and resource the office sufficiently for this role.

National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service

Recommendations to Strengthen the Federal Public Service

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (NCMNPS) was established in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 to "conduct a review of the military selective service process" and (2) to "consider methods to increase participation in military, national, and public service to address national security and other public service needs of the Nation." NCMNPS is composed of 11 Commissioners appointed by the President, by Congressional leadership, and by the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees.

On March 25, 2020, NCMNPS submitted its final report and legislative recommendations to Congress, the President, and the American public. The final report includes 164 recommendations that would strengthen all forms of service to address domestic and national security needs, elevate service, and strengthen American democracy. NCMNPS also submitted a comprehensive legislative proposal, the Inspire to Serve Act of 2020, which has been introduced as H.R. 6415.

Consistent with the cover letter, which NCMNPS joins, following are recommendations made by NCMNPS that would strengthen the Federal public service to address the needs of the Nation. These are ordered by recommendation number with the corresponding legislative provision in parentheticals.

Recommendations Addressing Public Service in Connection with Military and National Service

7. Establishing and funding an interagency Council on Military, National, and Public Service (ITSA Section 201)

> NCMNPS recommends that Congress establish and appropriate funds for a Council on Military, National, and Public Service in the Executive Office of the President, to be headed by an Assistant to the President for Military, National, and Public Service. The Counsel would be led by an Assistant to the President and include senior Administration officials. It would have responsibility for advising the President and coordinating and overseeing executive branch action on policies and initiatives to foster an increased sense of service and civic responsibility among all Americans; to promote, expand, enhance, and make available opportunities for military, national, and public service for all Americans; and to promote governmentwide policy and interagency coordination related to military, national, and public service.

8. Establishing an internet-based service platform to connect Americans with service opportunities (ITSA Section 202)

> NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize and appropriate multiyear funds for an internet-based service platform. This would be a one-stop-shop, internet-based service platform to provide a centralized resource for Americans to learn about and connect with opportunities and organizations covering the breadth of military, national, and public service and for organizations in military, national, and public service to connect with individuals about potential opportunities.

30a. Optimizing cross-service marketing and recruitment. (ITSA Secs. 203, 204, 205, 207)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize and appropriate funding for a pilot program overseen by the Council on Military, National, and Public Service and run in appropriate agencies and departments to invest recruiting resources for military, national, and public service in underserved markets as defined by each service—focusing on gender, geography, socioeconomic status, and critical skills—to better reflect the demography of the Nation and ensure that recruiting needs are met into the future.

NCMNPS recommends that Congress direct and appropriate the necessary funds for the Secretary of Defense, the CEO of CNCS, and the Director of the Peace Corps to collaborate on joint advertising campaigns and to share marketing research resources.

NCMNPS recommends that Congress require the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the CEO of CNCS and the Director of the Peace Corps, to develop and provide to the Armed Services Committees a plan for providing ineligible or non-selected applicants with information about the other forms of service.

NCMNPS recommends that Congress require the Council on Military, National, and Public Service, together with the Secretary of Defense, the CEO of CNCS, and the Director of the Peace Corps, to jointly produce a quadrennial report that is focused on evaluating cross-service participation and that contains recommendations for increasing joint awareness and recruitment initiatives.

30b. Promoting continued service for those completing a term of service. (ITSA Sec. 206)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress require the Secretary of Defense to work with the CEO of CNCS to provide information on national and public service to transitioning military service members through DoD's Transition Assistance Program, and to provide military and public service information to individuals completing national service.

Recommendations Addressing Federal Public Service

21. Reforming Federal government hiring. (ITSA Secs. 345, 350)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress and the President take steps to improve and simplify the competitive hiring process so that it is possible to more efficiently and effectively hire talented individuals by, among other things, reviewing and substantially revising USAJOBS, its interoperability with outside vendors, and the way it functions to facilitate hiring so as to make it easier to attract and employ talent. This includes:

22c. Expanding the usability of direct-hire authority. (ITSA Sec. 346)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress amend existing law to change the criteria for granting direct-hire authority to agencies so that agencies may obtain direct-hire authority in the case of a shortage of "highly qualified" candidates.

