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STATEMENT OF

**GENERAL JAMES T. CONWAY
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS**

BEFORE THE

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION SUBCOMMITTEE

ON

**FY09 MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
MARCH 11, 2008**

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Chairman Edwards, Congressman Wamp, and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, thank you for the opportunity to report to you on the state of your Marine Corps. In our recent meetings, as well as previous testimony before this Congress, I have pledged to provide you with frank and honest assessments; I come here today again with that thought in mind.

Your Marine Corps is fully engaged in what we believe is a generational struggle against fanatical extremists; the challenges we face are of global scale and scope. This Long War is multi-faceted and will not be won in one battle, in one country, or by one method. Your Marines are a tough breed and will do what it takes to win — not only in these opening battles of Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in the subsequent conflicts which we endeavor to prepare for today.

In the face of great hardship, your Marines have made a positive and selfless decision to stay resolved. More than 332,000 Marines have either enlisted or re-enlisted since September 11, 2001; more than 208,000 have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan — a telling number for a force of less than 200,000 Marines. Make no mistake, they joined or decided to re-enlist *knowing* they would go into harm's way.

They have answered the Nation's call and are fully engaged in this fight serving with distinction as the professionals they are. It falls on us, then, to fully support them — we owe them the full resources required to complete the tasks ahead. Now more than ever, they need the sustained support of the American people and the Congress to provide them the help they need to fight today's conflict, prepare for tomorrow's, and fulfill our commitment to Marine families.

Grow the Force

To meet the demands of the Long War as well as the uncertainty of our Nation's security environment, our Corps must be sufficiently manned, well trained, and properly equipped. Like the Cold War, the Long War is a generational struggle that will not be measured by the number of near-term deployments or rotations; it is this long-term view that informs our priorities and plan for growth.

To fulfill our obligations to the Nation, the Marine Corps will grow its personnel end strength to 202,000 Active Component Marines by the end of Fiscal year 2011. This increase will enable your Corps to train to the full spectrum of military operations and improve the ability of the Marine Corps to address future challenges of an uncertain environment. Our growth will

enable us to recover our ability to respond in accordance with timelines outlined in Combatant Commander war plans — thereby, reducing operational risk. Just as importantly, this growth will relieve strain on those superb Americans who have volunteered to fight the Nation’s battles. This growth includes:

- *An increase in our end strength to 202,000 Marines;*
- *Adequate expansions of our infrastructure to provide for our Marines, their families, and their equipment; and*
- *The right mix of equipment for the current and future fight.*

This additional end strength will result in three Marine Expeditionary Forces — balanced in capacity and capability. The development of Marine Corps force structure has been the result of a thorough and ongoing process that supports the Combatant Commanders and accomplishes our Title 10 responsibilities. The process addresses all pillars of combat development (Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities) and identifies our required capabilities and the issues associated with fielding them.

Infrastructure

The Fiscal Year 2009 President’s Budget of \$3.2 billion for our facilities program is a 59 percent increase over our Fiscal Year 2008 proposal. Our program consists of \$534 million for facility sustainment; \$881 million for restoration and modernization; \$297 million for Family Housing PPV seed money and operations and maintenance of housing; and \$2.038 billion for supporting construction for our active and reserve forces.

This unprecedented level of funding in our facilities program is primarily the result of our end strength increase to 202,000 Marines and our conviction that the Marine Corps must provide adequate, fully functioning facilities for our Marines to operate and live. Because our manpower expansion has already begun, temporary facility solutions were put into place beginning in Fiscal Year 2007. In Fiscal Year 2007 and 2008, \$951 million was requested to support our growth — for bachelor enlisted quarters, family housing, and operational facilities. In Fiscal Year 2009, \$1.3 billion is requested in support of this growth.

Exacerbating our requirements, for many years, we funded only our most critical needs. As a result, we have a backlog of repair needs, construction requirements, and our installations are in a poor position to properly accommodate our increased number of Marines. Most of the efforts in Fiscal Years 2007, 2008, and proposed-2009 accelerate non-unit specific facilities, which benefit all those aboard the installation — such as bachelor quarters, family housing, ranges, operational facilities, and landfills. This will assist in getting our installations ready to support our Grow the Force initiative.

