

Questions for Executive Director of the Office of Military Affairs Nominee

By: Matthew H. Frame, Legislative Analyst II
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Executive Director of the Office of Military Affairs ([CGS § 32-58b](#))

The executive director heads the Office of Military Affairs (OMA). Within available appropriations, the executive director must:

1. coordinate state and local efforts to prevent the closure or downsizing of Connecticut military facilities, particularly the Groton submarine base;
2. maximize the state's role in the federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, including (a) acting as liaison to the state's congressional delegation on defense, military, and BRAC issues and (b) coordinating the activities of consultants the state hires to help monitor BRAC activities;
3. encourage the relocation of military missions to Connecticut;
4. coordinate state and local efforts to enhance the quality of life of military personnel stationed in or deploying from Connecticut and their families living or working in Connecticut;
5. review and make recommendations for state policies affecting Connecticut military facilities and the defense and homeland security industries;
6. coordinate state, regional, and local efforts to encourage the growth of Connecticut's defense and homeland security industry;

7. serve as an advocate for service members and their families with other state agencies;
8. initiate and sustain collaborative partnerships with local military commanders;
9. consult with the Department of Economic and Community Development on proposed financial assistance agreements with defense and homeland security firms; and
10. prepare and submit a report of activities, findings, and recommendations annually to the governor and Commerce and Public Safety and Security committees.

Questions

1. Please describe the mission of OMA as you see it. Over the years that you have served as executive director, has your focus shifted at all?
2. Do you believe the office has adequate resources, in terms of personnel and budget, to meet its statutory obligations?
3. What do you consider to be the greatest challenge for OMA? How can the legislature assist you in addressing this challenge?
4. OMA's FY 2021-2022 annual report identifies key defense issues facing the nation and Connecticut, including (1) the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 and (2) the major conflict between Russia and the Ukraine. How has Connecticut's defense industrial base been affected by these dynamics? What are the current and future impacts on our military personnel?
5. According to OMA's 2021-2022 annual report, the FY 2022 Defense Funding Bill and the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act contained substantial funding for Connecticut, a larger percentage being for Virginia-class and Columbia-class submarines as well as for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. What actions, if any, should Connecticut take to ensure it has, and maintains, an industrial base capacity that is sufficient to meet this demand? How does Connecticut's defense industrial base compare to other top defense contracting states?
6. In December 2022, the U.S. Army announced that Sikorsky would not receive a contract to create a new aircraft model, causing concern for Connecticut's workforce, economy, and long-term defense future. Was clarification ever provided regarding why Sikorsky did not receive the contract? What role do you see OMA, or the state overall, playing in bringing business like this to Connecticut?
7. On a similar note, what is the status of the appeal of the Army's decision? What is the likelihood that such a decision might be amended?

8. Last year, the General Assembly authorized legislation that would allow for the state to have jurisdiction over juvenile crimes on military bases. Has the state agreed to a memorandum of understanding formalizing this jurisdiction?
9. BRAC has twice targeted the Naval Submarine Base New London for closure. What steps has OMA proactively taken to enhance the base's military value in advance of future BRAC meetings? Are there strategies other states have taken to protect their military facilities from closure?
10. What initiatives has OMA implemented to enhance the quality of life of military personnel and their families? And in particular, what role does OMA play in their transition from deployment to civilian life? Does OMA work with the state Department of Veterans Affairs during this transition?
11. The armed forces, including here in CT, face additional challenges in recruiting and retaining personnel due to a competitive workforce and declining enlistment. Are you aware of any other recruitment challenges that are particularly relevant to Connecticut?

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