

# INFORMATION PAPER

24 May 2023

Subj: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION; DEFENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE SERVICES (DACOWITS)

Ref: (a) MCO 1610.7A  
(b) MARADMIN 657/18  
(c) MCO 6110.3A w/Ch3

1. Purpose. To respond to DACOWITS RFI #8 on performance evaluations.

2. Background. In 2019, DACOWITS recommended the Secretary of Defense “establish a DoD policy that defines and provides guidance to eliminate conscious and unconscious gender bias” with a view to tackling the bias that has impeded servicewomen’s promotion and advancement opportunities. The Committee continues to be interested in the gender barriers servicewomen confront during their service. Women in the military and across all industries have historically lagged men in career progression opportunities and promotion rates, and women in male-dominated industries (such as the military) typically encounter even greater barriers and resistance to career progression.

3. Discussion. The DACOWITS RFI centers around current service policy and performance evaluation standards to determine if information related to convalescent leave, deferment periods, exemptions to weight standards and leaves of absences related to pregnancy or birth events was resident or implied on performance evaluations, and the service’s mitigation efforts to ensure no negative impacts servicewoman’s career progression and/or promotion if this information was available or assumed by board members.

4. Conclusion.

- a. The Marine Corps performance evaluation policy with updates (references (a) and (b)) prohibit language which reference “pregnancy” and/or “post-partum”; both in reference to weight standards or periods of absence. The revision of reference (a) formally incorporates this verbiage. Reference (a) also prohibits comments based on an individual’s gender, references to the servicemembers status as a parent, and encourages limitations on the use of pronouns.
- b. Each individual performance evaluation is screened for non-compliance prior to the report entering the servicemembers official record. If the performance evaluation contains verbiage which violates policy (i.e. discriminatory language), the report is returned to the reporting official for correction. The service retains a process for servicemembers to petition for a modification of their official record if they believe that their record contains discriminatory language which affected board proceedings.
- c. Reference (c) contains guidance for body composition standards for pregnant/post-partum service members, which includes exemptions during the pregnancy and post-partum periods. Reference (c) provides commanders latitude to waive the standards for servicemembers, mitigating potential impacts from birth events.