

DEFENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE SERVICES (DACOWITS)

Quarterly Meeting Minutes 8–9 December 2020

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) held a quarterly business meeting December 8–9, 2020. The meeting took place virtually via a video teleconference.

8 December 2020

Opening Remarks

The DACOWITS Military Director and Designated Federal Officer, Colonel R. Elaine Freeman, opened the December quarterly business meeting by reviewing the Committee's establishment and charter. COL Freeman reminded those in attendance any comments made during the meeting by Committee members are their personal opinions and do not reflect a DACOWITS or Department of Defense (DoD) position. COL Freeman then turned the meeting over to the DACOWITS Chair, General (Retired) Janet Wolfenbarger.

Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all participants for joining the meeting virtually. She provided a status on the annual research cycle, mentioning that all Committee members signed the 2020 annual report, which includes a 70 year historical retrospective on the Committee. She then conducted a roll call.

Status of Requests for Information

COL Freeman reviewed the status of the Committee's requests for information (RFIs). The Committee received responses to all 14 of its RFIs. The Committee also received three written public comments. All the RFI responses and three public comments were published on the DACOWITS website.

Briefing: Women in Space (RFI 5)

The Committee requested a briefing from the U.S. Space Force, Office of the Chief of Space Operations, to provide an overview of (1) current and projected end strength of the Space Force; (2) the systems, infrastructure, policies, trainings, career development opportunities, and governance structures the Service plans to implement to build an inclusive environment for servicewomen; (3) planned innovative career models and personnel processes to recruit and retain servicewomen; (4) percentage of Service members assigned to leadership roles by rank and gender; and (5) strategies for establishing a values-based culture that emphasizes equal opportunity, fair treatment, and respect.

The briefer opened by reporting that the Space Force has a planned military end strength of 6,434 Service members for fiscal year (FY) 2021. As of December 1, 2020, the Service has reached approximately 34 percent of that goal with 2,206 Service members transferring into the Space Force from other Military Services. The briefer confirmed that Air Force Service members will continue to transfer into the Space Force throughout FY 2021 and noted that the Service projects adding 256 officers and 312 enlisted personnel through Basic Military Training (BMT), Officer Training School (OTS), Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA). The Space Force plans to continue using inter-Service transfers and the previously cited accession programs to meet the FY 2021 military end strength goal. The briefer explained as of December 1, 2020, approximately 100 current Space Force Guardians were direct accessions through BMT, OTS, ROTC, and USAFA. Seven basic trainees (five men and two women) are projected to be the first to graduate from BMT into the Space Force on December 10, 2020. The briefer noted the Space Force values diversity in the force to mirror the population of the United States and confirmed that the Service will establish policies and procedures and fill positions within the Space Force with a focus on building and maintaining diversity and inclusivity.

The briefer explained the positions filled in FY 2021 are primarily transfer volunteers from the Air Force, but the Space Force is also very interested in attracting and recruiting talent from industry, particularly to fill science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-related opportunities available in the Service. The briefer confirmed that the Space Force is currently developing a lateral-entry approach to talent management as part of the Space Force Human Capital Strategy with a focus on diversity and inclusion. The Space Force is reviewing the systems, infrastructure, and policies it inherited from the Air Force with a lens of diversity and inclusion, including uniform wear, personnel engagement, and performance assessments and promotions. The briefer explained that because the Space Force is such a small force, the Service is able to be more intentional and establish direct connections with its Service members. For example, the Space Force Human Resources team focused on the design of female Space Force uniforms before the design of male uniforms and the first Space Force uniform prototype developed was made to fit a female Service member.

The briefer confirmed the Space Force has considered flexibility frequently in the development of the Human Capital Strategy. The Space Force offers its Service members a variety of flexible career opportunities, including opportunities to do recruiting duty, participate in professional and military education, and access Career Intermission Programs (CIPs). Each of the Space Force's five specialty positions have career field managers who track personnel participating in these opportunities, including the associated timeline and process for their return to space-related duties. The briefer explained that to build an inclusive workplace into the Space Force across the lifecycle of a Guardian's career, the Service wants to ensure there are ample opportunities for Service members to receive professional development and engage with professional military and educational development programs. The briefer explained that although these programs and opportunities are established, they are not valuable unless they are accessible to Service members. The briefer noted the Space Force wants to be a development organization for its Service members and plans to incorporate strategies for meeting that goal into the Human Capital Strategy.

The briefer said leadership roles play an important part in ensuring a diverse and inclusive Service. Women and minorities in leadership positions show female and racially diverse

Guardians that these roles are accessible to them, which could increase their desire to stay in the Service. The Space Force wants to ensure the percentage of female and minority Guardians in leadership positions is relatively similar to that of the U.S. population. Women are currently serving in all levels of the Space Force. Twenty-one percent of officers and 16 percent of colonels in the Space Force are female, while 17 percent of enlisted members and 27 percent of all chief master sergeants are female. The briefer also confirmed there are six general officers in the Space Force, one of whom is female and assigned to headquarters staff. After the Senate confirmation scrolling process is complete, there will be a total of 17 general officers in the Space Force, 2 of whom will be female.

The briefer confirmed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2020 established the Space Force and senior leadership plans to use new Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) authorities established in the NDAA for FY 2019 to ensure a diverse force, including the authority to develop alternative promotion zones, temporary promotions, and lateral accessions. The Space Force will also continue to evaluate where additional authorities may be necessary.

The briefer explained establishing a values-based culture that emphasizes equal opportunity, fair treatment, and respect is a high priority for the Space Force. Specifically, the Space Force is developing strategies to build and maintain a values-based culture based on interpersonal accountability, routine assessments, and consistent constructive feedback from junior Service members to leadership. The Space Force is currently developing core values and plans to roll them out in 2021.

The briefer noted the Space Force is expanding use of Project Aristotle, which currently provides individualized developmental coaching and mentoring for company grade officers, to include the entire workforce, comprising officers, enlisted, and civilian personnel. She explained this project was developed with a diversity and inclusion perspective to ensure it is accessible to all personnel.

Discussion

Captain (Ret.) Kenneth Barrett referenced the Space Force's desire to have certain occupational specialties transfer directly into the Service and asked how many Service members will automatically be transferred; and how many additional opportunities will be available to allow for lateral transfers from other Services or specialties. The briefer responded that the Space Force has five specialty areas: space operations, cyber, intelligence, acquisitions, and engineering. The Space Force's focus during FY 2020 was on mass transfers from organic specialties in the Air Force, such as space operations. The briefer explained the transfer boards the Space Force is conducting right now and will continue to conduct into FY 2021 are for the four specialties other than space operations. The briefer also confirmed the Space Force will begin transferring in Army and Navy personnel starting FY 2021, and it will begin expanding the inter-Service transfer processes with the Air Force. The number of Service members in the Space Force will continue to fluctuate over the next few years as the force continues to transfer personnel from other Services to meet a Total Force of about 15,000 personnel, including civilians. The briefer reiterated the end strength goal for FY 2021 is about 6,500 personnel.

Lieutenant General (Ret.) Kevin Mangum asked whether mass transfers of space-focused occupational specialties into the Space Force from the other Military Services in addition to the Air Force are planned. The briefer responded that the occupational specialty transfers from other

Military Services will occur, but they will not be as large as the transfer from the Air Force because of their smaller space-focused populations. The briefer explained the Space Force understands the importance of including personnel from all the Military Services to ensure each Service culture is reflected.

Rear Admiral (Ret.) Cari Thomas explained DACOWITS made a recommendation in 2019 about the recruitment and retention of senior women in the military, particularly those of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. She asked what the Space Force is doing to ensure racial and ethnic minority women are represented in the senior ranks of the force. The briefer responded that the Space Force established its baseline from the Air Force; however, the briefer confirmed the Space Force will continue to ensure racial and ethnic minorities are represented in senior leadership positions and noted the increased DOPMA authorities will help to meet this goal.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked when the Space Force intends to publish its Human Capital Strategy. The briefer responded that the goal is to have the document published in the spring of 2021.

Major General (Ret.) Ronald Johnson asked what the process is for astronauts being transferred into the Space Force. The briefer responded that this process has not yet been established by the Space Force.

Lieutenant General (Ret.) Judith Fedder referenced the current development of the Space Force Human Capital Strategy and the authorities granted to the Space Force through the expansion of the DOPMA authorities in the NDAA for FY 2019. She asked whether the Space Force requires any additional legislative changes to leverage innovative strategies for ensuring diverse human capital acquisition. The briefer responded that because the Space Force is a new Service, it is in the exploratory stage and wants to experiment with unique strategies offered through the expanded DOPMA authorities, including temporary promotions and alternative promotion zones. The briefer explained the Space Force will continue to review what works and what does not work for the Service and whether any legislative changes might be required in the future.

Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger explained one objective of DACOWITS is to ensure all Military Services are exposed to the best practices of each Service for supporting women in the military. She asked whether Space Force has any intention to share the progress it is making regarding innovative best practices to support women in the military with the other Services. The briefer responded that excitement about the Space Force is high and she has received a lot of questions from other Military Service representatives about the innovative processes the Space Force is implementing. The briefer noted that standing up a new Service has given other organizations and the Military Services an opportunity to communicate with the Space Force to discuss testing processes that may be able to be scaled to the size of the other Services. The briefer confirmed the Space Force continues to plan to collaborate with the other Military Services in a variety of areas, including organizational design and talent management. Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger recommended implementing a more formal mechanism to share Space Force best practices with other Military Services and organizations.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked what the breakdown will be between civilian and military personnel for the Space Force's projected end strength of 16,000. The briefer responded the projected end strength would be composed of about 50 percent civilian and 50 percent military personnel.

Colonel (Ret.) Many-Bears Grinder asked what challenges the Space Force has encountered with including women into the Space Force. The briefer responded that "selling" transfers to the

Space Force was not a challenge, but removing barriers for diversity and inclusion was a challenge. The briefer explained that from the start, the Space Force examined how to conduct transfer boards from a diversity and inclusivity perspective to ensure all Service members felt included. The briefer noted personnel performance is very important when it comes to transfer boards, but when performance between potential transfers was equal, the Service opted to bring in diverse Service members.

Panel Briefing: Women in Aviation (RFI 9)

The Committee requested a briefing from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force on their processes and criteria for assigning pilots to their initial pipeline community (Navy and Marine Corps) or Air Force Specialty. The Committee was specifically interested in (1) the criteria used for assigning flight students to their initial pipeline and any data on the criteria used; (2) how an individual's performance, their preferred pipeline, and anthropometric data influence the assignment, and any data or metrics available, especially as they apply to female aviators and why there are fewer women in Tactical aircraft versus Rotary wing or Mobility; (3) how many female pilots (officers) in FY 2020 were limited in their pipeline assignment because of body weight, height, or anthropometric measurements, and data on the limiting factor and pipeline from which they were restricted.