As a result of our rapid but rigorous planning process, we were able to submit our end-strength growth stationing plan to Congress in October 2007. Our proposed Fiscal Year 2009 request is based on that stationing plan and will go a long way to ensure that adequate facilities are available to support a 202,000-Marine Corps — while meeting our environmental stewardship requirements.

The Marine Corps' has four major funding areas where recapitalization and modernization initiatives in infrastructure and facilities are programmed: Bachelor and Family Housing; Facility Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization; Military Construction; and Military Construction, Navy Reserve.

Bachelor Housing. Bachelor housing is my top Military Construction priority. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2008, we began the Bachelor Enlisted Quarters Initiative. For the longest time, we placed some of our operational priorities above these projects. We have put ourselves *in extremis* with regards to new barracks as we have degraded their priority for decades in lieu of operational requirements. In concert with this written statement, I have enclosed photographs of some of our most pressing requirements for barracks renovation and replacement. We are now committed to providing adequate billeting for all of our existing unmarried junior enlisted Marines and non-commissioned officers by 2012 — and for our increased end strength by 2014.



**AREA: 64, Camp Talega
BLDG. #: 64371
Year Constructed: 1944
Classification: Inadequate
Configuration: Open-Bay,
Gang-head
Capacity: 28 Beds**



As these photographs show, we have some distance to go before we are able to claim success in this area; but as just stewards of our resources, we are committed to moving forward. The Fiscal Year 2009 budget request continues to build on this initiative and proposes \$1.168 billion bachelor housing new construction in support of our current end strength.



**AREA: 53, Camp Horno
BLDG. #: 53430
Year Constructed: 1953
Last Renovation: minor, 2006
Classification: Inadequate
Configuration: Open-Bay,
Gang-head
Capacity: 48 Beds**

The Marine Corps is the youngest, most junior, and least married of the four military Services. Providing appropriate and comfortable living spaces for these young men and women — who are facing ever-changing responsibilities and make the sacrifices for our Nation — just makes sense. Taking care of our single Marines is my highest priority for infrastructure support. The Marine Corps has dedicated more than eight times our historical average for new and replacement barracks construction. We are also committed to funding whole room barracks furnishings on a seven-year replacement cycle and prioritizing barracks repair projects to preempt a backlog of repairs.

The Marine Corps' primary focus remains housing our junior enlisted bachelor personnel in pay grades of E1 through E5 in our barracks, with a goal of providing a 2+0 room standard that allows two junior enlisted Marines (E1-E3) to share a room and bath. We believe that assigning two junior Marines to a room is the correct balance between the privacy desired by the Marines and the Marine Corps' goals of providing companionship, camaraderie, and unit cohesion. This balance provides the atmosphere we believe is necessary to motivate, train, and develop Marines, while fostering unit integrity. Noncommissioned officers (E4 and E5) are provided a private room with bath in a 2+0 room.

The Marine Corps currently maintains 86,804 bachelor enlisted housing spaces worldwide. We required an additional 16,330 spaces in 2006 in the United States to adequately house our enlisted bachelor Marines. Our program is now adjusted to support our current end strength. Your support of our Fiscal Year 2009 \$1.168 billion Military Construction request for bachelor housing will allow us to continue to reduce this shortfall through thirty five barracks projects at eight bases located in California, Georgia, Hawaii, and North Carolina. With your continued support, the Marine Corps is on track to obtain our goal to achieve the 2+0 standard to support 180,000 end-strength (pre-grow-the-force end strength) by 2012 and supports our 2014 goal to provide adequate housing for 202,000 Marines. Consequently, our single Marines are seeing signs of progress and know the support is there to provide them with quality housing.

