

INFORMATION PAPER

DAPE-MPA
9 May 2016

SUBJECT: DACOWITS RFIs for June Quarterly Business Meetings

1. PURPOSE. To provide response to question 12, "The Committee requests the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps provide a written response to a follow-up question from the December 2015 briefing:

- Are you considering implementing a policy to allow single parents to join, equivalent to that of the Air Force's policy?

For example, Air Force policy allows single parent applicants to join with up to three dependents (both male and female) with a waiver."

2. RESPONSE.

a. Army accession policy contained in AR 601-210 (Active and Reserve Components Enlistment Program), para 2-10, currently disqualifies sole parents from enlistment into the Regular Army. This policy is not intended to require any person to relinquish custody of his or her children to qualify for enlistment, and furthermore prohibits any Army representative from advising, implying, or assisting an applicant with regard to surrender of custody for the purpose of enlistment. The policy is in place primarily to ensure applicants a successful transition from the private sector to a life of demanding Army service, particularly the requirement for all Soldiers to spend most of their first term of service without their dependents while they complete lengthy periods of training, unaccompanied overseas assignments, and combat deployments. The policy also serves to minimize the impact on unit readiness of added sole parent attrition, already a significant readiness issue, both during training and from operational units.

b. The policy of not accepting sole parents for enlistment into the Regular Army serves several purposes.

(1) First, the policy is designed to prevent an economic hardship on initial entry Soldiers who have dependents. The pay level of initial entry Soldier is low enough to create undue mental stress on sole parent Soldiers and their dependents. These financial pressures ultimately impact both Soldier performance and Army readiness.

(2) The second purpose of the policy is to address the fact that serving Soldiers who become sole parents are subject to separation from military service, particularly during initial entry training, when parental responsibilities interfere with the performance of their military duties. This does not mean the Army doesn't want to keep serving Soldiers who become sole parents. In many cases, the Army retain these Soldiers to capture the Army's investment in their recruitment, training and experience, as well as to benefit the Soldiers, provided the Soldiers can perform their duties. Consequently, serving Soldiers who become sole parents are required to have a Family Care Plan in which their

commander certifies they have made adequate family care arrangements that allow for a full range of military duties and for worldwide availability. Sole parent Soldiers are not guaranteed special privileges or special consideration for duty assignment or duty station because they have family members, even in cases of family emergencies.

(3) However, this second purpose of the Army policy of not accepting sole parents for enlistment is that the policy is intended to address the fact that many serving first-term sole parent Soldiers are unable to develop adequate Family Care Plans. Other sole parent Soldiers find their Plans eventually fail. These events occur because many sole parent Soldiers find the requirements to work long or unusual hours, to be available for worldwide assignment, and to be prepared for mobilization, create unacceptable conflict between caring for their dependents and accomplishing military requirements. During a five year period (2005-2010), nearly 10,000 Soldiers on active duty were determined to be unable to serve as sole parents and were separated before their first terms of service were up, over 9% of all Army attrition. By not accepting sole parents for enlistment, the Army avoids adding to this already high number of serving Soldiers who are separated after they become sole parents during their initial term of service. This avoids the need to replace these Soldiers, at a cost of over \$73,000 each in recruitment and training expense.

(4) The Army began to allow some waivers for Reserve Component sole parent applicants in 2007, but halted the practice in early 2010 for the U.S. Army Reserve at the request of the US Army Reserve Command (USARC). The downside of this practice is that those granted waivers were significantly more likely to fail to ship to training and to subsequently be removed from the rolls of the USAR due to ineffective Family Care Plans. Those that did ship to training suffered more than double the BCT/AIT attrition of their peers. The Army National Guard still enlist sole parents who have obtained valid FCPs under this policy.

3. DISCUSSION. Over the last decades and for the foreseeable future, the state of the recruiting environment has allowed and is projected to allow the Regular Army to achieve its recruiting requirements without recruiting sole parents. The policy is expected to remain in place primarily to minimize added first term attrition and other negative effects on unit readiness and to ensure applicants are positioned to succeed in their demanding military duties including training, unaccompanied overseas assignments, and combat deployments.

Prepared by: Mr. Al Green/703-695-7490
Approved by: Mr. Paul Aswell/703-695-7693