

Statement for the Record as prepared for the Honorable Milancy Harris  
Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security  
At the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence  
July 10, 2024

*(As of 1700 07/08/2024)*

Chairman Warner, Vice Chairman Rubio, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Department's progress on the initiatives underway to improve and enhance the National Background Investigation Services, or NBIS, program and implementing Trusted Workforce 2.0 reforms.

I am pleased to join the Honorable Dr. Stacey Dixon, the Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence; David Cattler, the Director of DCSA; and the Honorable Dr. Radha Plumb, the Department's Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Officer. Thank you all for the partnership in getting NBIS back on track.

NBIS is critical to the Department's and the Federal government's implementation of Trusted Workforce 2.0 initiatives. NBIS will be the end-to-end IT infrastructure that enables our security, suitability, and credentialing experts to conduct comprehensive personnel vetting – from subject initiation through background investigation, adjudication, and continuous vetting.

Although the Department has successfully deployed some key capabilities in the eight years since the program started, we are significantly behind in delivering the complete, end-to-end NBIS that has been promised to Congress and our customers. For instance, we promised and have yet to deliver background investigation capabilities to support the updated Personnel Vetting Questionnaire, a shared data layer to promote information sharing and reduce

*(As of 1700 07/08/2024)*

duplicative costs, and shared services capabilities such as adjudication case management for our Federal customers.

Last year, my office became aware of a number of issues which, when explored, revealed significant impediments to delivering NBIS on the expected timeline. When I became the Acting Under Secretary in March of this year, I initiated a 90-day sprint effort focused on understanding the state of the program, the issues resulting in delays in delivering capability, and charting a path to recovery. A cross functional team from across the Department – as well as my colleagues from DCSA and CDAO here today, but also our CIO and Acquisition experts – began that effort on April 1st, and have worked together closely to develop a way forward.

Our plan includes several actions intended to return the NBIS program to a path to success. First, we are acting to improve oversight and governance going forward by ensuring we are making decisions at an appropriate level. That includes elevating the program decision authority from DCSA to the Under Secretary for Acquisition and Sustainment. We are also elevating program sponsorship to the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Security. Lastly, we are creating a robust governance process that will allow us to translate requirements from our interagency customers while providing the necessary protections to prevent cost, schedule, and performance erosion.

*(As of 1700 07/08/2024)*

DoD also has new leadership and experts in key positions responsible for NBIS development. Along with Director Cattler, DoD brought in both a new Program Executive Officer and a new NBIS Program Manager. The new Program Manager joins us with a wealth of expertise and experience in delivering through Agile methodologies—something lacking in past NBIS program management. We have also enlisted expertise from the Defense Digital Services under our Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office. Dr. Plumb will testify today to DDS’s focus on modular data architecture, building the right teams, and adopting digital transformation best practices, all of which will be instrumental in strengthening the NBIS program.

Combined with improved oversight, new leadership, and greater technical expertise, we are moving forward with several initiatives. The program is fully focused on Agile software development with strong involvement from our users to ensure timely feedback and value assessments of product deliveries. To support this, we are updating foundational documentation to clearly outline roles and responsibilities, establishing the program’s core capability requirements in support of Trusted Workforce 2.0, and driving improvements across the board. These efforts will result in more robust, transparent, and reliable cost, schedule, and performance metrics, improving trust in future delivery of capabilities. Recovery is not quick. This will be a month’s long exercise to build a foundation enabling the Department to deliver NBIS.

Statement for the Record as prepared for the Honorable Milancy Harris  
Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security  
At the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence  
July 10, 2024

*(As of 1700 07/08/2024)*

Despite the issues, the Department has successfully enrolled its entire national security population into Continuous Vetting, or CV. CV is an effective model that relies on automated record checks and the reporting of relevant information from Components to enable the near-real time identification of risk. Our data indicates we are identifying potentially concerning behavior significantly sooner than traditional periodic reinvestigations. This early detection enables a strengthened security posture, supporting our critical missions across the Department. Additionally, within the Department, Trusted Workforce 2.0 policies are driving robust information-sharing between our agency insider threat hubs and the personnel vetting enterprise, allowing us to better identify and mitigate potential risks.

In closing, the Department of Defense remains committed to the NBIS program and providing secure and effective personnel vetting processes, services, and systems so that government agencies and members of our Nation's industrial base have confidence in their trusted workforce. While we cannot undo the missteps of the past, I am confident that we are on the path to success for NBIS. It is of paramount importance that the Department regains and maintains the trust of Congress in these efforts if we are to maintain strategic advantage over our adversaries. I thank the members of this Committee for your strong support of the Department of Defense, and I look forward to answering your questions.