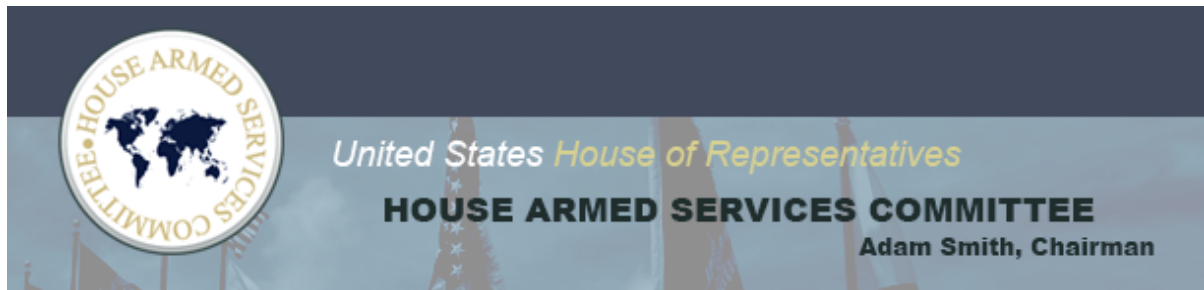


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Opening Statement (As Prepared)
Chairwoman Jackie Speier
Subcommittee on Military Personnel Hearing:
"Professional Military Education and the National Defense Strategy"
May 18, 2022

Click [here](#) to view the hearing.

I want to welcome everyone to the Subcommittee hearing on Professional Military Education and the National Defense Strategy. This is the second Subcommittee event we have had on this topic, and I commend the Ranking Member for making this a priority. We are here with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff to discuss the Department's processes for developing and deploying professional education to servicemembers that is relevant, flexible, and delivers value to the armed forces given the investment in time and taxpayer dollars. This content prepares officers charged to advance and execute our future National Military Strategy and ultimately become the senior leaders responsible for the defense of the nation. We will then hear from our second panel of outside witnesses on their thoughts on the Department's Professional Military Education enterprise and their recommendations for change.

From our first panel, I want to hear not only about the need for this ongoing education, but what is the intended and the actual return on the significant investment of both time and resources — estimated at over 8 billion dollars per year — and how that return is measured? I am also concerned about these programs becoming very insular and not taking into consideration educational experts outside of the Department of Defense to consider their insights in the development and execution of relevant educational content, as well as the maintenance of accreditation. We must make sure that our leaders remain on the cutting edge of the intellectual, technological, and educational development necessary for the changing character and conduct of operations. The Office of the Secretary of Defense has been in charge of Professional Military Education for 30 years, but it appears to have operated on autopilot and with little oversight by DoD or Congress. The need for swift change in this arena must match the evolving strategy in a rapidly changing world. I'm convinced that the Professional Military Education system is flexible

enough to modify and adapt the curriculum promptly to keep pace with changing defense needs — it just needs the attention of leadership and follow through. I want to ensure that these educational opportunities are not used for career box-checking, but are used to enhance the warfighters' intellectual rigor, or as Chairman Milley states, the "intellectual overmatch" that is necessary to increase critical strategic thinking, leading to increased competence and effectiveness of our fighting force. I am also very interested to hear from our civilian witnesses their opinion of the robustness and effectiveness of the current system of Professional Military Education and any recommendations they have for improvements to any aspect of the education continuum.

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