

**Written Statement of Kathleen Naeher
Chief Operating Officer of the Civil Group, Leidos**

Before the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology

December 6, 2022

Chairwoman Johnson, Ranking Member Lucas, and members of the Committee, my name is Kathleen Naeher, and I am the Chief Operating Officer in the Civil Group at Leidos. Leidos appreciates the Committee holding this important hearing and is deeply committed to working in partnership with the National Science Foundation and this Committee to address concerns about sexual harassment for those deployed to Antarctica.

I help to oversee our work in Antarctica in connection with the Antarctic Support Contract. I have been closely involved in our efforts to address the important issues the Committee is exploring today. Let me be crystal clear – there is no place for harassment of any sort in any workplace, be it on ice or elsewhere. As a company with a long history of providing technology, engineering and scientific experience to our customers, including the federal government, Leidos is committed to doing everything possible to provide a safe and secure workplace wherever we operate. Since 2018, Leidos has been recognized by Ethisphere as one of the world’s most ethical companies.

Leidos is proud to partner with the NSF to support the United States Antarctic Program and the important work being conducted. As the prime contractor to NSF, Leidos does not oversee or perform scientific research; instead, our role is to provide the support services that allow the scientists on the ice to do their work. The jobs Leidos and its subcontractors do represent a wide range of trades and skills, including engineers, waste management, construction workers, medical professionals, fire and rescue, cooks and kitchen workers, janitorial services, logistics specialists, mechanics, air support, finance, HVAC specialists, and many others. We essentially run a small town – all to support the science being conducted there.

Before coming to Leidos, I spent over thirty years at the CIA where I worked in difficult and demanding settings around the world, including in multiple war zones. Even when compared to those locations, Antarctica presents complex and unique challenges, which I saw firsthand when I was on ice last month. Given the extremely remote and harsh conditions, working in Antarctica is difficult and isolating. Connectivity is limited, making communications difficult. Because people working in this remote environment share living and working spaces for months at a time, it is hard to have private time or separation from your coworkers. Further complicating the environment, there are a number of different stakeholders operating alongside each other. While a number of people work in the same setting or location, they report to different employers or agencies, each with its own requirements, expectations, and policies for addressing workplace matters on ice.

Though the complicated nature of the work environment presents unique complexities as it relates to workplace safety, including with respect to preventing and reporting harassment, we take all reports of potential misconduct seriously. Since becoming NSF’s prime contractor in Antarctica in 2016, Leidos has taken a number of steps to improve the culture and conditions on ice and to foster a safe and protective workplace. For example, in 2019, Leidos strengthened requirements

relating to prevention and response training for sexual harassment and assault, including providing Ally Training to station leadership and subcontract line managers. In 2020, Leidos deployed a full-time counselor on site to provide counseling services to all people deployed on ice, including grantees, NSF, and military personnel. Leidos added workshops addressing workplace culture in 2020. And in 2021, we established the ASC Inclusion Council and our ASC HR managers received certifications as Victim's Advocates.

After receiving the SAHPR report this summer, we continued our efforts to improve the culture and conditions on ASC, in coordination with the NSF. This issue has the attention of the highest levels of Leidos. In particular, the company established a task force in July 2022 to address the specific concerns raised in the SAHPR report. The resulting action plan includes multiple ongoing work streams focused on enhancing harassment prevention training; encouraging reporting of concerns; improving physical safety, including for grantees working in the field; and collaborating with our subcontract teams to strengthen and improve consistency in responding to reports of sexual harassment and assault.

In conclusion, I was inspired during my recent visit to see the level of dedication to the mission among the staff in Antarctica. Leidos shares this commitment—both to the mission and to ensuring a safe environment for those living and working there. We are pleased to partner with NSF to continue to make progress in this area so that the important scientific work in Antarctica can continue free from harassment of any kind.

I would like to reiterate my thanks to the Committee for addressing this important issue, and to Chairwoman Johnson for her leadership throughout her career. We at Leidos wish you the best in your upcoming retirement. Thank you.