

SUBJ: DACOWITS RFI #6 – September QBM

FROM: Office of Military Uniforms (CG PSC-PSD-MU)

TO: DACOWITS Committee

THRU: Office of Diversity & Inclusion (CG-127)

PREGNANCY/PARENTHOOD POLICIES (WB&T)

The Committee has received anecdotal evidence that some servicewomen may experience negative career impacts as a result of pregnancy. These potentially negative impacts may affect assignment to or continuation of deployments, command, and other career enhancing tracks. The Committee is interested in better understanding policies, practices, and the impacts of these issues on servicewomen.

The Committee requests a **briefing*** from each of the **Military Services** providing details (and static displays as appropriate) on the following:

DACOWITS:

a. Please identify all changes, initiatives, and improvements to maternity uniforms since the Committee was last briefed in September 2016. Additionally, explain how you measure the effectiveness and impact of changes to/new uniforms.

In the summer of 2016, the Military Uniform Branch along with clothing designers from the Coast Guard Clothing Design Technical Office (CDTO) set forth to redesign the Coast Guard Maternity Utility uniform. Based on critical fit information from the fleet, redesign efforts focused on modifications to the blouse pocket relocation, expandable side tab blouse adjustment, widen sleeves, increased blouse back lengths by two inches, full circle nylon – spandex belly band, front trouser hip pockets, and trouser sizes that are now available in short, regular, and long lengths. Benchmarked against the Air Force Maternity Battle Uniform (MABU), coordinated efforts with the Air Force, Army, and Navy culminated in uniform approval and production in September 2018.

Wear test communications along with post production surveys indicate the applied changes satisfy the critical fit issues communicated by fleet personnel. Additionally, a survey specific to female service members was released in 2018 to help inform the Uniform Program areas that need focus and areas that are succeeding. Results of the survey revealed a general acceptance with all current uniforms and accouterments. Personal grooming policies were revised to include expanded hair styles, footwear choices, along with fingernail polish colors.

b. *Include findings from your most recent maternity uniform wear test (include year). Specifically address functionality, comfort, affordability, availability, and consistency with non-maternity uniforms. Additionally, explain how the effectiveness and impact of the newly proposed uniforms was measured.*

Most recent Maternity wear test: A user evaluation was conducted in May 2017 following the redesign of the Air Force MABU to meet Coast Guard utility maternity requirements. Initial feedback from the fleet concerning the current maternity utility uniform indicated dissatisfaction with the following:

Note: The below changes were made to the maternity uniform across the board and to all sizes

Belly panel with draw cord (Old style Kangaroo pouch) - Members disliked the belly panel due to its general discomfort, restrictiveness and ability to cut into ones belly. This was addressed by changing the belly panel to an all-encompassing stretch panel that circumvents the front part of the waist and contours more to the shape of the belly as it develops. The new design also allows the user to pull the waist up or down for comfort. The belly panel material was replaced with a newer more comfortable breathable blend.

Sleeves being too tight – This was addressed by increasing the sleeve circumference starting at the arm pit down to the elbow.

Lack of functional pockets – Two functional cargo pockets were added at the hip locations of the trousers. Faux pocket flaps were maintained in the chest area of the blouse and additional full function cargo pockets were added to the lower half waist area of the blouse.

Blouse side tab blouse adjustment – Adjustable side tabs were added to the blouse to allow for a tailored fit depending on the trimester of the member.

Increased blouse back length – An additional 2 inches of material was added to the maternity blouse back length to allow for more uniformed coverage.

New initiatives:

a. Uniform Board #48 (October 2018): approved for wear commercially available post-partum nursing t-shirt to be used in conjunction with the Operational Maternity Utility uniform.

b. The Military Uniform Program w/ CDTO is currently looking to incorporate ruching with the standard Maternity utility t-shirt to provide a more tailored and comfortable fit.

The Coast Guard is looking to continue its partnership with the Air Force through the development of a new Maternity Dress Skirt.