

**Senate Commerce Committee Coast Guard Nominee Questionnaire
117th Congress**

Instructions for the nominees: The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation asks you to provide typed answers to each of the following questions. It is requested that the nominee type the question in full before each response. Do not leave any questions blank. Type “None” or “Not Applicable” if a question does not apply to the nominee. Return printed answers to Committee. Begin each section (i.e., “A”, “B”, etc.) on a new sheet of paper.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

1. Name (Include any former names or nicknames used):

Wilborne Earl Watson (Will)

2. Position to which nominated: Rear Admiral (lower half)

3. Date of Nomination: 26 August 2022

4. Address (List current place of residence and office addresses):

Office: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave
Washington, D.C. 20593

Residence (own):

████████████████████
████████████████████

5. Date and Place of Birth:

January 25, 1974
Memphis, TN

6. Provide the name, position, and place of employment for your spouse (if married) and the names and ages of your children (including stepchildren and children by a previous marriage).

Spouse: Yashica Lakisha Watson (not currently working)
Children: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

7. List all college and graduate degrees. Provide year and school attended.

Master of Science, National Security Strategy, 2018
National War College, National Defense University, Washington, D.C.

Master of Business Administration, 2003
Loyola University, New Orleans, LA

Master of Arts, Education - Curriculum and Instruction, 1999
Xavier University, New Orleans, LA

Bachelor of Science, Biology, 1996
Xavier University, New Orleans, LA

8. List all post-undergraduate employment, and highlight all management-level jobs held and any non-managerial jobs that relate to the position for which you are nominated.

I have been a Coast Guard Officer since 1996. Please see my official Coast Guard biography.

9. Attach a copy of your resume.

My official Coast Guard biography is attached.

10. List any advisory, consultative, honorary, or other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed above, within the last ten years.

None.

11. List all positions held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, company, firm, partnership, or other business, enterprise, educational, or other institution within the last ten years.

Vice President, East Jackson (TN) Community Empowerment Program (Education, health and wellness, mental and physical fitness), Nonprofit, 2014-2021

Immediate Past President, National Naval Officers Association, Nonprofit, 2016-2018

President, National Naval Officers Association, Nonprofit, 2014-2016

12. Please list each membership you have had during the past ten years or currently hold with any civic, social, charitable, educational, political, professional, fraternal, benevolent or religiously affiliated organization, private club, or other membership organization. (For this question, you do not have to list your religious affiliation or membership in a religious house of worship or institution.). Include dates of membership and any positions you have held with any organization. Please note whether any such club or organization restricts membership on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability.

Member, National Naval Officers Association (2002-Present) - this organization does not restrict membership on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability

13. Have you ever been a candidate for and/or held a public office (elected, non-elected, or appointed)? If so, indicate whether any campaign has any outstanding debt, the amount, and whether you are personally liable for that debt.

No.

14. List all memberships and offices held with and services rendered to, whether compensated or not, any political party or election committee within the past ten years. If you have held a paid position or served in a formal or official advisory position (whether compensated or not) in a

political campaign within the past ten years, identify the particulars of the campaign, including the candidate, year of the campaign, and your title and responsibilities.

None.

15. Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$200 or more for the past ten years.

None.

16. List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, military medals, and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievements.

Military Personal Awards:

Legion of Merit (2)

Meritorious Service Medal (2)

Coast Guard Commendation Medal (3)

Coast Guard Achievement Medal (3)

Armed Forces Service Medal

Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

Fellowship:

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Seminar XXI - 2016-2017

Scholarship:

Coast Guard College Student Pre-commissioning Initiative - 1995

17. Please list each book, article, column, Internet blog posting, or other publication you have authored, individually or with others. Include a link to each publication when possible. Also list any speeches that you have given on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated. Do not attach copies of these publications unless otherwise instructed.

Co-Author, Article - *Corporate Philanthropy: When is giving effective?*
Journal of Corporate Accounting (co-authored with Professor of

Accounting and classmates from Loyola University, New Orleans, MBA program) October 2003

Author, Article - A Tale of Two Responses: Coast Guard Proceedings, Oct-Dec 1998

I have provided extemporaneous remarks in a variety of venues and panels on Coast Guard operations and leadership as a military officer.

18. List all digital platforms (including social media and other digital content sites) on which you currently or have formerly operated an account, regardless of whether or not the account was held in your name or an alias. Include the name of an “alias” or “handle” you have used on each of the named platforms. Indicate whether the account is active, deleted, or dormant. Include a link to each account if possible.