Family Housing. With over 170,000 family members, Marine Corps families are an integral component of readiness. We must always remember that Marines and their families serve out of a sense of duty and loyalty to our country and as they do so, they face the difficulties of the military lifestyle — frequent relocations far from extended family and deployments that

separate families for months at a time. A continued commitment to improving family housing helps us to convey our appreciation for their service and sacrifices.

In continued support of the President's Management Agenda, we have been increasing our quality family housing inventory through public private ventures (PPVs) and through Military Construction where necessary.

The Department of Defense has had a long-standing goal to eliminate all inadequate family housing. We have nearly 23,000 owned, leased, or PPV family housing units worldwide; in 2001, the Marine Corps had close to 17,700 inadequate housing units with the majority of those units requiring significant revitalization or replacement. Thanks to your support, I am proud to report that we successfully had contracts in place by the end of Fiscal Year 2007 to completely revitalize all remaining inadequate housing by Fiscal Year 2014.

The Fiscal Year 2009 President's family housing budget request of \$297 million for the Marine Corps includes \$37 million for family housing operations, \$9 million for traditional Military Construction, and \$251 million for PPV seed money. Support for this request will allow us to continue to address the requirement for additional family housing resulting from "Grow the Force" increases and the remaining requirement for the stand-up of the Marine Corps Special Operations Command and to reduce our long-standing housing deficits. Under our traditional military construction programs, we will sustain and restore 72 townhouse enlisted units at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan.

Public Private Ventures. The PPV seed money will permit construction of 394 deficit-reduction units and a DoD Dependent school at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina; the construction or purchase of 951 units at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in California; and 520 units at Marine Corps Base Hawaii. This aggressive PPV program will continue to allow the Marine Corps to leverage private sector funds. In addition to government financing, the private sector will contribute an estimated \$149 million worth of development capital for PPV projects in Fiscal Year 2009.

We have privatized ninety-six percent of our world-wide inventory to date and continue to see success from our PPV projects at Marine Corps installations in Arizona, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, North and South Carolina, and Virginia. PPVs have not only improved the homes in which our families live, they are also providing

community support facilities such as community centers, playgrounds, green scapes, etc., that help create neighborhoods and a sense of community.

Appropriation of last year's request will provide funding to award two PPV projects. This funding will allow for additional housing construction through privatization at Marine Corps Bases Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton, and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms. Upon award of these projects, we will have successfully privatized approximately 97 percent of our worldwide inventory and reduced our housing deficit by up to 1,103 homes.

With nearly 100 percent of our domestic inventory privatized we will continue to build on our prior successes and use PPVs to help us address most of our remaining housing requirement. We thank the Congress for its generous support of this program — it has made all the difference in the world to our families.

Basic Allowance for Housing. In addition to PPV initiatives for family housing, the Department of Defense's continued support for full funding of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) is allowing more families to access quality affordable housing in the private sector. This is important since more than two-thirds of married service members do not live on a military installation. However, many families continue to prefer to live in military or PPV housing for a number of reasons, including economics, safety, schools, and community support. PPV combined with traditional Military Construction will continue to build and improve the homes necessary to supplement private sector housing.

Facility Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization. Facility sustainment funding is critical to keeping our buildings ready to support the mission and provide an acceptable quality of life. In the past, our infrastructure was not replaced at an appropriate rate, causing portions of it to deteriorate. As a consequence, the Marine Corps has had to use an increasing percentage of its facility sustainment funds to bind together old, inadequate buildings throughout the course of their service life, rather than maintaining newer, more economical structures; this has resulted in significant numbers of facility sustainment projects being deferred due to a lack of funds. This directly affected the living and working conditions in barracks, mess halls, and other facilities, in highly visible and negative ways. In addition, we suffered a "quiet crisis" with respect to less obvious repairs to steam plants, runways, sewer lines, and roads.

Because of a funding model and standards developed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to determine the amount of funding we need to sustain our facilities, we have done very well in programming and execution of facility sustainment. In Fiscal Year 2008, our estimated sustainment rate is over 100% — allowing us to take care of some backlogged repairs. To build on this investment, we added approximately \$400 million in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget to reduce the backlog of restoration work in our existing facilities. This one-time injection of repair money will help improve living and working conditions for both existing and "Grow the Force" Marines.