Army

The Army briefer noted the RFI was geared more toward the other Services because “pipelines” are not used in Army vernacular. Everyone in flight training goes through the same pipeline—initial entry rotary wing training at Fort Rucker—regardless of whether someone is a warrant officer or commissioned officer. The next step is choice of aircraft, which is done during advanced qualification courses.

The predominant requirements for flight students to apply for flight training are broken out in the Selection Instrument for Flight Training (SIFT), and students must pass a Class 1 flight physical. To be selected as a warrant officer, the application is the same for all Army personnel. There are two paths to achieve this: warrant officer selection boards for those already serving, and warrant officer flight training for civilians who would like to go directly into Army aviation as a warrant officer. Civilians still need to attend basic training, but upon completion, they attend warrant officer candidate school to be appointed as a W-1.

The next step is a talent assessment. Those already in the Army will be chosen for warrant officer service according to their Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report and physical testing scores. Commissioned officers use the same SIFT and flight physical requirements. An order of merit list (OML) and the Soldiers' own requests are also taken into account.

One of the newer additions is a Talent Assessment Battery, which measures how well someone would fit in a specific branch. This is not specific to aviation; it spans across all Army branches. It is not used as a discriminator or disqualifier for aviation or military service; however, it is another means of talent management to identify those who would be a good fit for aviation, infantry, engineering, and so forth. Anthropometric requirements are not specifically considered, with the exception of the flight physical. For those who may face a physical challenge, at Fort Rucker there is a lineup of all cockpits in which all individuals—male or female—can sit to test

that they can safely access the controls. The main issue is the Soldiers' ability to reach specific flight controls. The most restrictive airframe is the CH-47 Chinook helicopter, which requires the pilot to have a longer reach because of the size of the cockpit. The least restrictive is the Apache helicopter because the flight controls are more adjustable and do not require as far of a reach. No men or women have been disqualified from flight status based on these requirements.

Students predominantly choose to fly the UH-60 Blackhawk, AH-64 Apache, and CH-47 Chinook helicopters. There is also a small contingent of individuals that go into a fixed-wing, which is a C-12 King aircraft. Students move straight from flight school into that community. This is the same for both commissioned and warrant officers. Anthropometric data does not influence aircraft selection; it is determined by the OML and the needs of the Army. The OML is calculated based on how well students are doing in flight school, including written tests, end-of-stage check rides, and physical fitness scores. Of note, the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) is currently on hold at Fort Rucker, so the physical fitness scores are not weighed as heavily. The largest population is in the Blackhawk community, so often there are more Blackhawk requirements per flight class, and this can change throughout the year. Selection will then be made according to where flight students fall on the OML.

There are not many aviators in tactical communities. Aviators going into those limited assets will rarely go straight into that community. Usually such individuals are more experienced and will apply to enter the tactical community. Those who enter directly into the community are likely already aviators coming from another Military Service, and they are likely already in that Military Service's special operations community.

The percentage of women in aviation across all airframes is generally similar for both commissioned and warrant officers. Blackhawks have the highest percentage of women, at approximately 8 percent. In comparison, although the AH-64 Apache (attack platform) and the CH-47 Chinook (heavy lift) are two very different helicopters with very different mission sets, there is only about a 0.2 percent difference in the number of female pilots between them.

Regarding individual assignments, the Army has not identified measurements (e.g., body weight, height, etc.) as a limiting factor for women or men going into flight school.

Navy

The Navy briefer noted all flight pipeline accessions are codified; the Navy oversees the process through the Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA). The Naval Flight Student Training Administration Manual (CNATRAINST 1500.4J) was recently updated.

There are five pipelines for student naval aviators to choose from: Rotary, Maritime, Strike, E-2/C-2, and Tilt-rotor. The selection process starts after a set of common training sessions for all student aviators at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola. The training consists of flight time in a Cessna, where students are evaluated on their ability to fly more complicated aircraft. This is followed by classroom, swim, physiology, and survival training, which are also completed at NAS Pensacola. Students are graded on flight performance, physical fitness, and academic scores.

Students then move to NAS Corpus Christi or remain at NAS Pensacola, where they undergo primary flight training. Upon the completion of that program, students receive a naval standardized score (NSS), which compares their score to the last 200 primary stage completers. Students then submit their top three pipeline choices, which are reviewed by the command. Selection is based on the needs of the Navy and then student performance, which is used to match top performers with the most difficult pipelines. The only pipelines that have an NSS restriction are Strike and E-2/C-2 (both are carrier aircraft). The Navy has found a correlation between an NSS of more than 50 and lower rates of disqualification during the carrier qualification phase. Student preference is also considered. The top performer will always receive their top choice, and then assignments are based on the needs of the Navy.

One other aspect taken into account is the commanding officer's (CO) comments. Each squadron's CO will provide notes on students, and more specifically, notes that would not appear on an NSS or student preference list. For example, if a prior enlisted aviator who became an officer is proceeding through the flight training program and had experience in their community as a helicopter air crewman, the Navy will push them into that community based on the CO's comments, if it is the student's preference.

Women serve in all pipelines presently; there are no pipeline restrictions for female aviators. There are three primary reasons for the currently low number of women in some pipelines: first, Navy Strike is a small community. Based on the needs of the Navy, 46 percent of students go into the Rotary pipeline, which is the largest community. Strike is the second-largest community (24 percent), then Multi-engine (19 percent), Tilt-rotor (6 percent), and E-2/C-2 (5 percent).

Second, there are fewer female student naval aviators (SNA) who are eligible to select Strike because of their NSS scores. From FY 2008 to FY 2020, 854 female SNAs completed flight training. Approximately 28 percent of female SNAs were eligible to select the Strike pipeline (i.e., they had an NSS score of 50 or higher).

Third, of the female SNAs who were eligible to select any pipeline, 47 percent selected Strike compared with 65 percent of their male counterparts. Men are more likely to choose the Strike pipeline, and women are more likely to choose the Rotary pipeline (i.e., 35 percent of women versus 15 percent of men). Based on preferences and scores, for those who select Strike, women are chosen at the same rate as men for this pipeline.

Of the 80 women who completed flight training in FY 2020, 18 were restricted from a pipeline (16 from E-2/C-2 and 2 from Multi-engine) because of anthropometric measurements. The E-2/C-2 aircraft has the most limited seat-to-eye measurements because of the seat design. The C-2 is being retired and replaced by the CMV-22 Osprey, so the number of students needed for this pipeline will decrease in the future from 40 pilots to about 25 pilots per year.

Marine Corps

Much of the Navy's presentation is applicable to the Marine Corps since Marine Corps flight training is integrated into the Navy's flight training. The Marine Corps also trains all aviators with CNATRA. The Marine Corps makes pipeline selections at the same time as the Navy, using nearly the same criteria and considering anthropometric measurements.

The Marine Corps considers the needs of their Service and students' NSS scores to determine whether they meet the required cutoff for the Strike pipeline. Like the Navy, the only pipeline in the Marine Corps that has a cutoff is the Strike pipeline (requires a score of 52). The Marine Corps also considers student preference.

Three female Marine aviators were restricted because of anthropometric measurements in FY 2020. All three were restricted by the thumb-tip reach requirement, and one was restricted by the sitting eye height requirement.

Similar to the Navy, the sizes of the Marine Corps aviation communities vary. The largest Marine Corps aviation community is the Rotary wing community (40 percent), then Tilt-rotor (28 percent), Strike (23 percent), and Multi-engine (9 percent). The Marine Corps also uses the same calculation as the Navy to determine the NSS for students going through CNATRA.

There are two primary reasons why there are fewer females in the Strike pipeline: the size of the community and individual student preferences. From FY 2015 to FY 2020, female Marine aviators overwhelmingly chose the Rotary wing, followed by the Multi-engine community. Eleven percent of Marine aviators over a 6-year period selected the Strike community as their first choice.

Air Force

When the Air Force assigns students to aircraft, the process is very similar to the other Military Services with some variations in nomenclature. Except for Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training (ENJJPT) at Sheppard Air Force Base (AFB), all training location assignments are determined by matching needs of the Air Force with student preference. ENJJPT is competitive, and there is a boarding process, so students cannot choose Sheppard AFB unless it has been agreed to by the board.

If there is an anthropometric issue identified during screening before training, the potential student is given a fit check in an actual aircraft. Students' laser measurements are put into the WEBpass computer system, which confirms which aircraft those students would be safe to fly. Once a student passes through the WEBpass system and has their waiver approved, they go to pilot training. Like the other Military Services, students have flight performance scores, academic scores, and officership, all compiled into a Merit Assignment Selection System (MASS) score, which creates a rank order of merit. The rank order of merit, the needs of the Air Force, and student preferences are matched to aircraft availability.

The Air Force briefer shared an example of a student's WEBpass entry, which included anthropometric measurements and whether the measurements aligned with requirements for each type of aircraft. Aircraft on the WEBpass page are color-coded green, yellow, or red. Green signifies that a student is safe to fly an aircraft, and red signifies that the student is not safe to fly the aircraft. Yellow defaults to allowing the student a chance to fly the aircraft.

The Air Force briefer shared a flowchart created from WEBpass information to show how waivers are granted. If a student has a "pathway to wings," they are allowed to move forward. For example, if a student is able to fly a T-6 as well as follow-on aircraft, they would be given a waiver. If they can fly a T-6 but none of the follow-on aircraft, they would not be given a waiver.

The situation in the Air Force with Tactical aircraft versus Rotary wing or Mobility is similar to that in the other Military Services. To clarify, helicopters and several nonfighter platforms are considered tactical. Student preference is considered as long as the students receive a high enough MASS score. The Air Force's conclusion is that females are not requesting fighter platforms as often as males, even though they are physically qualified to fly them. Training is an equitable process, and females receive their MASS scores in the same way as their male counterparts.

In FY 2020, the WEBpass process placed a restriction for safety reasons on 52 of 53 females with approved waivers. If the students had not applied for a waiver, they would not have been approved to fly at all. Of the 53 waivers processed in FY 2020, four were disapproved. The Air Force briefer shared a table of approved and disapproved waiver data with reasons for each disapproval. Certain legacy platforms in the Air Force (e.g., A-10, F-15, B-2, and B-52) were likely designed for larger males, but newer platforms are more gender inclusive, so they appear less in the notes for disapprovals.

The briefer noted 92.4 percent of female anthropometric waivers were approved in FY 2019. Newer generation platforms are less restrictive for people who are shorter; older platforms are the most restrictive.

