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MPE

Subj: RESPONSE TO PREGNANCY IN THE MILITARY REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
(RFI)

Ref: (a) Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service
(DACOWITS) Requests for Information (RFI) for March 2023

The following is provided in response to the reference,
specifically RFI #13 (Gender Discrimination).

a. RFI #13a: What is the Service doing or plans to do with the data provided by the 2021 WGR survey and/or prior year WGR surveys, to include any additional research or studies on gender discrimination comparing or contrasting to the WGR findings?

Response: The Marine Corps plans to hire two training specialist that will be dedicated to updating all Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) training. That training will include statistical findings that will inform discussions with an end result of creating a culture that will combat behaviors that contribute to gender discrimination and other harmful behaviors.

Workplace and Gender Relations (WGR) survey data showed high percentages of gender discrimination incidents including sexual undertones (e.g., 84% of female and 91% of male Marines responded the gender discrimination they experienced included being mistreated, ignored, excluded, or insulted because of their gender; and 36% of female and 24% of male Marines responded incidents gender discrimination included repeated sexual comments about their appearance or bodies, etc.)

Based on the findings and the results, the Marine Corps is able to identify trends and risk factors that are contributing to harmful behaviors identified in Marine Corps Order (MCO) 5434.1F which will assist the training specialists in tailoring MEO training and education to address trends and provide relevant examples that Service members can relate to.

The data shows that 67% of female and 69% of male Marines responded that gender discrimination incidents occurred in the presence of other military members, but no one intervened. Collaboration with the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW) and Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOAs) is providing prevention training and activities such as bystander intervention, included in MEO annual training, which will provide Service members the tools and skill to intervene in a safe and effective way.

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Prior to 2022 the Services were not provided clarity of DoD's definition of formal and informal complaints therefore, the Service's MEO policy does not define a formal versus informal complaint, rather the policy states the type of resolution is either formal (investigated and adjudicated incidents) or informal (incidents resolved via conflict management). The Service is working to update the MEO policy to provide a clear definition of complaints and investigation process so that Service members have a better understanding of the type of complaint and process of each option.

The WGR study also highlighted actions taken in response to gender discrimination that could be deemed as retaliation: 49% of female and 75% of male Marines were encouraged to drop the allegation; 37% of female and 58% of male Marines were discouraged from filing a formal complaint; 33% of female and 51% of male Marines responded the alleged offender took action against them for complaining; and 42% of female and 54% of male Marines responded their coworkers treated them worse, avoided them, or blamed them for the problem. EOAs will continue to educate the Service members of what retaliation - (to include maltreatment, ostracism, and reprisal) and to ensure complaints know the process of filing a retaliation complaint with a nexus to a Prohibited Activities and Conduct (PAC) complaint.

The Marine Corps' MEO Program Office is reviewing multiple metrics to improve processes and respondents' satisfaction through inspections, quality assurance checks, monthly Discrimination And Sexual Harassment (DASH) certifications, and implementation of the No Wrong Door policy. Areas currently being reviewed:

- Complaint process and timelines information availability
- Complainant support resources
- Time taken to resolve the complaint
- How well respondents were kept informed about the progress of their complaint
- How well their privacy was protected, and the overall complaint Process

b. RFI #13b: Have all Service regulations/policies been updated to include DoD's most recent definition of prohibited discrimination?

Response: The Service policy did not have to update the regulations/policy as the current Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) definition of "prohibited discrimination" was already included within the MCO 5453.1F. DoDI 1350.02, "DoD Military Equal Opportunity

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Program," was updated 20 December 2022. This Instruction defines prohibited discrimination as "Discrimination, including disparate treatment, of an individual or group on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, or sexual orientation that is not otherwise authorize by law or regulation and detracts from military readiness.

MCO 5354.1F, "Marine Corps Prohibited Activities and Conduct (PAC) Prevention and Response Policy, Enclosure (2), Chapter 1, Section 7, page 1-6," expands on this definition by adding behaviors considered discriminatory.

b. RFI #13c: Provide an update on the Service's position or considerations regarding the use or revision of gendered language in written materials, displays, and field use (e.g., Marine Corps' consideration of using non-gendered identifiers for drill instructors).

Response: The Marine Corps has a long history of traditions, customs, and courtesies, which include the usage of "Sir" or "Ma'am" which are all deeply rooted in respect. The purpose of gendered language at recruit training depots is to instill a sense of respect for those who have earned the title "Marine" and to prepare new Marines for interactions with officers. At this time more research is needed to determine the full implications of incorporating "gender neutral" language during recruit training and in the operating forces.

- A comprehensive review of all Marine Corps Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) titles with the word "man" in them was conducted to determine which Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) titles would retain the word "man" and which ones should be updated to a gender-neutral title. On 24 June 2016 the Secretary of the Navy in agreement with the Commandant of the Marine Corps approved changes to 19 Marine Corps MOS titles.

<https://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/Messages-Display/Article/898051/military-occupational-specialty-renaming/>

- In the Marine Corps Performance Evaluation System (PES) or MCO 1610.7A, Reporting Seniors (RS) and Reporting Officers (RO) are instructed to limit references to gender pronouns. MCO.1610.7A, p.4-48, para.9a-9b