Military Construction. For the second year in a row, the Fiscal Year 2009 proposal for Military Construction represents a significant increase from traditional funding levels in order to provide facilities to address long-standing requirements at our bases and stations. The facilities we are proposing will ultimately support our ramp-up to 202,000 end strength increase.

The Marine Corps prioritizes and balances our Military Construction requirements against many pressing needs. As I stated earlier, bachelor housing is our top Military Construction priority. In Fiscal Year 2009 we have requested an investment of \$1.168 billion in bachelor housing construction. This is the second year of our initiative to construct new barracks to support a Marine Corps force of 180,000 by 2012. For decades, we set aside our barracks shortfall as a funding priority, and we now find ourselves well below acceptable living standards. \$856 million of the \$1.3 billion in Grow the Force Military Construction investment is an acceleration of our BEQ initiative. This funding with an additional \$312 million in our regular program request provides a total of \$1.168 billion in BEQ funding in support of both our BEQ and Grow the Force Initiatives. The additional BEQ funding in the Grow the Force initiative will help meet existing deficiencies and enable our bases to house new Marines earlier. This investment plan does not take into account our end strength growth to 202,000 but will go a long way toward meeting the additional future requirement and our effort to have all single Marines adequately housed.

Other long-standing improvement requirements at our bases and stations include dining facilities at Camp Lejeune; MCAS New River, Camp Pendleton and Quantico; a Child Development Center at Camp Lejeune; ranges at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune; facilities that support the stand-up of the V-22 aircraft in North Carolina and California; the second and third stage of barracks replacement supporting the 3rd Recruit Battalion at MCRD Parris Island;

a recruit support battalion barracks at MCRD San Diego; and the third stage of student officer quarters replacement at The Basic School at Quantico.

The support of this Committee is clearly evident when I visit Marines who are working in some of our newly-constructed facilities; their morale and ability to accomplish their mission is significantly and positively affected. When new construction is deferred, in the short term, Marines will still find a way to accomplish their mission. However, in the long term, especially with our end strength increase, we cannot defer new construction without having a profound effect on readiness, retention, and quality of life.

Military Construction, Navy Reserve. The Marine Forces Reserve is an integral and vital portion of our Marine Corps total force. Marine Forces Reserve is comprised of almost 39,600 Select Marine Corps Reserve personnel at 183 sites, dispersed throughout 48 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. As these numbers suggest, maintenance of Marine Corps Reserve facilities presents a considerable challenge. It is our mission to make sure they are supported with adequate facilities. The Military Construction, Navy Reserve program for exclusive Marine Corps construction must effectively target limited funding to address at least \$130 million in deferred construction projects. Over 50 percent of the reserve centers our Marines train in are more than 30 years old and of these, 35 percent are more than 50 years old.

In addition to antiquated facilities, the modern equipment our Marines use today requires appropriately constructed or modified maintenance facilities, as well as adequate electrical power and other support infrastructure upgrades to maintain combat readiness. The electrical demand on our facilities has increased significantly due to the widespread use of electronic devices and technologically advanced equipment, such as weapons systems simulators. We still continue to use inadequate facilities built to accommodate manual typewriters, M151 jeeps, and M-48 tanks.

To help us address these challenges, the President's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget for Military Construction, Navy Reserve contains \$22.98 million in appropriations request for construction and \$843 thousand in planning and design. This program addresses our most pressing requirements and will provide a new Reserve Training Center and a vehicle maintenance facility in Fresno, California; and a Reserve Training Center in Windy Hill, Georgia.

Improving Quality of Life for Marines and Families

Marines take care of their own – period. This enduring pledge between Marines is never more sacred than during time of war. Just as every Marine makes a commitment to the Corps when they earn the title Marine, the Corps makes an enduring commitment to every Marine – and an enduring commitment to their family.

