

DACOWITS RFI # 13

PRIMARY CAREGIVER LEAVE



21st Century Sailor Office
Inclusion and Diversity
OPNAV N17
3 March 2020



DACOWITS – PRIMARY CAREGIVER LEAVE(RFI #13a)

Provide data or feedback gathered to date, if any, about impact, sufficiency and satisfaction with the current 12-week primary caregiver leave policy.

RFI #1 Response: Feedback from the Secretary of the Navy-directed biennial Personal and Professional Choices Survey (last conducted 2018).

A majority of survey participants support increasing the amount of caregiver leave.

- Women were relatively evenly divided about the amount of leave the Navy should provide for women after the birth of a child, with 45% supporting current policy (12 weeks) and 52% in favor of 18 weeks.
- 63% men believe the current policy of 12 weeks leave for women after the birth of a child is adequate.
- Most participants support increasing the amount of leave for men (SCL) after the birth of a child.



DACOWITS – PRIMARY CAREGIVER LEAVE(RFI #13a cont.)

Provide data or feedback gathered to date, if any, about impact, sufficiency and satisfaction with the current 12-week primary caregiver leave policy.

- “As a reservist, I sometimes ask myself if I would have stayed active duty if the maternity policy was 12 weeks back then... It certainly would have helped. Definitely a step in the right direction.” (Female O4 – O6)
- “Although I understand and appreciate the individual impact of the extended maternity leave policy, I do feel as though the impact on our unit is overwhelming.” (Female O4 – O6)
- “The maternity leave policy is also very generous compared to civilian employers and is a great incentive to stay in the military.” (Female O1 – O3)



DACOWITS – PRIMARY CAREGIVER LEAVE (RFI #13b)

What impact did the reduction from 18 weeks to 12 weeks have in the Navy and Marine Corps?

- There is no data analysis on the impact of the reduction from 18 weeks to 12 weeks in the Navy. However, written feedback from previous *surveys reveal varied opinions on length of leave afforded to primary care and secondary caregivers, mainly with increasing the amount of time afforded.*
- Women were relatively evenly divided about the amount of leave the Navy should provide for women after the birth of a child, with 45% supporting current policy (12 weeks) and 52% in favor of 18 weeks, and 3% other.



DACOWITS – PRIMARY CAREGIVER LEAVE (RFI #13c)

Do the Services back-fill positions vacated by servicewomen utilizing their primary caregiver leave? If so, how is that accomplished? If not, what is the impact to the unit because of these vacancies?

- Navy Servicewomen who get pregnant while on an operational tour are transferred from their sea billet to a shore duty unit for a period of 12 months postpartum to facilitate convalescence, maternal bonding, and breastfeeding.
- Once the Servicewoman has transferred, the operational unit can request a replacement. This unplanned personnel loss will cause a temporary gap. Type Commanders (TYCOMs) can assign personnel from other units to cover the unplanned loss.
- Servicewomen who get pregnant while on shore duty are still attached to the unit while on Maternity/Convalescent Leave and Primary Caregiver leave. No backfill requests are required. Personnel at the servicewoman's shore duty unit will cover the work/tasks normally performed during these leave periods.



DACOWITS – PRIMARY CAREGIVER LEAVE (RFI #13d)

We note the Coast Guard is exploring the capability of providing short-term staffing augmentation to units with absences related to convalescent and caregiver leave. Are the other Military Services using or considering a surge staffing augmentation model? If so, how will these back-fills be funded?

- The Navy is not currently using a surge staffing augmentation model.



DACOWITS – PRIMARY CAREGIVER LEAVE(RFI #13f)

In the December 2019 RFI response, the Navy noted a Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) study released in April 2019 titled, “*An Analysis of the Relationship Between the Navy’s Maternity Leave Policy and Reenlistment Rates.*” Please provide a copy of the study and an overview of its findings.

- In a report released in 2019, CNA analyzed the change in female Sailors' reenlistment rates relative to those of male Sailors before and after the 2015 change Navy made to maternity leave, incorporating both the increase from 6 to 18 weeks and the reduction to 12 weeks in 2016. The study estimated that the first-time gender reenlistment gap shrank by 3.7 percentage points for 4 Year Obligation Sailors under the 18 and 12 week policies relative to the 6 week policy.



Center for Naval Analyses Findings

Flexible (Non-Continuous) use of Maternity Leave

- House Armed Services Committee “directs the Secretary of Defense to submit a report assessing the feasibility of permitting flexible (non-continuous) use of maternity leave” (HR 115-676).
 - 2017 NDAA codified: Up to 6 weeks of maternity convalescent leave (MCL), up to 6 weeks of primary caregiver leave (PCL), and up to 21 days of secondary caregiver leave (SCL).
 - Feasibility question is framed not as “*Can it be done?*” rather “*What would happen if it was done?*”
- With sponsor concurrence, Center for Naval Analyses only examined the feasibility of offering non-continuous PCL and SCL.
- Examined implementation of noncontinuous caregiver leave from a *policy* and *operational readiness* perspective
 - Other policy (and practices) would change
 - Identified possible implications for operational readiness



Center for Naval Analyses Findings

Flexible (Non-Continuous) use of Maternity Leave

- Current military culture generally supports leave-taking
 - Take care of the Service member for the mission – Services want people to take leave
 - Use-or-lose leave is tracked and often highly visible to commanders
 - Some SMEs mentioned unit culture that values being ever-present and views “absences” negatively
- Leave flexibility is not a new idea: SMEs said they often deal with injury and unexpected losses
- IT systems changes would be required to accommodate non-continuous leave tracking
- Non-continuous caregiver leave is perceived to be infeasible during deployment and some training cycles
- Non-continuous caregiver leave requires precise policy language signifying the amount of leave offered