

RFI Category and Number:

CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS GENDER BIAS RFI #4

RFI Question:

The Committee requests a written response from each of the Military Services on what actions have been taken to assess and mitigate (if necessary) the impact of conscious and unconscious gender bias and language on military performance evaluations and promotions? Additionally, include any processes built into your promotion and evaluation systems that facilitate equitable selection.

RFI Response:

The Navy's performance evaluation system and promotion selection board process is fair and equitable, striving to ensure that no member is disadvantaged and committed to meeting the needs of the Navy with the best qualified officers and senior enlisted leaders.

Although Navy Personnel Command is not aware of any formal action/studies that have been taken to assess and mitigate the impact of conscious and unconscious gender bias and language on military performance evaluations, the Navy does have formalized guidance for performance evaluations from the Chief of Naval Personnel. The performance evaluation system utilizes tailored, gender neutral and performance based reports for officers, senior enlisted and junior enlisted. Fitness Reports are utilized for officers (W2-O6), Chief Evaluations for chief petty officers (E7-E9) and a standard evaluation for other enlisted personnel (E1-E6). Performance traits are graded on a 5-point scale, from 1.0 (lowest) to 5.0 (highest), using gender neutral performance standards printed on the forms. The performance trait grade of 3.0 represents performance to full Navy standards. Higher grades are reserved for performance which significantly exceeds standards. All 1.0 grades must be substantiated in the comments, as well as general comments on the remainder of the evaluative blocks. The performance evaluation is the primary method of capturing the member's performance of duties assigned. Every member that is being evaluated shall sign the performance evaluation unless unable to do so. Members shall receive a copy of every report from the reporting senior at the time it is signed. Every service member has the right to comment on their evaluation to include the event that a member feels that they have been subject to conscious or unconscious gender bias and language in their evaluation, they have the right to submit a statement to the record concerning their report, either at the time of the report or within 2 years thereafter. Such a statement shall be endorsed by the original reporting senior and forwarded to Navy Personnel Command (PERS-32). If the reporting senior feels that the member's statement does not meet the requirements as prescribed in the Navy's performance evaluation instruction, then the reporting senior should counsel the member. If the members refuse to change their statements, then the reporting senior

should submit the members' statement along with their endorsement to Navy Personnel Command (PERS-32) for review. Members have the right to review their records, communicate directly with selection boards and have various avenues by which to appeal for change or removal of their reports.

Every selection board is given written and oral guidance by the convening authority, i.e. Secretary of the Navy for officer statutory boards, Chief of Naval Personnel for enlisted advancement boards, and Commander, Navy Personnel command for administrative and screening boards.

Guidance from the aforementioned convening authorities state that selection boards are reminded of the Department of the Navy's dedication to equality of treatment and opportunity for all personnel without regard to race, religion, color, sex (including gender identity), sexual orientation, or national origin. Discrimination on any of these bases is contrary to the Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment. The Navy strives to maintain a professional working environment in which an individual's race, religion, color, sex (including gender identity), sexual orientation, or national origin will not limit his or her professional opportunities. Accordingly, within the board's charter to determine the members who are "fully qualified", the board must ensure that members of every race, religion, color, sex (including gender identity), sexual orientation, or national origin are given fair and equitable consideration. The board's evaluation of all members must be fair and equitable. The board is advised to be particularly vigilant in their evaluation of records to take care that no member's opportunity is disadvantaged by service utilization policies or practices. The board evaluates each member's potential to fulfill the responsibilities of the next grade, including his or her ability to successfully lead a diverse organization, the overriding factor being performance of duties assigned. The Navy benefits when we capitalize on the diverse experience, perspective, innovative spirit, background, and ideas in our ranks.

Diversity is not founded on statistics, percentages, or quotas. Diversity is about achieving peak performance. Our Navy should draw upon every available set of talents and backgrounds to maximize our lethality and warfighting capability. Successful performance of duties assigned is the key in measuring a member's potential for promotion/advancement. This guidance shall not be interpreted as requiring or permitting preferential treatment of any member or group of members on the grounds of race, religion, color, sex (including gender identity), sexual orientation, or national origin.

All selection board membership requirements established by convening authorities mandate female representation on every statutory or administrative board. Board members certify that the board complied with all laws and policies; they were not subject to or aware of any censure, reprimand, or admonishment about the recommendations of the board or the exercise of any lawful function within the authorized discretion of the board.

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