

**Statement for the Record**  
**The Honorable Stacey A. Dixon, Ph.D.**  
**Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence**

**Hearing on NBIS and Personnel Vetting Reform**  
**Senate Select Committee on Intelligence**

**Wednesday, July 10, 2024**

Chairman Warner, Vice Chairman Rubio, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss personnel vetting reform milestones achieved to date as well as the next steps moving forward.

I am pleased to be here representing Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Avril Haines, who serves as the Security Executive Agent for the Federal Government. As the Security Executive Agent and head of the Intelligence Community, the DNI develops and oversees policies and standards for determining an individual's eligibility for access to classified information or to hold a sensitive position. Her responsibilities include developing and issuing uniform and consistent policies and procedures, along with exercising oversight, to ensure that these vetting processes are effective, efficient, timely, fair and secure.

Since I last spoke before this committee on the topic of personnel vetting reform in March of 2023, implementation of Trusted Workforce 2.0 has continued to mature and have a positive impact on our entire Federal Workforce.

The current Trusted Workforce 2.0 effort is transformative – it is centered around a risk-based model that leverages modern IT, improves timeliness of personnel vetting, reduces complexity, and eliminates repetitive and duplicative investigative actions. By making personnel vetting processes more consistent across the government enterprise, leveraging technology and automation, and shifting away from the traditional periodic reinvestigation model, Trusted Workforce 2.0 seeks to deliver talent to the mission faster. Doing so improves mobility of the workforce to respond to mission needs and aids the ability to detect and mitigate risk earlier.

Through the issuance of several policy documents, we have established a more consistent vetting foundation by creating guidelines and standards that identify intended outcomes for personnel vetting. We have created an engagement approach that emphasizes trust in the process and shapes a culture of personal accountability and shared responsibility between the individual being vetted and the personnel vetting practitioners. We have revised the investigative standards and issued new performance management standards to ensure that personnel vetting practitioners are satisfying goals and measures in line with expected outcomes of Trusted Workforce 2.0.

Agencies have identified Trusted Workforce 2.0 Senior Implementation Officials and our teams work very closely together to ensure implementation of these policies is progressing effectively.

Based on extensive feedback from personnel vetting practitioners, agencies, and the public, we have modernized the Personnel Vetting Questionnaire (PVQ) to improve our ability to collect information more comprehensively and aligned with the revised investigative standards.

We have successfully implemented the continuous vetting capability for our National Security population that allows the receipt of information in near real time. Data generated through a combination of ongoing automated record checks, user activity monitoring, adjudicatively relevant insider threat information, self-reporting and agency specific information creates the ability to respond to issues much more quickly.

Not only does Continuous Vetting improve the protection of IT systems, facilities, people and mission, it also introduces a robust wellness factor by allowing earlier identification of problems such as financial hardships, substance abuse, and addictive behaviors, as reflected in collected information. By identifying these issues more quickly, agencies are able to intervene earlier and leverage available resources within the government to provide the assistance employees need.

We are now looking to expand the continuous vetting capability to the Non-Sensitive Public Trust (NSPT) population. This effort will ensure the delivery of a trusted workforce beyond just the National Security population.

Despite all of these achievements, much work remains to be done. Implementing the most aggressive clearance reform effort in decades has taken longer than we had hoped. The important thing is that we get this right and maintain the right balance between delivering a trusted workforce and managing risk.

Streamlining reciprocity and the broader transfer of trust are examples where work continues. Improved personnel mobility across the enterprise is a major goal of this effort. Reciprocal determinations from a security perspective continue to improve with most agencies completing that determination within five days. This is evidence that a Top Secret clearance sponsored by one agency is accepted by a gaining agency without additional vetting. Despite these favorable statistics for reciprocal determinations made by personnel vetting practitioners, the actual transfer of trust from one agency to another takes more time, as would be expected. Factors such as polygraph requirements, medical evaluations, access to more sensitive information or more restricted IT networks, and continuous vetting alerts may increase the time it takes to move individuals from one agency to another, especially within the Intelligence Community.

Another rising issue related to personnel mobility is transparency. Favorable Transfer of Trust and reciprocity determinations are achieved based on the gaining agency accepting the prior vetting of an individual. Previously, the date of an individual's background investigation was a factor in that determination. As we pivot to continuous vetting and eliminate the common

practice of confirming the date of a reinvestigation, we are receiving a demand signal from gaining agencies who are requesting more transparency into actionable CV alerts, previously submitted information collection forms, HR related actions such as medical evaluations, and self-reported activities.

In response to the increased demand for expanded transparency between agencies related to personnel mobility, we are working to deliver a high side Information Technology (IT) solution that will provide greater visibility into the information needed by the gaining agency. The Transparency of Reciprocity Information System (ToRIS) will allow agencies access to required information on an as needed basis with the intent to enhance Transfer of Trust determinations.

ToRIS is not duplicative of NBIS, and will leverage some NBIS capabilities such as the electronic application (eAPP) function, allowing applicants to submit their required paperwork in eAPP and then have an IC element transport that information to the high side for processing.

Regarding hiring timelines, within the Intelligence Community, we are seeing an overall improvement. In parallel to Trusted Workforce 2.0 implementation, the ODNI has been driving a 180-day hiring timeline initiative. This initiative requires IC Elements to streamline efforts and improve efficiencies in each facet of the hiring process. The Performance Management Standards are looking to further decrease that hiring timeline to an aspirational 130 days within the next four years, as we agreed to during the March 2023 Personnel Vetting hearing.

Measuring the success of the Trusted Workforce 2.0 effort is imperative. Embedded within the ODNI National Counterintelligence and Security Center is a metrics collection team who gathers data from across the Federal Government to assess the performance of agencies' personnel security vetting programs, to include timeliness. This team is working to create a more robust template aligned to the recently issued Federal Personnel Vetting Performance Management Implementation Guidance (PMIG). This new template will assist agencies in transitioning to the new reporting requirements of Trusted Workforce 2.0 with as little disruption as possible while, at the same time, allowing for automated data collection that can be analyzed more effectively.

In order to enhance this automated process, we are working to deliver an IT capability called Security Metrics and Quality Reporting Tool (SMART), which reimagines how customers interact with personnel vetting performance data. SMART will simplify data management, foster greater collaboration among users, and ensure robust data protection measures for enhanced security. SMART-provided indicators and measures will not only provide the information oversight entities require to ensure the success of the Trusted Workforce 2.0, but will give agencies the insights they need to sustain healthy personnel security vetting programs that promise a trusted workforce across government.

Along with my colleagues here alongside me, as well as with PAC Principals, OMB and OPM, we are working collaboratively to address gaps in the clearance reform effort as Department and Agencies continue to work through their implementation strategies and initiatives.

My colleagues and I work with and take into account views from multiple partners including interagency security personnel, civil liberties and privacy experts, legal advisors, hiring officials, industry partners, and Congressional Committees.

I would like to particularly emphasize the important role that our industry partners play as they have been instrumental in our ability to make sustained progress. We have intentionally increased our engagement and outreach with industry representatives. Their voice and advocacy for transformation has tremendously assisted the Trusted Workforce 2.0 team in identifying challenges and addressing their concerns. As an example of this collaboration, the ODNI is working to promote enhanced information sharing and facilitate clearances for companies' key management personnel. These are both issues previously raised by this committee.

In closing, we believe it is imperative to stay focused on improving and completing implementation of the Trusted Workforce 2.0 transformation. The success of this personnel vetting reform effort will continue to require strong senior leadership commitment and support from Congressional leaders such as yourselves.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today – we look forward to addressing any questions you may have.