

MARINE CORPS RESPONSE TO DACOWITS RFI #2 (MARCH 2024)
RETENTION INITIATIVES

The Committee is concerned that women opt out of major career progression milestones at a larger rate than their male counterparts (e.g., requests for withdrawal from promotion consideration, Service schools, or command opportunity). The Committee is interested in opt-out data from FY19-23, separated by gender and grade, to determine if there is disparity of mid-career women versus men.

RFI #2. The Committee requests a written response from the **Marine Corps** on the number of opt outs submitted by Service members in the grades of O-4 through O-6 and E-7 through E-9, broken out by grade, gender, and the percentage of the total number being considered in their peer group.

RESPONSE

BACKGROUND. 10 U.S. Code § 619, permits officers, with approval of the Service Secretary, opt-out of promotion consideration if the basis of the request is to complete a broadening assignment, advanced education, another assignment of significant value to the Department, or a career progression requirement delayed by the assignment or education. The Secretary concerned may only approve the request under the following conditions. One, the officer has not previously failed of selection for promotion to the grade for which the officer requests the exclusion from consideration. Two, the Secretary determines the exclusion from consideration is in the best interest of the military department concerned. The Secretary of the Navy delegated the authority to the Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs to approve the request of an officer to opt-out of consideration.

The Secretary of the Navy authorized active component unrestricted officers who were eligible consideration for promotion to major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel in Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025. Additionally, the Secretary of the Navy authorized reserve component officers who were eligible consideration for promotion to major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel in Fiscal Year 2025.

There is no provision to opt-out of enlisted promotion selection boards.

DISCUSSION

1. FY24 USMC Promotion Selection Boards Opt-Outs

a. Seven officers opted out of promotion for FY24. Of the seven officers that elected to opt-out seven were male and 0 were female.

(1) One officer opted out of the FY24 USMC Maj Promotion Selection Board. 0.1% (1 of 811) of in-zone officers eligible for promotion to major opted-out. 0.1% (1 of 720) of in-zone males opted-out of promotion and 0.0% (0 of 91) of in-zone females opted-out of promotion.

(2) Four officers opted out of the FY24 USMC LtCol Promotion Selection Board. 0.9% (4 of 441) of in-zone officers eligible for promotion to lieutenant colonel opted-out. 1.0% (4 of 410) of in-zone males opted-out of promotion and 0.0% (0 of 31) of in-zone females opted-out of promotion.

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(3) Two officers opted out of the FY24 USMC Col Promotion Selection Board. 1.0% (2 of 192) of in-zone officers eligible for promotion to colonel opted-out. 1.1% (2 of 179) of in-zone males opted-out of promotion and 0.0% (0 of 13) of in-zone females opted-out of promotion.

Promotion Selection Board	FY24			
	# of males opted out of promotion	% of males that opted out of promotion	# of females that opted out of promotion	% of females that opted out of promotion
Maj	1 (of 720)	0.1%	0 (of 91)	0.0%
LtCol	4 (of 410)	1.0%	0 (of 31)	0.0%
Col	2 (of 179)	1.0%	0 (of 13)	0.0%

2. FY25 USMC Promotion Selection Boards Opt-Outs

(1) Eighteen officers opted out of promotion for FY25. Of the eighteen officers that elected to opt-out fourteen were male and four were female.

(2) Four officers opted out of the FY25 USMC Maj Promotion Selection Board. Of the four officers four were male and zero were female. 2.0% (4 of 896) of in-zone officers eligible for promotion to major opted-out. 0.5% (4 of 803) of in-zone males opted-out of promotion and 0.0% (0 of 93) of in-zone females opted-out of promotion.

(3) Eleven officers opted out of the FY25 USMC LtCol Promotion Selection Board. Of the eleven officers, nine were male and two were female. 1.9% (11 of 594) of in-zone officers eligible for promotion to lieutenant colonel opted-out. 1.6% (9 of 552) of in-zone males opted-out of promotion and 4.8% (2 of 42) of in-zone females opted-out of promotion.

(4) Three officers opted out of the FY25 USMC Col Promotion Selection Board. Of the three officers, one was male and two were female. 0.2% (3 of 257) of in-zone officers eligible for promotion to colonel opted-out. 0.6% (1 of 179) of in-zone males opted-out of promotion and 9.1% (2 of 22) of in-zone females opted-out of promotion.

Promotion Selection Board	FY25			
	# of males opted out of promotion	% of males that opted out of promotion	# of females that opted out of promotion	% of females that opted out of promotion
Maj	4 (of 803)	2.0%	0 (of 93)	0.0%
LtCol	9 (of 552)	1.6%	2 (of 42)	4.8%
Col	1 (of 235)	0.6%	2 (of 22)	9.1%

3. FY25 USMCR Promotion Selection Board Opt-Outs. No officers, eligible for selection for promotion by the FY25 USMCR and Active Reserve colonel, lieutenant colonel, and major promotions selections boards, elected to opt-out.

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ANALYSIS: The Marine Corps implemented opt-outs for two years; FY24 and FY25 promotion selection boards. Since implementation, twenty-five officers elected to opt-out of promotion consideration. Four of the twenty-five officers that elected to opt-out of consideration were female. The relatively small sample size precludes determination of a meaningful conclusion at this stage of implementation.