Facebook - Will Watson (active)
Will Watson (dormant)
Twitter - @willewatson1 (deleted)
Instagram - will_e_w (active)
LinkedIn - Wilborne Watson (active)

19. Please identify each instance in which you have testified orally or in writing before Congress in a governmental or non-governmental capacity and specify the date and subject matter of each testimony.

None.

20. Given the current mission, major programs, and major operational objectives of the Coast Guard, what in your background or employment experience do you believe affirmatively qualifies you for appointment to the position for which you have been nominated, and why do you wish to serve in that position?

Over the course of my 27 years of service in the Coast Guard, I have had the honor of serving in key assignments that have broadened my operational acumen and advanced my leadership experience.

I currently serve as the Executive Assistant to the Vice Commandant. In this role, I operate as his direct representative on all matters pertaining to the

administration and management of the Coast Guard. Prior to this assignment, I served as Commander, Sector New Orleans - one of the Coast Guard's largest sector commands. Of note, during this tour of duty, I served as Coast Guard Incident Commander for Hurricane Ida Response and Recovery Operations.

Prior operational tours include serving as Commanding Officer at Marine Safety Unit Lake Charles, Louisiana, as Executive Officer at Marine Safety Unit Texas City, Texas and as Executive Officer at Marine Safety Unit Cleveland, Ohio. I also deployed to Joint Field Office Baton Rouge in support of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Rescue and Recovery Operations in 2005.

Several staff assignments and educational opportunities have provided me vital exposure to governmental/interagency inner-workings and enterprise level leadership. Those include serving as Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Homeland Security, as a Coast Guard Congressional Affairs Liaison, graduate of the National War College and Fellow of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Seminar XXI on Foreign Politics, International Relations and the National Interest.

Above all, the Coast Guard has afforded me the opportunity to serve with the incredible men and women that comprise its ranks. I am energized daily by the great work that our Coast Guard is doing to protect our citizens, our ports, our waterways, and our way of life. If I am confirmed, I look forward to serving at the next level of leadership in our organization. I count it an honor and a privilege to lead within the world's best Coast Guard as we serve this Nation amidst increasingly complex and challenging mission demands.

21. What do you believe are your responsibilities, if confirmed, to ensure that the Coast Guard has proper management and accounting controls, and what experience do you have in managing a large organization?

Every leader has a responsibility to be a good steward of the resources within his or her span of influence. Accountability, transparency, honor and integrity are key elements of that effort, in my view. To that end, I will continue to ensure that the resources within my charge are monitored

effectively to prevent misuse and are employed effectively to maximize mission execution. I have done so throughout my career, both in major command cadre and key leadership and oversight roles.

From 2018-2022, I served as Deputy Commander, and subsequently, Commander of Sector New Orleans, one of the Coast Guard's largest Sector Commands. The unit had over 750 personnel attached with 17 subordinate units spread throughout Southeast Louisiana, including 6 cutters (4 patrol boats, 2 construction tenders), 3 small boat stations, 4 Aids to Navigation Units, 3 Marine Safety Units, and 1 Marine Safety Detachment. In this position, I was charged with oversight of a \$2.7 million dollar annual budget, judiciously employed to support vital safety and security operations in one of the Nation's most vital economic centers.

I was also privileged to serve as Military Assistant to the Secretary of Homeland Security from 2015-2017. There, I gained great exposure to Cabinet-level leadership at one of the government's largest federal executive departments. In my current role as Executive Assistant to the Vice Commandant, I serve as his direct representative on all matters related to the operation and administration of the Coast Guard.

22. What do you believe to be the top three challenges facing the Coast Guard, and why?

Recruiting talent is one of the Coast Guard's leading concerns. Coast Guard mission demands are proving increasingly challenging and complex. As maritime commerce, trade and transport increase, the requirements to keep our waterways safe and secure grow. We need a well-trained and ready workforce to meet the increasing demand. Presently, we are seeing a decline in the number of people willing to serve. The Coast Guard is working diligently to resolve this issue.

Another key challenge is that of keeping pace with the ever changing and increasingly complex maritime operating environment. Larger and more technologically advanced ships, unmanned autonomous vessels, the proliferation of automation in our ports, and an increasing number of waterway users overall within the Marine Transportation System (MTS) are several, among many other factors, the service must consider as we work to ensure maritime safety and security along our ports and waterways.

