

STATEMENT OF MR. JOHN BARTRUM
NOMINATED TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF HEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIR

Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Blumenthal, distinguished members of the committee, I'm honored to be nominated for the Under Secretary of Health at the Department of Veterans Affairs. I thank this committee, the President, and Secretary Collins for their confidence, and I'm grateful for the support of my wife Elizabeth and twin daughters. I also want to acknowledge my family, friends, fellow veterans, and military brothers and sisters who are watching and providing support from across the country.

As a 16-year-old living on my own after my father died in sixth grade, I never imagined this moment. Growing up fatherless presented significant challenges, but military service changed everything. Upon high school graduation, I enlisted in the Air Force, which trained me, allowed me to mature as a leader, pay for college, and opened the American dream for me. Statistically speaking, my life should have turned out very differently.

The decision to enlist led to over 40 years of service, achieving the rank of Major General and currently serving as Mobilization Assistant to the Air and Space Force Surgeon General. I'm the most senior Medical Service Corps (Hospital Executive) officer in the Air Force and the most senior Medical Officer in the Air Force Reserve. My experience in the military taught me that statistics may be predictive, but American opportunities can override any predetermined path.

Despite my early life challenges, I earned an undergraduate degree in Business Administration from McKendree University. Degrees in Bio-Environmental Engineering and Survival and Rescue Operations and eventually an MBA from Southern Illinois University and a Law degree from George Mason University. In addition, I was trained by the Air Force as a Hospital Administrator.

My background demonstrates my qualifications for the Under Secretary of Health position. This includes extensive healthcare executive leadership experience with multibillion-dollar

systems serving military members and families. In my position as the Air Force Surgeon General Mobilization Assistant, I assist in the leadership of a \$6.1 billion healthcare system involving a 44,000-person integrated healthcare delivery system serving 2.6 million beneficiaries at 76 Air Force military treatment facilities worldwide. I am a combat veteran experience who has been mobilized multiple time from Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, to the COVID response. I served as the Associate Director of NIH, and during COVID in addition to developing the concept of what became Operation Warp Speed I was Deputy for the Government-wide Emergency Support Function-8 with DoD, HHS, FEMA, VA, and PHS. As House Appropriations Committee professional staff member, I oversaw the policy and funding for major healthcare agencies including NIH, CMS, and CDC. Furthermore, I previously worked within the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of Management and Budget on VA and DoD health policy and financing matters.

The Veterans health care system exclusively serves millions of veterans nationwide with critical healthcare they earned from military service. It operates and manages over 1,200 healthcare facilities nationwide, including medical centers, community-based outpatient clinics, and specialized care facilities to serve approximately 9 million eligible veterans annually.

If confirmed, I will work to enhance healthcare delivery standards with greater consistency, continue VHA's focus on patient safety and quality improvement, while balancing access and improved outcomes. Continue to support medical research on veteran issues, its medical education programs, and enhance VA's mission to assist our nation during emergencies and disasters.

Military service is more than a job it is an act of selflessness and dedication to ensure all of us can enjoy the freedom of democracy. The military service of my father, brother, grandfather, and my military brothers and sisters who have served before, with or after me who have taught me, we owe veterans more than gratitude—we owe them excellence.

I welcome your questions and, if confirmed, look forward to working with this Committee to

fulfill our sacred obligation to those who have served.