Discussion

Vice Admiral (Ret.) Robin Braun noted in the Air Force briefing many of the 52 approved waivers out of 166 students pertained to restrictions on flying fighters (F-15 or F-16). The Air Force briefer stated many women preferred other platforms instead of fighters, but there is no data shared on preferences. The briefer also noted students must qualify to be eligible to fly specific platforms. VADM (Ret.) Braun asked whether there were restrictions on certain platforms, similar to restrictions defined by the NSS in the Navy and Marine Corps. The Air Force briefer responded that there is no score cutoff, but participants are ranked based on how they place in their class. The first ranked student will receive their preference, assuming their preference matches the needs of the Air Force. The briefer asked for clarification on the source of the 166 statistic that VADM (Ret.) Braun cited. VADM (Ret.) Braun noted it was from RFI 10 and it pertained to the number of female pilot accessions in FY 2020.

VADM (Ret.) Braun asked the Navy briefer if students know their NSS when they list their preferences, and if he believes the minimum service obligation for each community is a factor in what women are choosing. The Navy briefer responded that students do know their NSS at the completion of the primary phase and prior to selecting their pipeline preference. The Navy briefer stated that he believes the minimum service obligations are equal across Tactical, Rotary, and Maritime, so he does not think it would be a factor. VADM (Ret.) Braun noted a Navy RFI response from September 2020 that stated jet aircraft have an 8-year service obligation requirement and helicopters have a 6-year requirement. The Navy briefer stated he will follow up with confirmation on minimum service requirements. The second Navy briefer noted that he believes there is a disparity between the Naval flight officers (NFOs) and pilots, with the NFOs requiring 6 years and pilots requiring 8 years. More women are choosing the NFO pipeline over the longer pilot commitment. There is no specific study that identifies why this disparity exists. VADM (Ret.) Braun asked the briefer to confirm whether Rotary wing requires 6 years for

pilots. The Navy briefer responded that currently, all pilots have the same minimum service requirement.

Command Master Chief (Ret.) Octavia Harris asked the Navy and Marine Corps briefers whether there has been an assessment of why women choose the Rotary pipeline more often than other pipelines. The Navy briefer responded that he is not aware of a formalized study assessing the reasons. From his experience as a primary CO, several factors go into a student's pipeline choice, including types of missions, multi-crewed versus single-crewed, locations of stations, and schedules. The second Navy briefer responded that he is not aware of an existing study. CMDCM (Ret.) Harris asked whether there is encouragement to let women aviators know the other platforms are also available to them. The Navy briefer responded that all students experience fleet fly-ins, where Tactical aircraft are brought into primary sites and students are able to interact with them. Women also attend naval aviation groups that meet regularly. A limited number of student aviators are also given funding to attend. In the past, top performing students were chosen to interact with fleet aviators so they could see that there are viable careers for both men and women in any of the pipelines. The Navy briefer also noted that with ejection seat aircraft, if an aviator becomes pregnant, they are no longer medically cleared to fly. This may also affect preference decisions. The Marine Corps briefer confirmed their Service does the same fleet fly-ins as the Navy, and the Marine Corps does not have a study assessing why women more often choose helicopters. The Marine Corps briefer also confirmed it does offer the same educational opportunities to all aviators so that they are aware of their options.

Brigadier General (Ret.) Jarisse Sanborn asked if certain aircraft are not as likely to be carrier-based or never carrier-based, whether this could be a factor in pipeline preferences, and whether there are any surveys planned to study the preference disparity. The Navy briefer responded that F-18 and F-35 are all carrier-based, as is E-2/C-2 aircraft. Helicopters are largely sea-based, and maritime aircraft are only land-based. Locations are likely considered when students are choosing preferences. The second Navy briefer confirmed there is no study planned at this time. The second Navy briefer noted that despite the disparity, there are more women in almost every pipeline almost every year. At one point in time last year, one-quarter of the Rotary wing NFO population was female.

MG (Ret.) Johnson noted that for the Strike pipeline, students need an NSS of 52 in the Marine Corps and an NSS of 50 in the Navy. He asked the Marine Corps briefer to discuss the practical differences between a pilot with an NSS of 52 and an NSS of 50. The Marine Corps briefer responded that a score of 52 equates to the 58th percentile, but he is not sure how that is translated into skills and proficiency in an aircraft.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked if the Navy has data on the Navy Class 1 swim test related to diversity in the force, whether attrition is higher among certain demographic groups related to the swim test, and when the Navy Class 1 swim test standard was last evaluated. The Navy briefer responded that he would follow up with answers to these questions.

Brigadier General (Ret.) Allyson Solomon asked who considers CO input in students' preselection for pilot training and during training and whether there could be negative input that prevents a student from being selected. The Navy brief responded that CO input is considered during pipeline selection and that the purpose of this input is to provide recommendations on where they believe a student would perform best rather than to provide negative or adverse

feedback. Anecdotally, input is aligned with student preference approximately 90 percent of the time and provides information on students' skills that may not be included elsewhere. The Navy usually selects students to their primary choice, but the Navy briefer was unsure whether this includes students who received an NSS lower than 50. On the assessment side, the Navy briefer noted he would need to follow up with information on specifically when a CO's recommendation is considered. The Army briefer responded that command or commander input is not considered during the selection process. The Air Force briefer responded that selection does consider leadership ratings of cadets and accounts for 10–15 percent of ratings, but there is no objective percentage of the MASS score comprised of flight commanders' preference. The Marine Corps briefer responded that the process is similar to the Navy's process: either the senior Marine in the training squadron—or the training squadron commander if they are a Marine—will provide context to scores.

COL (Ret.) Grinder asked whether there is a simple cockpit modification that could be applied to eliminate the anthropometric measurement restrictions. The Marine Corps briefer responded that he does not believe there is a way to eliminate the thumb-tip reach requirement or modifications that could be applied to ejection seats, but he would need to obtain a more formal answer. The Air Force briefer responded that when students participate in the laser measurement, they may use one or two half-inch cushions in the T-1 aircraft. The Army briefer responded that Army platforms are built to accommodate several body shapes, and seats and pedals are usually adjustable. The Navy briefer responded that their Service has few exclusions based on anthropometric requirements, and that a redesign of the E-2/C-2 would be fairly extensive.

Fleet Master Chief (Ret.) Susan Whitman asked the Army and Air Force briefers whether any surveys studying the gender disparity in pipeline selection have been conducted. The Army briefer responded that there are no surveys to his knowledge, but he would need to confirm with the Army Aviation Component. The Air Force briefer responded that there are no existing surveys, but there is an initiative to start collecting data on student pilot training experiences. The briefer noted a question on this disparity could be included in the future data collection efforts, if necessary. FLTCM (Ret.) Whitman commented that a 0.2 percent difference between AH-64 Apache (attack platform) and the CH-47 Chinook (heavy lift) female pilots is a noteworthy statistic.

VADM (Ret.) Braun asked the Marine Corps briefer whether there are available data similar to the Navy's on the percentage of women who had an NSS of 52 or higher. The Marine Corps briefer responded that he would need to follow up with this data.

Briefing: Improving Child Care Provisions (RFI 11)

The Committee requested a briefing from the DoD Office of Military Family Readiness Policy (OMFRP) on fee assistance and other financial support offered for Service members through child care programs. The Committee was specifically interested in (1) child care fee assistance available to Service members both on and off installation; (2) fee discounting or tiered-payment scales for lower enlisted and junior officers; (3) fee assistance for off-base DoD/Services certified child care; (4) existing provisions to offset the cost of off-installation non-DoD child care; (5) options for offsetting the cost of off-installation child care in remote locations or those serving in the Reserve and Guard Components; (6) other financial assistance initiatives that are

planned or being considered to address the child care needs of Service members and their families.

The OMFRRP briefer began by stating the importance of child care as a workforce enabler for the military that directly affects readiness, efficiency, and retention. DoD offers access to quality, affordable Child Development Programs to more than 160,000 children every day, from birth to aged 12. DoD's Child Development Program system of care is the largest employer-sponsored child care system in the country.

The Child Development Centers (CDCs) serve approximately 69,000 children from birth to age 5, and the Military Services maintain approximately 500 child care facilities. The OMFRRP briefer stated the greatest child care need is for infants and toddlers. DoD maintains 57 percent of child care spaces for children younger than 3, with the remaining spaces for preschool children. Some families choose to use school-based preschool programs that are part of the public school education system. For DoD's school-aged programs, the OMFRRP briefer noted DoD serves approximately 35,000 children between the ages of 6 and 12. These programs provide services before and after school, during school holidays, and during summer, when schools are out of session. During COVID, DoD's school-aged programs have been adapted to provide child care during the school day where schools are closed. In the school-aged programs, the OMFRRP briefer stated DoD is meeting the child care need; very few installations have waiting lists for this age of children.

DoD currently has 900 installation-certified Family Child Care (FCC) providers serving approximately 5,000 children. The FCC providers meet stringent certification requirements, including training, background checks, and ongoing oversight, which enables them to provide child care in their homes. The OMFRRP briefer noted many families like the intimate home-like setting available through DoD's FCC homes. FCC is an integral part of meeting the child care demand, and the Military Services are working on a variety of initiatives to increase the number of FCC providers serving the community. More than 36,000 children are cared for in DoD's community-based child care program (commonly known as the fee assistance program).

The OMFRRP briefer noted the Committee asked for this briefing to address issues related to the cost of child care. She stated that Section 1793 of Title 10 requires DoD to prescribe fee regulations for military Child Development Programs. DoD assesses child care fees every year, and it also issues an annual child care fee policy. The OMFRRP briefer stated military child care fees are based on total family income and rank, which enables DoD to ensure child care is affordable for all families. Currently, DoD has nine total family income categories with fees ranging from \$60 to \$150 per week. Families with lower total family income will pay less for child care. However, installation commanders have the authority to adjust child care fees based on hardship, and the Military Services and installation commanders have the authority to offer multiple child discounts. FCC providers are private business owners, and they set their own child care fees. The Military Services may offer fee assistance to ensure FCC is also comparable to center-based care.

As previously noted, DoD cares for more than 36,000 children in the community-based child care program, also known as Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood. DoD's goal is to ensure child care is affordable to all families, including families who cannot access on-installation child care by providing fee assistance to use at eligible community-based child care programs. The OMFRRP briefer stated that DoD provides the overarching fee assistance policy, and the Military

Services fund their own fee assistance programs and partner with a third-party administrator to manage the program, enroll families, find suitable providers, and issue payments. Child Care Aware of America is the current third-party administrator. Families who are not near a military installation or who are not able to access child care because of long waitlists are eligible for fee assistance. The OMFRRP briefer noted this includes Guard and Reserve members, recruiters, and other geographically disbursed Service members. The Military Services use a consistent method to calculate fee assistance. The amount of fee assistance is based on three factors: (1) the child care fee based on total family income that is consistent with the installation base child care fee, (2) the cost of care charged by the provider, and (3) the Military Service-determined provider rate cap. If the provider fee is within the Military Service established rate cap, the family only pays their military child care fee. When the providers charge more than the Military Service established rate cap, the family is required to pay their military child care fee and any amount in excess of the provider rate cap. The Military Services determine their provider rate caps based on the amount of funding they have for fee assistance. However, in individual circumstances, the Military Services have the ability to grant hardship waivers, which would provide additional fee assistance to families in need.