Resourcing, training, and equipping our people to keep pace with this rapid change requires innovation, creative engagement and vital partnerships.

Last, but certainly not the least of these, is the challenge presented by cyber proliferation/influence within the MTS. Our Nation's critical maritime infrastructure is increasingly more modernized and digitally interconnected through the cyber realm. This presents risk that we must understand, monitor, and mitigate to ensure maritime commerce continues to move along the MTS safely and efficiently. We must also continue to protect Coast Guard systems from cyber intrusion and disruption.

B. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. Describe all financial arrangements, deferred compensation agreements, and other continuing dealings with business associates, clients, or customers. Please include information related to retirement accounts.

Please see my nominee PFDR.

2. Do you have any commitments or agreements, formal or informal, to maintain employment, affiliation, or practice with any business, association or other organization during your appointment? If so, please explain.

No.

3. Indicate any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other relationships which could involve potential conflicts of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

None, but should one arise I will obtain advice from a Coast Guard ethics official and will follow that advice.

4. Describe any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction which you have had during the last ten years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that could in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

None, but should one arise I will obtain advice from a Coast Guard ethics official and will follow that advice.

5. Identify any other potential conflicts of interest, and explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

None, but should one arise I will obtain advice from a Coast Guard ethics official and will follow that advice.

6. Describe any activity during the past ten years, including the names of clients represented, in which you have been engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration and execution of law or public policy.

None.

C. LEGAL MATTERS

1. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics, professional misconduct, or retaliation by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, an Inspector General, the Office of Special Counsel, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If yes:
 - a. Provide the name of agency, association, committee, or group;
 - b. Provide the date the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action was issued or initiated;
 - c. Describe the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action;
 - d. Provide the results of the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action.

No.

2. Have you ever been investigated, arrested, charged, or held by any Federal, State, or other law enforcement authority of any Federal, State, county, or municipal entity, other than for a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain.

No.

3. Have you or any business or nonprofit of which you are or were an officer ever been involved as a party in an administrative agency proceeding, criminal proceeding, or civil litigation? If so, please explain.

I became a member of the National Naval Officers Association (NOAA) in 2002 and served as President from 2014-2016. I am aware that NNOA was involved in a lawsuit in 1998, prior to my joining. I have no firsthand knowledge of the matter.

4. Have you ever been convicted (including pleas of guilty or *nolo contendere*) of any criminal violation other than a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain.

No.

5. Have you ever been accused, formally or informally, of sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), age, disability, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, engagement in a protected Equal Employment Opportunity/Equal Opportunity (EEO/EO) activity, whistleblower activity, or any other basis? If so, please explain.

No.

6. If you have ever served as a general court-martial convening authority involving sexual misconduct or assault, have you ever disapproved the findings of a court-martial related to the offense(s) or reduced the sentence adjudged by a court-martial, other than in connection with a pre-trial agreement?

No.

7. Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be disclosed in connection with your nomination.

None.

D. RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMITTEE

1. Will you ensure that your department/agency complies with deadlines for information set by congressional committees, and that your department/agency endeavors to timely comply with requests for information from individual Members of Congress, including requests from members in the minority?

Yes.

2. Will you ensure that your department/agency does whatever it can to protect congressional witnesses and whistleblowers from reprisal for their testimony and disclosures?

Yes.

3. Will you cooperate in providing the Committee with requested witnesses, including technical experts and career employees, with firsthand knowledge of matters of interest to the Committee?

Yes.

4. Are you willing to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress on such occasions as you may be reasonably requested to do so?

Yes.

5. Do you agree, if confirmed, to keep this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided?

Yes, in accordance with law and DHS policy and guidance.

6. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this Committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their

oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request?

Yes, in accordance with law and DHS policy and guidance.

7. Do you agree, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this Committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress?

Yes.


(Nominee is to include this signed affidavit along with answers to the above questions.)

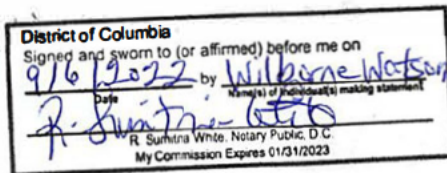
F. AFFIDAVIT

WILBORNE WATSON being duly sworn, hereby states that he/she has read and signed the foregoing Statement on Biographical and Financial Information and that the information provided therein is, to the best of his/her knowledge, current, accurate, and complete.