23a. Modernizing veterans' preference. (ITSA Sec. 343)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress amend existing law to change veterans' preference within competitive examining to a tiebreaker between equally qualified candidates.

NCMNPS recommends that Congress amend existing law to limit eligibility for veterans' preference to individuals who are not employed by a Federal agency and Federal employees within two years of their first use of the preference.

NCMNPS recommends that Congress amend existing law to establish a 10-year time limit, beginning upon separation from the military, for preference-eligible veterans to use veterans' preference.

23b. Standardizing and extending noncompetitive eligibility. (ITSA Secs. 335, 343, 344, 370)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize 12 months of NCE for successful completion of federally sponsored internships, scholarships, and fellowships; grant 36 months of NCE to all full-time AmeriCorps alumni and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers; and extend the Veterans Recruitment Appointment authority to 10 years after separation. NCMNPS further recommends that Congress authorize NCE for select high-performing and qualified civilian employees who leave the Government, allowing them to return at a higher grade.

23c. Streamlining preference-eligibility determinations within the hiring process. (ITSA Sec. 342)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress amend existing law to require that eligibility for preferences be determined centrally by OPM rather than in a decentralized manner by each agency during every hiring process.

24a. Improving the Pathways Internship and Recent Graduates programs. (ITSA Secs. 366, 368)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress improve governmentwide hiring authorities for students and recent graduates, including the Pathways Internship and Recent Graduate Programs, and set a statutory goal for hiring no fewer than 30,000 students and recent graduates per year into term or permanent, competitive service positions through any available authorities, and no fewer than 50,000 students and recent graduates per year by 2031.

24b. Piloting new hiring programs for critical skills. (ITSA Sec. 369)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize the Director of OPM to allow agencies to conduct a demonstration program that would allow the use of new reform authorities to hire students and recent graduates in areas of critical skills, as identified by the Council on Military, National, and Public Service, into the new internship program or directly into positions identified by the agencies as critical.

24c. Compensating all Federal Government interns. (ITSA Sec. 365)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress pass legislation to require that all Federal Government internships be paid.

24d. Making a technical correction to existing direct-hire authority for students and recent graduates. (ITSA Sec. 367)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress increase the statutory cap on the direct-hire authority for students and recent graduates through technical corrections to 5 U.S.C. §§ 3115 and 3116.

24e. Streamlining and expanding fellowship and scholarship programs. (ITSA Sec. 361)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress establish a Federal Fellowship and Scholarship Center, within OPM and supervised by the Council on Military, National, and Public Service, to administer, streamline, and expand fellowship and scholarship programs across the Government and to promote fellowship and scholarship programs, particularly in areas of critical need to the Nation.

24g. Establishing new postsecondary education pipelines to public service through a Public Service Corps. (ITSA Sec. 362)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize and appropriate funds to OPM and other agencies to support a Public Service Corps, similar but not identical to the Reserve Officers' Training Corps and in partnership with universities and other levels of government, that awards scholarships and provides special coursework to participants in exchange for a public service commitment.

24g. Establish new postsecondary education pipelines to public service through a public service cadet program at military service academies. (ITSA Sec. 363)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize and appropriate funds to the military service academies to bring in a cohort of public service cadets or midshipmen who would be subject to the same five-year service commitment, but in public service rather than in military service, at a Federal agency in a civilian capacity. The number of public service cadets should represent at least 5 percent of the total incoming class at each academy, with no corresponding decline in enrollment of military cadets or midshipmen.

24h. Establishing a Public Service Academy grant program. (ITSA Sec. 363)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress establish and appropriate funds for a competitive grant program for 50 institutions of higher education to establish public service academies. Grants would provide funding over four years, covering 75 percent of the full operating costs in year one, 50 percent of the operating costs in year two, 50 percent of the operating costs in year three, and 50 percent of the operating costs in year four.

25a. Elevating the human resources function. (ITSA Sec. 351)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress direct the Chief Human Capital Officers Council to establish competency standards for HR specialists, including technical knowledge, analytics, and collaborative skills.

