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September 23, 2024

The Honorable Alex Wagner
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
1690 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC, 20330-1670

Dear Mr. Wagner,

I'm writing to you regarding the United States Air Force's apparent use of race and sex quotas for its officer applicant pool.

On August 9, 2022, the office of the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) sent a memorandum titled "Officer Source of Commission Applicant Pool Goals." The memorandum sets race and sex quotas, referred to as "Diversity & Inclusion goals," for commissioned officer applicants to the Air Force at a proportion of 64 percent male and 36 percent female, 67.5 percent white, 15 percent Hispanic, 10 percent Asian, 14 percent African American, 1.5 percent American Indian/Native Alaskan, and 1 percent Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and directs Air Force leadership to develop a plan to reach these goals within 30 days.

Air Force documents from 2023 recently obtained by the Daily Caller News Foundation (DCNF) show that, in response to the August 2022 memorandum, the Air Force developed even more granular race and gender quotas. For example, a slide that was presented to the SECAF as part of its "Office Accession Applicant Pool Goals D&I Outreach Plan" includes a graph that shows white male ROTC officer applicants declining from about sixty percent in 2019 to a goal of approximately 43% by fiscal year 2029.

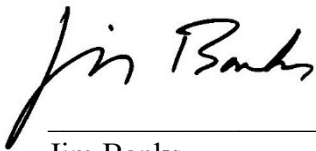
Internal Air Force email correspondence obtained by the DCNF suggest that you personally advocated for presenting the SECAF with a specific timeline for implementing these quotas. An email relaying your feedback on the draft "Applicant Pool Goals D&I Outreach Plan" slide deck reads: "Mr. Wagner would like to know specifically and what we are doing for and the timeline to meet goals for each specific demographic, for example, black males, white females, etc." Another email shows that efforts were made to delay the briefing "to give us more time to meet Mr. Wagner's intent."

At a 2023 House Armed Services Committee Military Personnel Subcommittee hearing, I asked you if you would personally commit to opposing any effort to promote or recruit servicemembers based on their race or gender. You responded that, “I will commit to you to do everything possible to reach the broadest segment of America, whether it means increasing the number of women in our force or people of color, and I commit to you that we will continue those efforts, to have a more diverse force.”

Please respond to the following questions no later than October 20, 2024:

1. How does reducing the proportion of white male ROTC applicants by seventeen percent in ten years compatible with your stated goal of “reach[ing] the broadest segment of America”?
2. Why would the Air Force advocate for reduced recruiting of certain demographics while it struggled to meet its recruiting goals?
3. What is the difference between the “Diversity & Inclusion goals” you set and race and gender quotas?
4. Do you believe that race- and sex-based discrimination should be tolerated within the United States Air Force?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Banks". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jim Banks
Member of Congress