Signature of Nominee

Subscribed and sworn before me this 6 day of September, 2022


Notary Public





CAPT Wilborne (Will) E. Watson
Executive Assistant
to the Vice Commandant



Captain Watson currently serves as Executive Assistant to the Vice Commandant. In this role, he operates as the Vice Commandant's direct representative on all matters pertaining to the administration and management of the Coast Guard. Prior to this assignment, Captain Watson served as Commander, Sector New Orleans where he directed all Coast Guard missions in an area of responsibility that includes the Louisiana Gulf Coast and the Mississippi River System from Baton Rouge to the Gulf of Mexico out to the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf - among the largest, busiest and most complex coastal and port areas in the United States. Of note, during this tour of duty, Captain Watson served as Incident Commander for Hurricane Ida Response and Recovery Operations following the catastrophic impacts of one of the most powerful hurricanes to ever make landfall on the U.S. mainland.

Captain Watson's previous operational tours include serving as Commanding Officer at Marine Safety Unit Lake Charles, Louisiana, from 2012 to 2015 where he oversaw maritime safety, security, and environmental response missions throughout Southwest Louisiana. From 2010 to 2012, he served as Executive Officer at Marine Safety Unit Texas City, Texas with oversight of operations throughout the ports of Galveston, Texas City and Freeport, Texas. He also served as Executive Officer at Marine Safety Unit Cleveland, Ohio from 2005 to 2007 and deployed to Joint Field Office Baton Rouge in support of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Rescue and Recovery Operations in 2005.

Captain Watson's staff assignments include serving as Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Homeland Security from 2015-2017, as Congressional Affairs Liaison from 2007-2010 and as the Eighth District Budget Officer from 2001-2005.

Captain Watson holds a Master of Science in National Security Strategy from the National War College in Washington, D.C., a Master of Business Administration from Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana, as well as a Master of Arts in Education and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana. Captain Watson is a 2016-2017 Fellow of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Seminar XXI on Foreign Politics, International Relations and the National Interest.

Captain Watson's military awards include the Legion of Merit (2), the Meritorious Service Medal (2), the Coast Guard Commendation Medal (3), the Coast Guard

Achievement Medal (3), the Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal and various service and unit awards.

CAPT Wilborne (Will) E. Watson

Current Assignment

May 2022 – Present

Executive Assistant to the Vice Commandant

Assignment History

May 20 - May 22	Sector New Orleans, LA, Sector Commander
Jun 18 - May 20	Sector New Orleans, LA, Deputy Sector Commander
Aug 17 - Jun 18	DUINS, National War College, Washington, DC, Fellow
Jul 15 - Jul 17	DHS HQ, Washington, DC, Military Asst. to the Secretary
Jun 12 - Jul 15	Marine Safety Unit Lake Charles, LA, Commanding Officer
Apr 10 - Jun 12	Marine Safety Unit Texas City, TX, Executive Officer
Jun 07 - Apr 10	Congressional Affairs, Washington, DC, Liaison
Jun 05 - Jun 07	Marine Safety Unit Cleveland, OH, Executive Officer
Aug 01 - Jun 05	Eighth District Office, New Orleans, LA, Budget Officer
Aug 00 - Aug 01	Duty Under Instruction - Financial Management Loyola University, LA & University of New Orleans, LA
Jan 97 - Aug 00	Marine Safety Office New Orleans, LA, Port Operations Officer

Educational Summary

2018	National War College, Washington, DC, Master of Science, National Security Strategy
2010	Marine Industry Training, Port Safety & Security
2003	Loyola University, New Orleans, LA, Master of Business Administration
1999	Xavier University, New Orleans, LA, Master of Arts
1996	Xavier University, New Orleans, LA, Bachelor of Science

Military Awards and Significant National Recognition or Achievement

2022	Legion of Merit
2022	Type 1 Incident Commander
2017	Legion of Merit
2016	DHS Personnel Staff Badge
2015	Meritorious Service Medal
2014	Honorary Chief Petty Officer
2012	Coast Guard Commendation Medal
2010	Meritorious Service Medal
2009	Coast Guard Achievement Medal
2007	Coast Guard Commendation Medal
2006	Coast Guard Achievement Medal
2005	Coast Guard Commendation Medal
2000	Coast Guard Achievement Medal

Significant Current Professional Credentials or Recent Activities

2017

Fellow, M.I.T. Seminar XXI, Washington, DC, Foreign
Politics, International Relations & the National Interest