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**

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The Honorable Chuck Hagel  
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The Honorable Mark Esper  
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