In addressing DoD's additional options for care, the OMFRRP briefer noted DoD has been very flexible, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. DoD is offering fee assistance for school-aged programs to meet the needs of school-aged children. During the summer months, the DoD approved summer camps to receive fee assistance on behalf of military families because many community-based summer camps were not available to families. The Military Services offer a variety of options to support Guard and Reserve members during drill weekends. When DoD is providing community-based fee assistance, the provided care must be regulated and inspected. The OMFRRP briefer stated one of the biggest challenges in local communities is that less than 15 percent of community-based child care programs are accredited, which is a DoD requirement. In areas where accredited care is not available, a limited number of exceptions have been granted to meet the child care needs of that community.

In late 2019, DoD launched a pilot called Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood Plus, which is an extension of the fee assistance program. The Military Child Care Plus initiative expanded DoD's pool of eligible providers for fee assistance by including providers who may not be accredited but who are participating in the State's Quality Rating Improvement System. The OMFRRP briefer stated this initiative improves access to a broader network of community-based child care providers eligible to receive fee assistance and standardizes DoD's procedures and processes for nonaccredited providers. In August, DoD launched another initiative through Military OneSource to better address the hourly care needs of families. Military OneSource offers a subscription service free to families that provides access to a national database with more than 1 million caregiver profiles nationwide. The OMFRRP briefer noted this new service puts families in the driver's seat, enabling families to make their own arrangements, including hiring decisions and payment of caregivers via a web-based platform. Families who use this service also have access to the screening process for caregivers, including checking references, reading caregiver reviews, conducting interviews, and utilizing free access to background checks.

The OMFRRP briefer provided an update about initiatives and policies that have been altered as a result of COVID-19. DoD and the Military Services are tracking child care capacity, participation, openings, and closings on a weekly basis. This information is going to the DoD

Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) Office, the Under Secretary, and the Secretary of Defense. DoD is operating youth programs at some locations. All Child Development Programs, school-aged programs, and FCC programs are following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention measures and the American Academy of Pediatric guidelines. Some of the CDCs continue to operate at reduced capacity to accommodate health protection measures such as social distancing requirements. The OMFRRP briefer stated school-aged programs are operating on a full-time basis to accommodate children needing child care during the day. The school-aged programs are operating facilities that parents can use for child care, and they are providing some support for children who are participating in virtual school. Some of the youth programs are open but operating at reduced capacity, and some have reduced program offerings such as youth sports to accommodate health protection measures. Some of the programs are offering youth sports or sports clinics depending on the local health protection condition level requirements. The OMFRRP briefer noted M&RA issued several exceptions to policy for additional flexibility during the pandemic. One exception enables child and youth programs to employ dependents of Service members and DoD civilians aged 17, which expands beyond the typical requirements for staff needing to be 18 and have a high school diploma. The OMFRRP briefer stated this change was recommended by the Military Services to help expand the workforce, and so far, it has been working well.

DoD child care programs undergo stringent inspection requirements every year by the Military Services and by their installation, but there have been temporary adjustments for those inspections because of the pandemic. DoD has also extended eligibility for summer camps to receive fee assistance on behalf of military families. The OMFRRP briefer noted there are regular team meetings that include the Office of Military Community and Family Policy, the Military Services' M&RA, the DoD's M&RA, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense to discuss how to continue to meet the needs of military families. The OMFRRP briefer commented that the Child Development Program and youth program personnel have been extraordinary during this time, especially in their professionalism and dedication to ensuring the safety and care of our Service members and their families in this challenging environment and unprecedented time. The OMFRRP briefer commended these personnel for the outstanding job they have done to meet the needs of the military community.

Discussion

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn acknowledged child care is one of the most critical issues for everyone in the country, especially for the military because of the requirements of the work. She asked the OMFRRP briefer to elaborate on the inclusion and exclusion criteria for school and off-base child care programs. The OMFRRP briefer responded that she does not believe DoD is excluding many programs. DoD has historically offered fee assistance for school-aged programs and is trying to be flexible and creative during the pandemic, including working with the Military Services to offer other programs and opportunities. DoD will be extending the fee assistance program to additional States where there are significant waiting lists, which is one of the goals for early 2021.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked what schools do not qualify or meet the requirements. The OMFRRP briefer responded that the biggest issue is whether that program is regulated and inspected. To receive fee assistance on behalf of military families, the program has to be regulated, which school programs are, and inspected. The inspection is the biggest challenge.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked whether there has been pushback from parents about declarations of eligibility for school-aged programs. The OMFRP briefer responded that she is not aware of any issues with eligibility determinations from parents. The OMFRP briefer stated DoD's school-aged programs have done an outstanding job to meet the needs for care, noting they provide services before and after school and during holiday breaks, and they are currently providing child care during the day to meet the needs of military families. Military Service members have a higher priority, and the briefer stated they are trying to accommodate all the families that need child care. The OMFRP briefer emphasized the requirement for fee assistance programs to ensure the safety of children, which is one of the reasons there are annual inspections.

COL (Ret.) Grinder asked the briefer to explain how the FCC provider certification does or does not transfer with military spouses as they move to different installations. The OMFRP briefer responded that DoD has been working with the Military Services to ensure, not only in CDC and school age but also with FCC, that there is a streamlined process for providers and employees to move from one installation to the next. The Military Services have been working together to standardize that process, including employee requirements and FCC requirements for providers. DoD has worked diligently to streamline those processes to ensure background checks and training transfers with the individual. The OMFRP briefer stated this is an ongoing priority for DoD and the Military Services.

Col (Ret.) Grinder asked whether the fee assistance is paid directly from DoD to the provider or if the military Service member pays the provider and then receives a reimbursement. The OMFRP briefer responded that the military Service member pays their adjusted child care fee to the provider and the third-party contractor pays the difference to the child care provider. Col (Ret.) Grinder asked whether DoD is forecasting future changes to child care needs such as a growing population of school-aged children. The OMFRP briefer responded that the child care population is always growing, and the programs remain flexible to meet the needs of child care in each age group. The OMFRP briefer previously mentioned the majority of school-aged programs do not have a waiting list and are able to meet the needs of the population. The OMFRP briefer also commented that DoD is concerned about a potential baby boom that may happen because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked if the OMFRP briefer has information on the DoD shortage of child care compared with the demand. The OMFRP briefer offered to provide the numbers to the Committee as a follow-up after the meeting. DoD tracks this information monthly, and the briefer noted her office provides an update to the Secretary of Defense every quarter, including capacity and enrollment. The OMFRP briefer stated DoD has found the greatest need for child care is in five regions of the United States: the National Capital Region; San Diego, CA; the Tidewater area in Norfolk, VA; Hawaii; and San Antonio, TX. These areas represent 55 percent of the overall child care demand across DoD. DoD is actively tracking this and working with the Military Services, and the capacity issue is of great interest up to the highest levels of DoD. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked if DoD could provide some of that information to the Committee, and the briefer confirmed she would.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked about Service members' access to alternative programs and fee assistance, particularly for those who are on remote assignments and do not have access to approved programs or centers. The OMFRP briefer responded that the Military Services have the

authority to approve exceptions and also mentioned the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood Plus program. DoD recognizes that accredited child care can be very limited, and in those cases, it is testing out relying on the State's Quality Rating and Improvement System. The OMFRP briefer noted this has been tested in Virginia and Maryland, and DoD is looking to expand to regions where there are long waiting lists or regions where Service members have a hard time finding child care. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted the Committee would be interested in additional information as that pilot program progresses, and the briefer responded affirmatively.

Major General (Ret.) George Alexander asked the OMFRP briefer to elaborate on the child care options available for Guard and Reserve members during drill weekends. The OMFRP briefer stated the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood program is the biggest initiative to meet the needs of child care for Guard and Reserve members. The OMFRP briefer also responded that the Military Services have their own programs, noting the Air Force's program for Guard and Reserve members who need weekend care. The Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood is DoD's mechanism to meet the needs of those Service members.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum followed up on the previous discussion about regulated and inspected programs and facilities, asking the OMFRP briefer whether the limitation on inspections is based on DoD capacity or some other constraint. The OMFRP briefer responded that DoD does not have the responsibility to inspect those programs; it is the responsibility of the State or a local child care resource referral program.

CAPT (Ret.) Barrett asked the OMFRP briefer about the percentage of FCC homes that are on military installations versus outside in the community. CAPT (Ret.) Barrett also asked if there is a fee structure for FCC homes such as a range for what they can and cannot charge for child care. The OMFRP briefer responded that FCC homes are private businesses, and DoD cannot regulate what they can and cannot charge. Most Services use fee assistance in their FCC programs where a Service member would pay their child care fee and the Service may offset the cost. For example, a provider may charge \$175 per week for an infant, but the parent in a child care center would be paying \$80, and the Military Services would fund that difference. The fee assistance mechanism can help offset the cost for families. In response to CAPT (Ret.) Barrett's question on the percentages of FCC homes that are on base versus off base, the OMFRP briefer stated that the proportion of on-base versus off-base child care homes varies by Service. The Military Services' housing has decreased, but many providers are still affiliated with the installation, such as spouses of retirees or active duty members who live off base because installation housing is limited. The OMFRP briefer noted that in San Diego and Norfolk, the Navy has a large FCC program that includes off-installation providers. The Military Services are certifying individuals who are associated with the military—such as a retiree or an active duty spouse—and partnering off the installation with those providers. The oversight for those providers is based on local, county, State, and DoD requirements. DoD is working to continue growing the number of FCC providers because they have decreased over time. The OMFRP briefer noted providing child care in your home is a hard business, so the Military Services are trying to look at initiatives to increase FCC numbers.

FLTCM (Ret.) Whitman asked how much DoD pays out annually for fee assistance. The OMFRP briefer responded that she does not have that statistic because the Military Services fund

their own fee assistance programs and noted the Military Services may have more information on how much they provide annually in fee assistance.

MG (Ret.) Johnson noted he was surprised at the number of children DoD provides child care for, commenting that 160,000 children seemed like a low number. He asked whether DoD has information on how many children are served by child care outside the DoD and Military Services system. The OMFRRP briefer responded that it is important to note that not all families need child care and not all families have children. It would be difficult for DoD to track where families are receiving child care, but the greatest measure is the 34,000 children who are served in community-based programs.

