



Statement from Key Leaders of the Defense Community

Diversity is a strength of the U.S. military, and our experience as senior defense leaders tells us that capable and diverse teams are more effective in today's complex environment. Our military is already made up of people from all walks of life, and we will increasingly recruit from all segments of our population — this means that within five years, service members of color will likely make up the majority of recruits. Additionally, we know that with an All-Volunteer Force, the strength of the force depends significantly on the resilience and well-being of our military families

While we recruit the Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Coast Guardsman, Guardian, and Marine, we retain the whole family. As such, it is our judgment that the important new research released by Blue Star Families about the experiences of military families of color can serve to begin a conversation that can improve the well-being of military families and ultimately strengthen our All-Volunteer Force. Even if some of us may not support all of the recommendations, we do encourage military and community leaders to consider and collaborate on addressing areas of challenge revealed by the research. By ensuring an inclusive environment for all military families — wherever military orders take them — we can enhance the effectiveness of the military and continue to attract America's best to our All-Volunteer Force.

Signatories

The Honorable Leon Panetta

The Honorable Chuck Hagel

The Honorable Mark Esper

The Honorable Robert Wilkie

**The Honorable James L. Jones, Jr.,
General USMC (Ret)**

The Honorable William J. Lynn III

The Honorable Eric Fanning

The Honorable Ryan McCarthy

The Honorable Richard Danzig

The Honorable Kenneth Braithwaite

The Honorable Whit Peters

The Honorable Heather Wilson

The Honorable Barbara Barrett

**General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.,
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**General George W. Casey, Jr.,
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**Admiral John M. Richardson,
USN (Ret)**

**General David L. Goldfein,
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**General Robert B. Neller,
USMC (Ret)**

**Admiral Paul F. Zunkuft,
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**General Lester L. Lyles,
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**General Larry O. Spencer,
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**General Johnnie E. Wilson,
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**General Edward A. Rice, Jr.,
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**General Vincent K. Brooks,
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**General John W. Nicholson, Jr.,
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**Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps
Alford L. McMichael,
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**Sergeant Major of the Marine
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**Master Chief Petty Officer of the
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