



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, DC

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

14 February 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR DACOWITS

FROM: HQ USAF  
1720 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington DC 20330-1720

SUBJECT: USAF DACOWITS RFI Response RFI #14

**QUESTION #14**

In December 2022, via RFI 9, the Committee asked the Military Services to provide varied sets of information regarding promotion trends and rates, broken down by gender. As the Committee continues to examine institutional policies and procedures to identify potential gaps that may unintentionally enable gender discrimination to occur, it will be useful to identify and analyze the reasons why servicewomen opt not to compete for promotion.

a. The number of “opt outs” (e.g., requests for withdrawal from promotion consideration), submitted by Service members for promotion to the grades of O-4 through O-7 and to the grades of E-7 through E-9, broken out by gender and the percentage of the total number of men and women being considered in their peer group.

**OFFICER PROMOTIONS:**

The USAF received 23 requests to “Opt Out” of promotion consideration to the grades of O-4, O-5, and O-6 since the FY19 NDAA authorization. Of those 23 requests, female service members submitted two, constituting 9% of all requests.

**ENLISTED PROMOTIONS:**

The USAF received 266 requests to “Opt Out” of promotion consideration to the grades of E-7 to E-8, and E-9 since the FY19 NDAA authorization. Of those 266 requests, female service members submitted 71, constituting 18% of all requests.

b. The top 5 reasons provided for these opt out requests, broken out by gender, if available.

**OFFICER PROMOTIONS:**

10 USC § 619 (e)(2)(A) authorizes Opt Out approval for requests only for the following reasons:

- 1) To allow an officer to complete a broadening assignment
- 2) To allow an officer to complete advanced education

- 3) To allow an officer to complete another assignment of significant value to the Department
- 4) To allow an officer to complete a career progression requirement delayed by the [aforementioned] assignment or education

The most common reason for Officers Opting Out is to complete a career progression requirement delayed by the completion of a career broadening assignment or educational program (13 requests, 1x female).

The second most common reason for Opting Out is to complete a career-broadening assignment (6 requests, 1x female).

The next reason is complete another assignment of significant value to the Department (4 requests, 0x female).

#### **ENLISTED PROMOTIONS:**

Unlike Officers, there is no statutory requirement or policy limiting authorization of Opt Out approvals. Due to the lack of requirement the DAF does not track reasons for Enlisted Opt Outs to the level of detail we track officers. From the data available, the most common reason for Enlisted Opting Out is for retirement or separation from service (323 requests, 57x female).