MG (Ret.) Johnson asked about potential stigma with Service members taking advantage of the fee assistance program and whether that is a barrier to accessing this benefit provided by the Military Services. The OMFRRP briefer responded that she feels families are very comfortable with the program fees and fee assistance because they are based on total family income. The OMFRRP briefer commented that she used to work at the installation level with child care programs and processed numerous waivers while working with family support centers. The OMFRRP briefer stated she does not think families are turning down assistance. At the installation level, the CDC works closely with the family support center and family advocacy to connect these resources for families in need; it is a community partnership.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked whether there has been a survey of the parent population to measure their satisfaction with child care and ask about their needs and desires for military child care. The OMFRRP briefer responded that when parents are on site, they do receive surveys, which is one mechanism to get feedback. The Military Services do not have a standardized process to survey families. Parents can participate in a parent advisory board, which is a mechanism at the installation level, where information can be shared between programs and families. Installation commanders are required to participate in the parent advisory board at least once annually, but they typically participate more often than they are required to. For hard data on child and youth programs, the briefer commented that she was not aware of a mechanism other than the existing surveys on behalf of military families.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked about whether parents could be given the option to waive regulation or inspection requirements to expand the child care options available to them through the military. The OMFRRP briefer responded that relying on nonregulated care, such as a neighbor, is not something DoD has considered for expanding child care options. The OMFRRP briefer noted there was an infant death on a military installation 18–24 months ago, and DoD recommitted itself to ensuring that child care was going to be safe, regulated, and that DoD would have oversight because this infant died in an unregulated home. DoD is maintaining its commitment to protect children, ensuring that children are safe. Part of the safeguarding process is ensuring children are taken care of in safe homes that are regulated and some level of oversight is provided in those homes. The OMFRRP briefer also noted parents have the right to choose, and the Military Services cannot always provide fee assistance for the child care choices that families make.

The first day of the meeting was adjourned.

9 December 2020

Opening Remarks

The DACOWITS Military Director and Designated Federal Officer, COL Freeman reopened the December quarterly business meeting by reviewing the agenda for the day. She reminded those in attendance any comments made during the meeting by Committee members are their personal opinions and do not reflect a DACOWITS or DoD position. COL Freeman then turned the meeting over to the DACOWITS Chair, Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger.

Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger welcomed the attendees to the meeting and conducted a roll call.

Panel: Improving Child Care Provisions (RFI 12)

The Committee requested a briefing from the Military Services to provide an overview of (1) current and new initiatives to expand child care support to Service members, (2) current and new initiatives to increase awareness of child care options and resources, and (3) on-installation child care options available to Service members to accommodate hourly, irregular, or overnight care.

Army

The Army briefer opened by noting the Army recognizes availability of reliable child care as an important issue for many Soldiers. She explained the Army has experienced challenges meeting the physical capacity needs of Soldiers related to child care, but she confirmed the Army constructed 151 CDCs across the country between 2007 and 2012. The Army also plans to construct new CDCs by the end of FY 2026 at Fort Wainwright, Aliamanu Military Reservation, Fort Polk, Fort Bragg, Fort Shafter, Fort Gordon, Fort Carson, Rock Island Arsenal, Fort Knox, and Eglin AFB.

The Army briefer noted the Army is also trying to expand FCC options for Service members. The Army was initially focused on establishing 275 new FCCs by the end of FY 2020, but this timeline has been delayed until the end of FY 2021 because of the effects of COVID-19. She noted the Army provides subsidies to reduce child care fees for certain military families who use FCCs. The Army briefer added that to encourage FCC providers to continue providing care if their spouse transfers to another installation, the Army offers relocation and recruitment subsidy incentives to FCC providers and a transfer program to ensure providers can easily reopen their FCCs upon arrival at the new installation.

The Army briefer explained as of September 1, 2020, the Army has implemented updated DoD child care priorities that prioritize access to child care for certain military families if there is a waitlist for child care at their installation. Similar to other Military Services, the Army uses Child Care Aware of America to support child care referral and fee assistance for parents who access child care off installation. She confirmed the Army provided about \$66 million in fee assistance to Active and reserve Soldiers.

The Army briefer noted CDC operating status is currently determined by health protection conditions established at each installation. For example, CDCs on an installation at Health Protection Condition Charlie (HPCON C) operate at 50 percent capacity and CDCs on an installation at HPCON B operate at 75 percent capacity. She confirmed Soldiers deemed mission

essential by garrison commanders are given priority access to child care, then other Soldiers are provided child care as space is available. The Army has also implemented cleaning standards required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and virtual learning environments to support children who are currently learning from home because of school closures attributable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Army briefer confirmed Army families use militarychildcare.com to view on-installation child care options, request child care, and view the waitlist for CDC placement. [Militarychildcare.com](https://militarychildcare.com) was recently updated to address revised DoD child care priorities, and as of August 1, 2020, all military families had been notified about the updated priorities. Installations have “newcomer orientation” events where child care availability on installation is discussed.

The Army briefer acknowledged hourly child care was an issue for Army families prior to COVID-19 and confirmed most Army installations offered child care for a minimum of 12 hours per day prior to operations being affected by COVID-19. She explained up to 20 percent of a CDC’s physical capacity may be used for hourly care if there is no waitlist for that facility. However, the Army briefer added that because many CDCs do have waitlists, their ability to provide hourly care is limited. Availability of hourly care has been reduced even further because of the effects of COVID-19, with Army CDCs providing 7,584 hours of care in September 2020 and 60,000 hours of care in February 2020 before being affected by COVID-19. She explained CDCs offer hourly care by filling vacant spaces created by absenteeism of full day care children.

The Army briefer confirmed the Army has tried to expand the use of FCCs for hourly care by using subsidies to encourage FCC providers to provide hourly care spaces and provide reduced rates for military families. The Kids on Site program is also available to families and provides child and youth school services and hourly care for community events at locations such as chapels and community centers. The Army briefer explained the Army has one installation (Fort Jackson) that provides overnight, 24/7 child care. The Army briefer also noted extended hours, overnight care, and long-term child care are provided by FCC providers at most installations.

Navy

The Navy briefer confirmed the Navy has modified its child care processes with enhanced cleaning and sanitation procedures and reduced capacity because of COVID-19. The Navy offers CDCs, FCCs, fee assistance, and other partner opportunities as part of its system of child care. The Navy offers 45,000 child care spaces throughout the entire Service but maintains a waiting list of about 9,000 children. The Navy briefer confirmed most children on the waitlist are in the Navy’s fleet concentration areas, which include Norfolk, San Diego, Pearl Harbor, and Bethesda.

The Navy briefer confirmed the Navy is considering a variety of strategies to improve child care capacity, including plans for military construction. Along with on-installation child care shortages, there is also a shortage of community child care facilities within the Navy’s fleet concentration areas. To address these community shortages, the Navy is partnering with community organizations to improve child care availability. For example, he confirmed the Navy has partnered with the Coronado School District in San Diego to lease one of the district’s excess elementary schools and provide child care services out of it. He also noted the Navy plans to replicate this partnership with other school districts in San Diego and Norfolk within the next few months.

The Navy briefer noted FCCs are also an important part of the Navy's child care delivery system, but the Navy has struggled recently to add new FCC providers. He confirmed the Navy is currently working on hiring a recruitment firm to support the recruitment of additional FCC providers in fleet concentration areas, and he explained FCC providers are especially important for Navy families in need of overnight or extended hours care.

The Navy briefer confirmed the Navy uses militarychildcare.com as its one-stop shop for all military families seeking child care across DoD, including DoD-operated programs and DoD-certified FCCs. However, the Navy briefer noted the website does not currently identify off-installation child care services participating in the Navy Fee Assistance Program, but these providers and those participating in other Service's fee assistance programs will be added soon through system enhancement efforts.

The Navy briefer confirmed all Navy CDCs offer hourly care, and similar to the Army, hourly care is managed by overselling full-day child care spaces and filling absentees with children in need of hourly care. The Navy briefer confirmed the Navy tracks trends in absenteeism and is able to offer hourly care reservations to parents 30 days in advance. The Navy also manages demand for child care from shift workers or watch standers through FCCs or 24/7 CDCs located in the fleet concentration areas. The Navy briefer noted the Navy's preference is that families seeking irregular or overnight care use FCCs.

The Navy briefer noted the Navy is seeing a change in demand for traditional Monday–Friday care as the Navy begins to embrace telework for some of its personnel. The Navy briefer said families' requests for care are becoming less uniform, for example, with some families requesting care on Mondays and Thursdays of one week and Tuesdays and Fridays the next week. The Navy briefer confirmed the Navy is adjusting to that change in child care demand.

Marine Corps

The Marine Corps briefer confirmed the Marine Corps is trying to increase child care capacity and noted the Service has been approved for an FY 2020 military construction project to add child care capacity to the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, which should be completed in FY 2023. The Marine Corps also expects to submit plans for military construction projects in FY 2021 to increase child care capacity at Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Pendleton and MCB Quantico.

The Marine Corps briefer emphasized the Marine Corps recognizes the high demand for child care and noted that four installations make up about 78 percent of the Marine Corps CDC immediate need waitlist, including MCB Hawaii, MCB Camp Pendleton, MCB Quantico, and MCB Camp Lejeune/MCAS New River. The Marine Corps briefer confirmed the Marine Corps is looking to provide additional funding to commence hiring staff for unfilled classroom spaces in those locations.

The Marine Corps briefer explained the Marine Corps has a variety of resources available to military families to increase awareness of child care options, including Military OneSource, installation resources and referral offices, and Child Care Aware of America to support and make families aware of off-installation fee assistance programs.

The Marine Corps briefer confirmed the Marine Corps does not currently have any 24/7 CDCs but recommends families use FCCs, if available, for overnight care. The Marine Corps briefer also noted the Marine Corps has seen a large decrease in the number of FCC providers over the

last few years, with less than 50 FCC providers remaining throughout the entire Marine Corps. As a result, the Marine Corps briefer confirmed the Marine Corps plans to think strategically about how to expand its number of FCCs providers over the next few years.

The Marine Corps briefer noted the number of children served through CDCs during the last year has decreased significantly because of COVID-19 operations and families opting to self-care for their children. The Marine Corps briefer noted the Marine Corps has hired health screeners for CDCs to ensure caregivers are able to focus on their responsibilities in the classroom and that management staff can focus on their responsibilities.

Air Force

The Air Force briefer confirmed that during FY 2020, the Air Force has been focused on deploying FCC recruitment and retention incentives to increase the number of FCC providers to expand child care capacity and options for military families. She explained the FCC recruitment and retention incentive was piloted at Minot AFB in May 2020, and it was successful in establishing new FCC providers at that installation. Under this program, the Air Force is focused on identifying the specific child care needs of an installation and using FCC incentives to meet these needs. The Air Force briefer explained that following the pilot of the incentive program at Minot AFB, it was piloted at seven other installations in August and September 2020 to examine their specific child care needs. During this second piloting of the program, it was determined that additional incentives could support the child care needs at Andrews AFB and Hanscom AFB. The Air Force briefer noted this program was deployed to the remaining 58 Air Force installations on November 1, 2020, and she confirmed the Air Force is working with data analysts to track outcomes from this program. Early outcomes from the program include the addition of an FCC provider at Los Angeles AFB, where there has not been an FCC provider in many years. There is also a family interested in becoming an FCC provider at Vance AFB, where there has never been an FCC before.