25c. Enhancing agencies' public communication about their mission. (ITSA Sec. 341)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress enact legislation to provide Federal agencies with the authority to engage in robust public communication about their mission, making clear that they are not prohibited from undertaking efforts to educate and inform the public about a Federal agency's activities and mission, promoting service with the agency, and recruiting aspiring public servants.

25. Requiring annual reports of Federal agencies' blended workforce figures. (ITSA Sec. 354)

NCMNPS recommends legislation requiring agencies to report annually to OPM the following figures: (1) the total number of people employed directly by the agency, (2) the total number of contractors issued credentials to access agency property or computer systems, (3) the total number of grantees issued credentials to access agency property or computer systems, and (4) a count of the blended workforce, including employees, contractors, and grantees. The legislation should also require OPM to compile and report this information on its website. (S

26. Expressing the sense of Congress on effective and efficient management of the blended Federal workforce. (ITSA Sec. 355)

NCMNPS proposes a congressional resolution expressing the position that agencies should manage the blended workforce of Federal employees, contractors, and grantees as effectively and efficiently as possible, within budget, without a full-time equivalent (FTE) or headcount limitation.

26. Requiring a simplified personnel system for Federal health-care professionals. (ITSA Sec. 375)

NCMNPS recommends adopting a streamlined personnel system for the Department of Veterans Affairs as recommended by the Commission on Care.

26. Authorizing licensure portability for Federal health-care professionals (ITSA Sec. 376)

NCMNPS recommends legislation to extend portability of health care licensure to all Federal health care professionals within the scope of authorized Federal activities.

27a. Extending special authorities to attract and retain cybersecurity workers. (ITSA Sec. 373)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize every Federal agency to adopt the Cyber Talent Management System, the special personnel system for civilian cybersecurity professionals managed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

27b. Reskilling the Federal workforce. (ITSA Sec. 271)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress and the President invest in upgrading the skills of the existing Federal workforce, including legislation to create a process for agencies to appoint current Federal employees who are graduates of OMB-approved reskilling programs to a position in their new field at a grade level commensurate with their demonstrated competency, but no lower than the employee's current grade level.

27d. Piloting a Federal Civilian Cybersecurity Reserve. (Sec. 372)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize and appropriate funds to create a Civilian Cybersecurity Reserve (CCR) pilot program. The CCR would be run by DHS and NSA and would compelling members to return to full-time civilian employment with the Federal Government if the agency head determines that their services are required to address an emergency that exhausts agency cybersecurity capability. This program would be voluntary and by invitation only. It would be open to former civilian cybersecurity employees of DHS and the National Security Agency (NSA) as well as transitioning members of the military with requisite qualifications.

28a. Improving and update benefits for Federal civilian employees. (ITSA Secs. 347, 348)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize OPM to offer a new benefit option for newly hired, non–public safety, Federal civil service employees with fully portable retirement benefits, flexible time off, paid parental leave, and comprehensive disability-income insurance.

NCMNPS recommends that Congress establish a cafeteria plan for certain Federal employee benefits.

28b. Providing access to pension credit for alumni of Federal service corps. (ITSA Sec. 336)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize Federal employees who are alumni of service corps operated by Federal agencies the option to purchase FERS pension service credit.

29a. Revamping personnel demonstration-project authority. (ITSA Sec. 349)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress expand OPM's demonstration authority to test changes to personnel systems, loosening the time and personnel restrictions as well as enabling OPM to expand demonstrated successes without statutory changes.

29b. Pilot a new personnel system at select agencies. (ITSA Sec. 374)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize OPM to pilot a new personnel system, covering hiring, classification, compensation, transfer, and promotion, at agencies with a significant number of STEM employees.

29c. Monitor the progress of recommended reforms. (ITSA Sec. 352)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress and the President require a comprehensive evaluation of changes to Federal personnel policy made in response to NCMNPS's report.

29d. Generating proposals for a new personnel system. (ITSA Sec. 353)

NCMNPS recommends that Congress authorize and the President direct the development of comprehensive proposals for a modern talent-management system to meet modern workforce needs.