

RFI Category and Number:

*Primary Caregiver Leave & Caregiver Sabbatical RFI #10*

RFI Question:

The Committee continues to be interested in the enhancement of parental leave policies to help encourage workforce recruitment and retention of Service members by making military benefits more competitive with private sector benefits. The committee requests a written response to provide the following:

- a. What is the current length of maternity/primary caregiver leave authorized for Service members following a birth or adoption?
- b. Provide details on any analysis conducted on how the length of this leave impacts retention. Detail any current or ongoing studies to assess whether this leave is having a positive impact on retaining servicewomen.
- c. Provide details on any analysis that considers whether extending the leave beyond the current length could lead to the increased retention of servicewomen.
- d. Address the benefits and/or potential risks to your Service if extended time off was offered to primary caregivers beyond the current authorized parental leave (i.e., sabbatical with corresponding service obligation).

RFI Response:

- a. Maternity convalescent leave is six weeks and primary caregiver leave is six weeks. A Sailor who gives birth and is designated the primary caregiver can receive a total of 12 weeks of leave while a Sailor who is designated as the primary caregiver following an adoption can receive six weeks of primary caregiver leave.*
- b. The Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) released a study in April 2019, "An Analysis of the Relationship Between the Navy's Maternity Leave Policy and Reenlistment Rates" that studied retention impacts of the old Maternity Leave Policy. Navy is not currently sponsoring any Caregiver Leave retention related studies. The total amount of leave a birth mother can receive under the new policy (six weeks of maternity convalescent leave plus six weeks of primary caregiver leave) is the same so we assume that the impacts are similar, but the new policy does have some differences and the impact of those differences has not been studied.*
- c. The Navy is not aware of any current analysis that considers whether extending the leave beyond the current length could lead to the increased retention of servicewomen. Navy is aware of a 2019 study that CNA conducted that assessed the feasibility of flexible (non-continuous) parental leave and the potential operational and policy implications.*
- d. Navy is concerned that any changes to caregiver leave that results in more time away from work has the potential to have a negative operational impact for the Navy. Because members*

*on Caregiver Leave do not have their positions filled while they are taking leave, units are often forced to accept the gap to the position for the length of the absence. If this gap occurs in an operational unit, the impact can be significant.*

*Hours Expended Answering this RFI: 9 hours*

*POC or office responsible: OPNAV N130*