The Air Force briefer noted the Air Force is also looking at installation needs related to CDC child care capacity and conditions. The Air Force briefer confirmed the Air Force plans to use \$20 million from the FY 2020 appropriations bill on 7 minor construction projects to expand child care capacity by 396 spaces. The Air Force briefer noted all these construction projects are currently in the design phase. The Air Force briefer explained the Air Force identified 14 military construction projects associated with CDCs that could be initiated if funding becomes available. Eleven of these military construction projects are in the planning phase, and three of these projects are in the design phase.

The Air Force uses militarychildcare.com and refers all families to that source to increase awareness of child care options and resources. The Air Force also developed a booklet titled *FCC and Your Family* to inform families about FCC options. The Air Force briefer noted installations also have community child care coordinators to serve as installation points of contact for information about military and civilian child care services. There has also been a major publicity campaign initiated by M&RA under the Secretary of the Air Force titled the "Child Care Solutions Campaign" to coordinate with organizations to better understand the child care needs of Air Force families. The Air Force is currently developing an Airmen & Family Strategic Communication Plan, and this plan will address child care needs.

The Air Force briefer confirmed the Air Force focuses on providing hourly, irregular, and overnight care through FCCs. The Air Force briefer referenced the Air Force's Expanded Child

Care program (ECC), which offers flexible hourly, irregular, and overnight care options. She noted the Home Community Care program under the ECC is the most frequently accessed program encompassed by ECC. It is targeted specifically toward supporting Guard and Reserve Service members with FCC-based child care during their training weekends. The Air Force briefer confirmed more than 98,000 hours of care were provided through the Home Community Care program in FY 2020. The Air Force briefer also noted the Military Spouse Appointment Child Care program was launched in July 2020. This program is designed to help military spouses with short-term child care needs related to medical or other appointments their child is unable to attend.

Discussion

COL (Ret.) Grinder noted availability of child care is very important for Service members and has a large impact on retention, but Service members have also noted concerns about quality of care provided to their children through FCCs and CDCs in previous DACOWITS focus groups. COL (Ret.) Grinder asked how the Military Services ensure a high quality of care is provided by FCC providers and CDCs. The Army briefer confirmed FCC coordinators conduct regular inspections of FCC homes and document any issues. The Army also offers training for FCC providers to help them develop important child care skills, including specialty skills to support the care of children with special needs. The Army briefer also noted CDC staff receive regular training and CDCs are inspected multiple times over the course of a year by the DoD and Army garrison commanders to ensure they are operating safely.

The Navy briefer confirmed that across the entire DoD, CDCs receive a minimum of four inspections per year, one of which is conducted by headquarters and is unannounced. The Navy briefer noted all CDCs are nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Local Navy staff also conduct unannounced inspections of FCC homes at least once a month. The Navy provides additional subsidies to incentivize FCC providers to become nationally accredited beyond just DoD certification. The Navy briefer noted numerous studies have shown DoD ranks among the highest organizations in terms of quality standards and oversight for its child care services. However, the Navy briefer acknowledged there are times when families are not happy with the quality of care their children receive but noted the Navy has a variety of mechanisms available to parents to report their concerns and ensure they are routed to the appropriate levels of leadership, including a 24/7 anonymous DoD hotline.

The Marine Corps briefer noted all the Military Services follow a standardized training process and part of that process includes a virtual training developed by Ohio State University. The Marine Corps briefer confirmed that service child care staff go through a variety of modules during this virtual training and receive a lot of mentorship from training specialists. Employees can also receive the equivalent of a child development associate degree upon completion of this training program. The Air Force briefer also noted DoD implemented a new training curriculum for child care providers that the Air Force and some other Military Services will roll out in January for piloting.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked the briefers to provide additional details about the incentives each Military Service offers to increase its number of FCC providers and whether these incentives have been successful. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn also noted the Committee has heard about a standardized process to improve the portability of FCC certifications between installations and asked the Service briefers to elaborate on this topic. The Air Force briefer confirmed that the Air

Force offers higher subsidies to FCC providers who gain accreditation beyond DoD certification and that most of the incentives offered to FCCs are monetarily based. In addition to this incentive, Air Force FCC providers are given a flat rate bonus the first time they sign up a child from the waitlist, and they are incentivized to renew their DoD certification at the end of each year. Air Force FCC providers are also offered higher subsidy rates if they provide specialty care to meet certain installation needs, such as caring for children younger than 2 or children with special needs. The Air Force also incentivizes FCC providers who transfer from one installation to another to reopen their FCC upon completion of the transfer. The Air Force briefer confirmed that FCC training does transfer between installations, but the new FCC homes still need to be certified to ensure they are safe for children. Although Federal background checks will still apply for FCC providers, they often need to meet local background checks, such as a local records check and fingerprint checks.

The Navy briefer noted the Navy has a standardized subsidy program. FCC providers are considered independent businesses that can be attractive to families wanting to run their own businesses. Like the Air Force, the Navy provides FCC providers with higher subsidies if they decide to provide specialty care, such as care for children younger than 2 or care for children with special needs. The Navy briefer noted the Navy has done an analysis that shows an FCC provider who becomes nationally accredited and receives the highest subsidies for providing care for the most at-need population at a given installation could make about \$50,000 a year before taxes and insurance. The Navy briefer noted providing care for other children also creates a cost avoidance of child care fees for some families with children of their own because they can care for their own children while caring for others. The Navy briefer also confirmed that FCC certification transfers between different installations and Services, but an inspection is still necessary to ensure the new home is safe for children.

The Army briefer noted the Army offers recruitment and relocation incentives and has a transfer program for FCC providers who move from one installation to another. The Army briefer confirmed that during FY 2020, eight FCC providers transferred and reopened at a new location after their home was recertified. The Marine Corps provider explained the Marine Corps typically allows the installation commander to establish the incentives for FCC providers and noted the Marine Corps continues to look at what the other Military Services are doing to incentivize new FCC providers.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted DACOWITS was briefed previously that it could take more than 2 months for FCC providers to resume business after transferring to a new installation and that the Army was working on an expedited process for recertifying FCC providers. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked for clarification on how long it generally takes FCC providers who transfer to a new location to reopen their businesses. The Marine Corps briefer noted the time it takes for Marine Corps FCC providers to become recertified after a transfer has been reduced. The Marine Corps briefer explained the Marine Corps also has the employee transfer program, which supports CDC staff transferring to new CDC locations and has helped to reduce the steps that do not necessarily have to be repeated to be certified at a new installation.

The Navy briefer said he is not aware of recertification processes taking more than 2 months for FCC providers who transfer to new installations. However, the Navy briefer noted there were challenges in previous years where FCC providers' background checks lapsed, and it took a lot of time to get them renewed. The Navy briefer confirmed DoD has instituted additional

provisional checks to cut this process from multiple months to multiple weeks for both FCC providers and CDC staff. The Navy briefer also confirmed that all Navy CDC workers who are relocating with their spouses to another installation are promised a position at the same pay at the new CDC location regardless of whether there are positions open, primarily because the Navy understands there is natural turnover in CDCs that will result in positions eventually opening.

The Army briefer noted she is unaware of large time gaps for FCC providers to reopen their business after transferring from one installation to another. However, the Army briefer confirmed that similar to the Navy, the Army has implemented a program that allows CDC workers to move from one CDC to another because the Army also understands that an opening will become available at the CDC in relatively short order.

The Air Force briefer said the only thing that might extend the timeline for recertifying an FCC provider is if they are not living in military housing because they might be required to become State licensed, which can be a longer process than the DoD certification process. The Air Force briefer also confirmed that the Air Force has a nonappropriated fund Employee Transfer Assistance Program to assist CDC staff as they transfer from one installation to another.

MG (Ret.) Alexander asked the Navy briefer how long it might take the Navy to move through the waitlist of 9,000 children and why there has been a decline in the number of FCC providers. The Navy briefer explained the Navy's current expansion goal is to create 4,000 additional child care spaces in the next few months through infrastructure capacity increases and by increasing the number of FCC providers; however, COVID-19 has slowed this process. The Navy briefer also responded that he is unsure why the number of FCC providers are declining, but he noted this is not only a Navy trend but also a national trend. The Navy briefer noted the National Association for Family Child Care is seeing up to a 50 percent decline in the number of community providers across the Nation. The Navy briefer confirmed the Navy does conduct exit surveys with exiting FCC providers, and these surveys indicate a variety of reasons for their exit, including not feeling safe with strangers in their home after their spouse deploys and determining that being an FCC provider was not a fit for them. The Navy briefer noted there has always been a stigma around FCCs, where some parents believe this type of care is not as safe or as high quality as CDC care, and this stigma can affect FCC enrollment. The Navy briefer noted most of the FCC providers currently caring for Navy children have been providing this service for years, and parents are generally equally or more satisfied with the care their child receives in FCCs in comparison to CDCs because of lower caregiver to child ratios.

COL (Ret.) Grinder asked for an estimate of the average amount of time a child spends on the CDC waitlist for each Service. The Army briefer confirmed that waitlist time can vary significantly from one installation to another. Further, she noted that because of COVID-19, the Army is averaging a 50 percent declination rate when families on the waitlist are offered a space in the CDC. She noted these parents will opt to stay on the waitlist, but many just do not need the child care at the time. The Air Force briefer noted single-parent and dual-military families have always been given the highest priority on waitlists and tend to get their children into the CDC before other types of families. She estimated the wait time for single-parents and dual-military families was about 45 days before COVID-19 began affecting CDCs. However, these families can now get their children into CDCs quickly because some families are choosing not to place their children in CDCs at this time. The Air Force briefer explained infants are always the

hardest children to place in CDCs, and some families will not be able to get their children into a CDC until after they have grown out of the infant stage for this reason.

The Navy briefer explained that prior to the effects of COVID-19, children of single-parent and dual-military families would be placed almost immediately into CDCs with no waitlists, while children of other family types would have to wait approximately 35 to 45 days for placement. However, the Navy briefer noted that in the Navy's fleet concentration areas where CDCs do have waitlists, children of single-parent and dual-military families were being placed in CDCs within 35 to 60 days, while children of other family types experienced 6- to 12-month waiting times. He noted the Navy recently met with Child Care Aware of America, which is a nonprofit that monitors the Nation's child care inventory and learned that many community child care providers have not been able to maintain their businesses through the pandemic. The Navy briefer explained this will exacerbate the problem facing many military families. The Navy briefer noted that to mitigate this issue, the Navy has helped to support some community child care providers that participate in its fee assistance program through increased subsidies to help them maintain their businesses. The Navy briefer explained the Navy is also looking into leasing facilities to operate community child care services, including those that previously hosted child care providers that closed because of the pandemic.