Putting Family Readiness Programs on a Wartime Footing. Our Marines have been at war for over six years; our commitment has been to place the programs that support their families on a wartime footing as well. Last year, we conducted a self-imposed, rigorous assessment of our family programs and have aggressively moved forward to improve them at every level. We continue our assessments — targeting younger Marines and their families to ensure that we are fully addressing their needs. We request that Congress, through authorities and appropriations, continue to support these initiatives so that we can advance these reforms to meet the evolving requirements of our warfighters and their families.

Our Marine Corps Family Team Building Program and unit Family Readiness Programs, the centerpiece to our family support capability, was based on a peacetime model and 18-month deployment cycles. It was also largely supported on the backs of our dedicated volunteers; our volunteers have been performing magnificently while shouldering the lion’s share of this program — but it is time to dedicate sufficient resources in light of the demands of our wartime operations.

We have recently initiated a sustained funding increase to implement Marine Corps family readiness reforms in Fiscal Year 2008. These reforms include:

- Formalizing the role and relationship of process owners to ensure accountability for family readiness;
- Expanding programs to support the extended family of a Marine (spouse, child, and parents);
- Establishing primary duty billets for Family Readiness Officers at regiment, group, battalion, and squadron levels;
- Improving the quality of life at remote and isolated installations;
- Increasing Marine Corps Family Team Building installation personnel;

- Refocusing and applying technological improvements to our communication network between commanders and families;
- Dedicating appropriate baseline funding to command level Family Readiness Programs; and
- Developing a standardized, high-quality volunteer management and recognition program.

In addition to family readiness program improvements, the Marine Corps has dedicated \$100 million in the Fiscal Year 2008 GWOT Supplemental Amendment for Warrior Family Support. The funding will be used to help transition and expand our installation and deployed family readiness support through staffing, infrastructure, equipment, and technology initiatives. At installations across the Marine Corps, to include remote and isolated installations, we are making programs and services upgrades to support the families of our deployed warriors. Remote and Isolated Installation Contact Teams were assembled to review our programs that serve these Marines with unique needs. We are acting on command-specific findings and recommendations by investing over \$35 million in Fiscal Year 2008 to increase the depth and breadth of programs offered at these installations and to execute facility modernization or refurbishment.

Exceptional Family Member Program (Respite Care) (EFMP). We are offering our active duty families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program up to 40 hours of free respite care per month for each exceptional family member. Also seeking to provide a “continuum of care” for our exceptional family members, we are using our assignment process, working with TRICARE and the Department of the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery to expand access and availability to care, and providing family support programs to ease relocations and ensure quality care transitions.

Wounded Warrior Regiment. In April 2007, the Wounded Warrior Regiment was activated to achieve unity of command and effort in order to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to Wounded Warrior care. The establishment of the Regiment reflects our deep commitment to the welfare of our wounded, ill, and injured. The mission of the Regiment is to provide and facilitate assistance to wounded, ill, and injured Marines, Sailors attached to or in support of Marine units, and their family members, throughout all phases of recovery. The Regiment provides non-medical case management, benefit information and assistance, and

transition support. We use “a single process” that supports active duty, reserve, and separated personnel and is all-inclusive for resources, referrals, and information.

There are two Wounded Warrior Battalions headquartered at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and Camp Pendleton, California. The Battalions include liaison teams at major military medical treatment facilities, Department of Veterans Affairs Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers and Marine Corps Base Naval Hospitals. The Battalions work closely with our warfighting units to ensure our wounded, ill and injured are cared for and continue to maintain the proud tradition that “Marines take care of their own.”

The Regiment is constantly assessing how to improve the services it provides to our wounded, ill, and injured. Major initiatives of the Regiment include a Job Transition Cell manned by Marines and representatives of the Departments of Labor and Veteran Affairs. The Regiment has also established a Wounded Warrior Call Center for 24/7 support. The Call Center both receives incoming calls from Marines and family members who have questions and makes outreach calls to the almost 9,000 wounded Marines who have left active service. A Charitable Organization Cell was created to facilitate linking additional wounded warrior needs with charitable organizations that can provide the needed support. Additionally, The Regiment has also strengthened its liaison presence at the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office. These are just some of the initiatives that reflect your Corps’ enduring commitment to the well-being of our Marines and Sailors suffering the physical and emotional effects of their sacrifices for our great Nation.

