# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# undersecretary for personnel and readiness, Department of defense

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Armed Services |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the Department of Defense is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country. |
| Position Overview | The undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness is the senior policy advisor to the secretary of defense on recruitment, career development, pay and benefits for military personnel, Guard and Reserve personnel, and DOD civilians. The undersecretary is also responsible for overseeing the overall state of military readiness.[[1]](#endnote-1) The media and other external audiences look at the person in the position as the Department of Defense’s top human resources official, responsible for caring for the more than 2 million service members and dependents. |
| Compensation | Level III $165,300 (5 U.S.C. § 5314)[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Defense[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness is the senior policy advisor to the secretary of defense on recruitment, career development, pay and benefits for the 2.1 million active and reserve service members and 742,000 civilian personnel, and for all DOD health and force health protection policies, programs and activities.[[4]](#endnote-4) The Office of the Undersecretary for Personnel and Readiness had an estimated budget of $909 million in fiscal 2012.[[5]](#endnote-5)  The undersecretary also oversees the $15 billion Defense Health Program, Defense Commissaries and Exchanges with $14.5 billion in annual sales, the Defense Education Activity which supports over 100,000 students, and the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, the nation's largest equal opportunity training program.[[6]](#endnote-6)  The assistant secretary for manpower and reserve affairs, assistant secretary for health affairs and assistant secretary for readiness all report to the undersecretary for personnel and readiness. Several separate agencies, including the Defense Human Resources Activity and the Defense Manpower Data Center, also report to the undersecretary. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Performs such duties and exercises such powers as the secretary of defense may prescribe in the areas of military readiness; total force management; military and civilian personnel requirements; military and civilian personnel training; language; military and civilian family matters; exchange, commissary and nonappropriated fund activities; personnel requirements for weapons support; national guard and reserve components; and health affairs (10 U.S.C. § 136) * In close coordination with the armed services, reviews and evaluates plans and programs to ensure adherence to approved policies and standards, as well as general consistency and conformity across the Department of Defense. * Serves on boards, committees and other groups pertaining to assigned functional areas and represents the secretary of defense on manpower and personnel matters outside the department[[7]](#endnote-7) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Appointed from civilian life (10 U.S.C. § 136) * DOD experience, not necessarily deeply in human resources realm, to understand the sociology and bureaucracy of the department (Office of the Secretary of Defense level with relationships to service secretaries and chiefs a plus) * Experience with education, human resources and health care policy (helpful) * Corporate human resources experience (a plus) * Excellent leadership and management experience with an ability to be responsive and engage with the very top leadership of the department and inspire subordinates[[8]](#endnote-8) * Political knowledge and experience, and understanding of sensitive issues, interests and constituencies to navigate and complex, constantly-shifting Washington landscape * Ability to establish strong relationships with relevant stakeholders essential in a realm of overlapping and shared responsibilities * Veteran (helpful for establishing credibility) |
| Competencies | * Strong interpersonal and communication skills; a “people” person * Political sensitivity and ability to understand key issues for service members and dependents, Congress, other top defense leaders and the broader public * High level of energy for extensive foreign and domestic travel and interactions[[9]](#endnote-9) * Political savvy and ability to work under high pressure and high public scrutiny, as this undersecretary must often deal with a mix of hot issues * Strong leader with a strong personality, able to navigate huge bureaucracy that is DOD and the military services that have their own personnel operations * Ambitious and innovative * Ability to multi-task and manage Defense agencies * Strategic perspective but also effective details person given that this is a broad portfolio |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Peter Levine (2016 to 2017) (performing duties): Deputy Chief Management Officer for the Department of Defense; Chief Counsel, Senate Armed Services Committee | |
| Brad Carson (2015 to 2016) (acting): Undersecretary of the U.S. Army, General Counsel of the Army, U.S. Representative | |
| Jessica Garfola Wright (2013 to 2015): Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs; The Adjutant General, Pennsylvania National Guard; Deputy Adjutant General for Army[[10]](#endnote-10) | |
| Erin C. Conaton (2012): Staff Director of the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services; Minority Staff Director and as a Professional Staff Member on the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services[[11]](#endnote-11) | |
| Clifford L. Stanley (2010 to 2011): President of Scholarship America, Inc.; Executive Vice President of the University of Pennsylvania; Deputy Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command; Marine Corps Principal Representative to the Joint Requirements Board[[12]](#endnote-12) | |
| David S. C. Chu (2001 to 2009): Vice President, Army Research Division, RAND Corporation; Director, Washington Office, RAND Corporation; Assistant Secretary and Director for Program Analysis and Evaluation, Department of Defense; Assistant Director for National Security and International Affairs, Congressional Budget Office[[13]](#endnote-13) | |

1. <http://prhome.defense.gov/Leadership/peterLevine.aspx> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <http://prhome.defense.gov/About/> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <http://prhome.defense.gov/About/> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://prhome.defense.gov/About/> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. <http://www.dmva.pa.gov/Documents/DMVA-Hall-of-Fame/Jessica-L-Garfola-Wright.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/bio/ms-erin-c-conaton> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. <http://www.myblackhistory.net/Clifford_Stanley.htm>

    <http://www.thehistorymakers.com/biography/maj-gen-clifford-stanley> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. https://www.ida.org/en/AboutIDA/IDA%20Leadership/DavidChu.aspx [↑](#endnote-ref-13)