The Marine Corps briefer agreed with the other briefers that many families are declining opportunities to place their children in CDCs right now as a result of the pandemic. The Marine Corps briefer also highlighted that staffing CDCs is difficult right now because of staff burnout attributable to changing COVID-19 operations and significantly extended working hours. The Marine Corps briefer noted there is a joint effort between the Military Services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) through a retention and recruitment working group to discuss strategies for maintaining and growing the CDC workforce. COL (Ret.) Grinder asked whether families who decline a position for their child in a CDC are moved to the bottom of the waiting list. The Marine Corps briefer explained that families who decline a CDC placement retain their position on the waitlist.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked if all the Services offer weekend care to support Guard and Reserve members. The Air Force briefer confirmed all weekend care for the Air Force is offered through FCCs. The Air Force briefer noted that prior to the pandemic, some CDCs did stay open one Friday night or one Saturday a month. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked if Guard and Reserve members are able to identify FCC providers for weekend care. The Air Force briefer confirmed they are able to do so. The Army briefer confirmed weekend care is provided at Fort Jackson at its 24/7 CDC. However, for other installations, weekend care is provided by FCCs for active duty Service members, but weekend care is not being offered to Guard or Reserve Service members.

The Marine Corps briefer noted weekend care is not being provided outside of FCCs currently; however, prior to the pandemic, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island offered weekend care at its CDC and may begin offering that service again soon to support drill instructors. The Marine Corps briefer added that Service members can use off-installation fee assistance to access community child care providers during the weekend. The Navy briefer noted weekend care is based on demand for the Navy. The Navy briefer pointed out that child care needs of Reserve members are different than the needs of Active Duty members but noted that

Reserve members often prefer to use the community child care provider they normally employ when they are not drilling or on Active Duty status.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked whether all the Military Services offer off-installation FCCs. The Marine Corps briefer noted the Marine Corps does not have off-installation FCCs. The Army briefer noted the Army does not have off-installation FCCs. The Air Force briefer noted the Air Force does have off-installation FCCs. The Navy briefer noted the Navy does have off-installation FCCs.

LTG (Ret.) Mangum asked the Army briefer how drill sergeants' needs for child care are addressed outside of Fort Jackson's 24/7 CDC. LTG (Ret.) Mangum also asked why the other Services do not offer 24/7 CDCs. The Army did a survey at all installations a few years ago to see if Service members would support expanding CDCs hours to 24/7 and found that personnel believed it was unnecessary because their needs could be addressed through FCCs. The Air Force briefer noted all 24/7 care for the Air Force is provided through FCCs and the need for 24/7 care is specific to some locations and positions, such as missile bases where Service members may be required to deploy to the missile field for 3–4 days. The Marine Corps briefer noted there has not been demand for 24-hour care in the Marine Corps. If such care is required, the Service refers Marines to FCC providers on installation. The Navy considers FCCs to be the preferred delivery system for overnight care because a home is the best environment for such care. The Navy briefer confirmed the Navy has implemented 24/7 care in the past at CDCs where not enough FCCs were offering that service. However, the Navy briefer added there is currently no demand signal for this type of care based on waitlists.

MG (Ret.) Johnson asked whether there have been any efforts within the Military Services to establish internships or cooperative partnerships with universities that provide child care degrees. The Navy briefer stated continuing education of the Navy's CDC workforce is a high priority for the Navy. The Navy briefer noted DoD's internal training program allows CDC staff and FCC providers to enter the training with only a high school diploma and earn an associate degree in child care upon completion of the program. The Navy briefer also confirmed the Navy offers a full tuition assistance program for all child and youth development employees to further their educational aspirations. The Army briefer noted she is not aware of any cooperative partnerships with universities or community colleges, but she confirmed the Army did have a program like that in the past. The Army briefer also confirmed she would ask internally whether there are plans to revitalize that program in the future.

The Marine Corps briefer noted that she is unaware of any cooperative partnerships or internship programs with universities, but she added that DoD does work closely with Purdue University to develop curriculum for the Virtual Lab School training program. The Air Force briefer confirmed she is unaware of any Air Force-wide initiatives to partner with universities, but she noted some installations have been proactive to partner with local universities and high schools to offer opportunities for students interested in healthcare and youth development. The Navy briefer also noted Navy installations work with local universities and accept interns at the installation level.

MG (Ret.) Johnson asked the briefers whether their Services have conducted any surveys to determine if and why members prefer to use uncertified child care providers, such as neighbors, rather than DoD-certified FCCs and CDCs. The Air Force briefer confirmed the Military Services have discussed with OSD the need for a DoD-wide survey to determine this

information, but also noted the Air Force does not currently have a survey mechanism to capture this information. The Marine Corps briefer agreed, noting that the Marine Corps does not have a survey mechanism to capture this information. The Navy briefer confirmed the Navy recently implemented a question to ask Service members requesting child care services through militarychildcare.com about their present child care arrangements. The Navy briefer acknowledged the need for a more comprehensive survey mechanism to determine what child care options members are using and noted he believes personnel use care providers who are not DoD-certified because of the child care capacity shortfall. The Army briefer confirmed the Army does not have a survey to capture current child care arrangements, but the Army has received feedback during Townhalls that Soldiers prefer to put their children in on-installation CDCs rather than off-installation child care facilities and FCCs.

RADM (Ret.) Thomas noted the Coast Guard is recognized as a Military Service even though it is part of the Department of Homeland Security. RADM (Ret.) Thomas asked if Coast Guard members have access to CDCs equal to members from the other Military Services. The Navy briefer confirmed DoD has a reciprocity agreement with the Coast Guard and that Coast Guard members are provided the same priority as active duty Service members at all DoD installations. The Navy briefer also noted this equal prioritization is built into the militarychildcare.com system and the Military Services cannot change that prioritization. The other Service briefers confirmed this.

Panel: Pregnancy in the Military (RFI 14)

The Committee requested a briefing from each of the Military Services on the actions taken and initiatives planned to ensure pregnant servicewomen experience no adverse career effects resulting from their pregnancies or postpartum periods. The Committee requested information on the following: (1) the safeguards to prevent servicewomen from being adversely affected because of pregnancy/postpartum; (2) the trainings that commanders and supervisors receive regarding how to address pregnancy/postpartum in their units and whether this training includes how to prevent and mitigate negative attitudes and bias toward pregnant/postpartum servicewomen; (3) whether each Service has any measures to track career progression and promotion of pregnant servicewomen; (4) whether each Service has conducted any surveys or undertaken other measures to solicit feedback from servicewomen about their workplace and career experiences as a result of their pregnancy and/or postpartum leave/lactation requirements and the findings of those surveys; (5) how each Service makes reassignment determinations when servicewomen must be temporarily reassigned to other duties because of pregnancy, regardless of whether for individual or occupational-wide profile reasons, and who within the command has decision authority for such reassignments; (6) how each Service makes reassignment determinations for servicewomen who must be reassigned while on postpartum operational deferment and who within the command has decision authority for such reassignments; (7) each Services' physical fitness testing requirements and deferment period for pregnant and postpartum servicewomen; and (8) specifically for the Space Force, how it plans to address pregnancy in the military.

Army

The Army briefer began by noting that pregnancy and postpartum put servicewomen in a temporary profile status because these are considered temporary medical situations. While these profiles would limit a Soldier's ability to do certain things, such as professional military education (PME) training, taking a physical fitness test, and deploying, these profiles do not

necessarily limit servicewomen in their daily duties. Regarding safeguards to prevent servicewomen from being adversely affected because of pregnancy, the Army is working on more permanent solutions by developing a policy that addresses any identified adverse effects to servicewomen limiting their attendance at PME training. In the interim, the Army is providing temporary promotions to servicewomen who are eligible, conditional on their completion of PME within a specified time. Recently, the Army has extended the deferment of physical fitness testing for postpartum female Soldiers from 6 months to 12 months.

The Army briefer mentioned that the Army does not have formalized pregnancy training for commanders. Given this, commanders are required to familiarize themselves with the medical regulations to ensure readiness in their organization. With the DoD update to the equal opportunity policy to prohibit pregnancy-based discrimination, the Army Military Equal Opportunity's (MEO) annual training will include pregnancy discrimination.

The Army briefer noted the Army does not track a Soldier's career progression and promotions based on their pregnancy and reiterated that pregnancy is a temporary condition that resolves itself over time. The Army has not conducted surveys specific to pregnancy and/or postpartum leave and/or lactation. However, a recent survey (the Department of the Army Career Engagement Survey) included one question related to pregnancy in which Service members were asked how important certain factors were in their decision to separate from the Army. The Army briefer reported 25 percent of female Soldiers compared to roughly 10 percent of male Soldiers responded that "Treatment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, genetic information, or pregnancy" in the workplace was an extremely important (12.77 percent) or important (12.68 percent) reason to leave the Army. Of those who indicated it was an extremely important reason to leave, 38.1 percent of women and 12.7 percent of men indicated that pregnancy in the workplace contributed to their answer. Data from this survey also indicate the most important reasons to leave the Army for both men and women were related to the effects on their families.

The Army briefer reported that it is not standard practice to temporarily reassign pregnant or postpartum servicewomen at the enterprise level. Given this, commanders will work with the medical treatment provider to temporarily reassign servicewomen who may not be able to perform a specific duty because of their medical limitations. The Army briefer reiterated that these temporary assignments are done to protect the Service member. While a unit can request that a servicewomen stay in the unit to help accomplish the mission, this request would not be typically related to pregnancy or postpartum specifically. Using the example of a drill instructor, the Army briefer mentioned that when servicewomen in positions of significant trust become pregnant, they will receive instructions to report back to their duties or school, as applicable, normally 6 months after anticipated delivery. The Army also does not have a policy specifically addressing pregnancy in evaluation reports. The Army briefer added that the Army does not reassign servicewomen while on postpartum operational deferments.

The Army briefer concluded the presentation by addressing physical fitness testing for pregnant and postpartum servicewomen. With the implementation of the ACFT, the Army has extended the deferment of physical fitness testing for postpartum female Soldiers from 6 months to 12 months. The Army medical community is reviewing these regulations to ensure they benefit all Service members, not just servicewomen, with profiles for medical conditions.

Navy

The Navy briefer opened the presentation by enumerating safeguards the Navy has to prevent servicewomen from being adversely affected because of pregnancy and postpartum. Pregnant or postpartum servicewomen can work with their detailers to receive operational deferment tours for 12 months, protecting them from all transfers. Postpartum servicewomen may also request a waiver to remain onboard an operational command. Dual-military families are also eligible for co-location. Pregnant or postpartum servicewomen receive a waiver for body composition and physical readiness test for 9 months.