We are at the beginning of a sustained commitment to care and support our wounded, ill, and injured. As our Wounded Warrior Program matures, additional requirements will become evident. Your continued support of new legislation is essential to ensure our Wounded Warriors have the resources and opportunities for full and independent lives.

Thank you for your personal and legislative support on behalf of our wounded warriors. Your personal visits to them in the hospital wards where they recover and the bases where they live are sincerely appreciated by them and their families. Your new Wounded Warrior Hiring Initiative to employ wounded warriors in the House and Senate demonstrates your commitment and support of their future well-being. We are grateful to this Congress for the many wounded warrior initiatives. This landmark legislation will significantly improve the quality of their lives and demonstrates the enduring gratitude of this Nation for their personal sacrifices. I am hopeful

that future initiatives will continue to build upon your great efforts and further benefit the brave men and women, along with their families, who bear the burden of defending this great country.

Combat Operational Stress Control. Marine Corps commanders are fully engaged in promoting the psychological health of our Marines, Sailors, and family members. Our commanders bear responsibility for leading and training tough, resilient Marines and Sailors, and for maintaining strong, cohesive units. Unit commanders have the greatest potential for detecting stress occurrences and assessing impact on warfighters and family members. Our leaders establish an environment where it is okay to ask for help and that combat stress is as deserving of the same respect and care as any physical wound of war. With the Navy's medical community, we are expanding our program of embedding mental health professionals in operational units — the Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) program — to directly support all elements of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force. We also continue our collaboration with sister Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Center for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and external agencies to determine best practices to better support Marines and their families.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). With the frequent use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and improved protective measures that reduce mortality rates, more Marines are exposed to possible traumatic brain injuries. As with other poorly understood injuries, there is sometimes a reluctance by individual Marines to seek medical attention at the time of the injury. Education is the best way to reduce this stigma, and it is to be the most effective treatment for those suffering a mild injury. TBI awareness and education is part of pre-deployment and routine training. All Marines are being screened for TBI exposure during the post-deployment phase and those identified as injured receive comprehensive evaluation and treatment. A pilot program for baseline neurocognitive testing is being implemented to improve identification of TBI and maintain individual and unit readiness in the field. The Marine Corps continues to work closely with DoD's Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury to continue to advance our understanding of TBI and improve the care of all Marines.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Marine Corps Training and Education Command, Naval Health Research Center, and others are studying ways to identify risk and protective factors for Post-Traumatic Stress

Disorder (PTSD) and to increase our resilience to stress. By improving the awareness of both individuals and our leaders, we can provide early identification and psychological first aid for those who are stress-injured. Better screening and referral of at-risk Marines are underway via pre- and post-deployment standard health assessments that specifically screen for mental health problems. The Department of Veterans Affairs has established comprehensive guidelines for managing post-traumatic stress, which are available to all services.

The Marine Corps is grateful for the effort Congress has put into making TBI, PTSD, and other-combat-related mental illness issues a top priority. We will continue to do the same so that we can further improve our knowledge and treatment of these disorders.

Conclusion

The Marine Corps continues to create a multi-capable force for our Nation — not only for the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also for subsequent campaigns of the Long War. We are committed to ensuring we remain where our country needs us, when she needs us, and to prevail over whatever challenges we face. On behalf of your Marines, I extend great appreciation for your support thus far and thank you in advance for your ongoing efforts to support our brave Service men and women in harm's way.

Now more than ever, they need the sustained support of the American people and the Congress to simultaneously maintain our readiness, reset the force during an extended war, modernize to face the challenges of the future, and fulfill our commitment to Marines and families. I promise you that the Corps understands the value of each dollar provided and will continue to provide maximum return for every dollar spent. Again, I thank you for the opportunity to report to you on their behalf.