The Navy briefer reported the Navy does not have specific training that commanders and supervisors receive regarding how to address pregnancy/postpartum in their units. However, commanders are strongly encouraged to establish a Command Advisor on Parenthood and Pregnancy (CAPP). The job of the CAPP is to provide information and guidance to the leadership triad (i.e., the CO, executive officer, and command master chief) and to Sailors to ensure they receive proper counseling, training, and guidance to understand the rights and responsibilities that are afforded to them. The CAPP creates a network between the fleet and family support center. The Navy briefer also mentioned that the CIP allows Sailors to transfer out of the Active Component for up to 3 years while still receiving full health coverage and base privileges.

The Navy does not actively track career progression and promotion of pregnant servicewomen. The Navy briefer reported that Task Force One Navy held a listening session for female Sailors and received feedback on family planning, having access to female role models, and child care challenges. The report detailing the findings of this listening session will be shared with the Culture of Excellence Governance Board in the next few weeks. The Navy also conducts the biennial Personal and Professional Choices Survey, which includes sections on pregnancy, workplace experiences during pregnancy, postpartum leave, and lactation requirements. The 2020 survey recently closed, and the results have not yet been released. The Navy briefer reported that results from the 2018 survey indicated that—

- Compared with 55 percent of women, 67 percent of men agreed that their command is supportive of pregnant female Sailors.
- Those with children were more likely to agree that their command is supportive of pregnant female Sailors (69 percent compared with 53 percent of those without children).
- Sixty percent of the survey participants support operational deferments for female Sailors (56 percent of men and 69 percent of women).
- In terms of the implications of parenthood for female Sailors, less than half (36 percent) of survey participants agreed that having a child does not negatively impact a female Sailor's career (42 percent of men and 26 percent of women).
- Fifty-three percent of women disagreed with a statement suggesting that there is a perception among female personnel that having a child or children detrimentally affects female Sailors' careers.

The Navy briefer noted reassignment determinations for enlisted Sailors are based on operational or shore assignment at time of pregnancy. If a pregnant servicewoman is on a ship, this transfer must be completed by the 20th week of her pregnancy. For pregnant servicewomen in shore

assignments, their commands will submit transfer requests if their typical duties involve health hazardous or exempt activities, such as scuba diving. If the servicewoman agrees with the transfer assignment, she works with the Navy Personnel Command (NAVPERSCOM) and her medical provider to make that transition. In terms of performance evaluation reports, the Navy briefer reported that these are submitted as Detachment of Individual reports and do not disclose that the servicewoman is pregnant. NAVPERSCOM guidance specifies that COs cannot adversely rate a servicewoman because of her pregnancy.

Postpartum servicewomen are deferred from all transfers to operational assignments for 12 months following delivery. They are also exempt from participating in short underway and temporary additional duty periods. Servicewomen who give birth to a stillborn child are entitled to 6 months of operational deferment. Regarding opportunities to provide input to reassignments, postpartum servicewomen may request to terminate deferment at any point after their convalescent leave, and detailers work to ensure that the billet matches their rate. The Navy briefer concluded the presentation by reporting the physical fitness testing requirements and deferment period for pregnant and postpartum servicewomen. Pregnant and postpartum servicewomen are exempt from both portions of the physical fitness testing, and they are not required to participate in command or unit physical fitness training. Given this, they are permitted to participate in command or unit physical fitness training if they are comfortable doing so and are following the guidance of their healthcare provider. The exemption for postpartum servicewomen expires 9 months following the delivery of their child.

Marines

The Marine Corps briefer opened the presentation by reporting that the newly revised Marine Corps policy dictates that COs and supervisors must ensure that pregnant and postpartum Marines are not adversely evaluated or impacted as a consequence of pregnancy or postpartum complications. The Marine Corps briefer mentioned that all Marines—enlisted and officer—receive entry-level training on parenthood and pregnancy. This training is provided on an annual basis. However, there is no specific training directed at preventing or mitigating negative attitudes and bias toward pregnant or postpartum Marines.

Like the Army and Navy briefers, the Marine Corps briefer reported that it does not have any measures to track career progression or promotion of pregnant Marines. The Marine Corps also has not conducted a survey or taken any measures to solicit feedback about workplace or career experiences as a result of pregnancy. The Marine Corps briefer mentioned that the Marine Corps conducted a primary caregiver survey to determine interest in the CIP and using annual leave as options to extend the time off after the birth/adoption of a child. Results from this survey indicate that a majority of respondents reported that they would use 8 weeks of annual leave if allowed before returning to duty. When asked how much time the Service member would need after the birth event, most respondents indicated they would need either 12 months or 52 weeks before returning to duty. Results from the survey also indicated respondents preferred a 1:1 payback over the current 2:1 payback for time taken through CIP. The Marine Corps briefer noted the Marine Corps is in favor of this alternative payback structure.

For both pregnant and postpartum servicewomen, reassignment determinations are made based on any adverse effects on the pregnant servicewoman's health, the health of her child, or the health of her fellow Marines. Servicewomen may provide input on their reassignments; however, there is no guarantee of special consideration in duty assignments or duty stations. Commanding

officers have the decision authority to only reassign pregnant and postpartum servicewomen within their command/unit and only between units at the same permanent duty station. The Marine Corps briefer mentioned that female Marines who are transferred from a unit because of pregnancy will be reassigned to the same billet in the same command or an equivalent billet in a command of the same type. The Marine Corps briefer added that evaluation reports are handled no differently after reassignment and are based only on demonstrated performance.

Pregnant Marines are exempt from physical fitness requirements until 9 months after delivery. The briefer reported that the Marine Corps is working to extend that timeline to either 1 year or 15 months after delivery.

Air Force

The Air Force briefer reported there are four safeguards the Air Force has established to prevent servicewomen from being adversely affected because of pregnancy or postpartum: (1) the Air Force has updated its Total Force Development policy to allow pregnant airmen to attend PME without a requirement to request an exception to policy; (2) it has improved flexibility for time afforded to breastfeeding mothers for breastmilk expression and includes provision for breastmilk storage while on temporary duty assignments; (3) it updated its policy to allow base medical professionals to approve waivers for uncomplicated pregnancy (12–28 weeks gestation), increasing flight opportunities for those servicewomen; and (4) it updated its policy to include logged simulated flight time toward Operational Flying Duty Accumulator requirements, aviation incentive pay entitlement, and aeronautical ratings for rated officers.

The Air Force briefer reported that while the Air Force does not currently have any formal training for commanders and supervisors addressing pregnancy and postpartum in their units, they are collaborating with the Women's Initiatives Team (WIT, an Air Force Barrier Analysis Working Group) to develop appropriate content, including information on lactation pods, to be incorporated in all levels of leadership training. Similarly, the Air Force does not currently have any measures to track career progression and promotion of pregnant servicewomen, but it will work with WIT to determine whether measures can be developed. The Air Force briefer reported that the Air Force has not conducted any surveys or undertaken other measures to solicit feedback from servicewomen about their workplace and career experiences as a result of their pregnancy and/or postpartum leave/lactation requirements, but that it will work with WIT regarding a related project in the future.

The Air Force briefer mentioned the Air Force does not typically reassign a permanent change of station (PCS) to a pregnant servicewoman. If the servicewoman is overseas, her assignment will be curtailed if her child will be placed out for adoption, there is a lack of obstetrical care or other medical considerations, she is assigned to a dependent-restricted location or a location where unaccompanied tour length is less than 18 months, or the servicewoman is not eligible, cannot qualify for, or is not permitted to serve an accompanied tour. A pregnant servicewoman in a mandatory PCS status will not be reassigned to any overseas locations or to any location within the continental United States during the 12 weeks before or the 12 weeks after her expected delivery date. However, pregnant servicewomen may request an exception be made so that they can proceed with the PCS. Postpartum servicewomen receive deferrals from PCS during the first year following the birth of their child.

Pregnant servicewomen are exempt from physical fitness assessments during their pregnancy. Postpartum servicewomen are also exempt from physical fitness assessments for 12 months if

their pregnancy lasted 20 weeks or longer, 6 months if their pregnancy lasted between 12 and 20 weeks, and 2 months if their pregnancy lasted less than 12 weeks.

Space Force

The Space Force briefer opened the presentation by mentioning the Space Force defers to the Air Force instructions regarding policies and processes related to pregnancy and/or postpartum profiles. The Space Force briefer continued to say that the Space Force is in the process of analyzing and identifying specific areas of improvement. The Space Force is interested in addressing negative biases directly and will be creating medical briefings for all commander courses so that commanders and supervisors are trained on their rights and responsibilities and barriers to preventing and mitigating negative attitudes and bias towards pregnant or postpartum servicewomen.

The Space Force briefer identified that the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) currently prohibits access to the type of information needed to execute tracking and measurement by career field managers or through a centralized process. Given this, the Space Force wants to create an innovative process to track and identify any negative trends for servicewomen. The Space Force also plans to conduct surveys to capitalize on feedback generated at all echelons and will update the Committee as those surveys become available.

The Space Force briefer noted reassignment decisions for pregnant servicewomen are typically made between the Service member and her commander. Servicewomen are kept in their current career field with some duty limitations to protect the health of the mother and child. Changes to duties to accommodate the updated limitations of the servicewoman are made by her CO, and servicewomen can provide input on the temporary administrative duties they are assigned. While evaluation reports focus on assessing the member's updated duties, the Space Force plans to review that process to ensure fairness and leverage best practices and lessons learned from its sister Services. Echoing the Air Force policy, the Space Force briefer noted servicewomen are placed on a physical fitness assessment deferment for 60 days, 6 months, or 12 months following a medical review.

Coast Guard

The Coast Guard briefer reported there are four safeguards the Coast Guard has established to prevent servicewomen from being adversely affected because of pregnancy or postpartum: (1) Primary (42 days) and Secondary (21 days) Caregiver Leave, and Maternity Convalescent Leave (42 days); (2) Postpartum Active Duty servicewomen may defer assignments for up to 1 year following childbirth; Reserve servicewomen may defer involuntary mobilization assignments for up to 1 year following childbirth; (3) Service members are permitted to use a flexible work schedule at the discretion of the CO/officer in charge for the first year immediately following the birth or adoption of a child; and (4) units are authorized to backfill for members on prenatal, maternity convalescent, or primary caregiver leave for a period of up to 120 days of support. This backfill is provided by Service members in the Reserve Component.

Like the other Military Services, the Coast Guard does not provide standardized training to commanders and supervisors on how to mitigate negative attitudes or biases towards pregnancy or postpartum. Instead, the contents of the Commandant Instruction Pregnancy in the Coast Guard is the principal vehicle used throughout the Service to ensure unit command cadre and supervisors are provided guidance regarding how to address pregnancy and postpartum related

matters at their units. This policy dictates that pregnancy status should not adversely affect a servicewoman's career progression and all Coast Guard unit commanders, COs, officers in charge, deputy/assistant commandants, and chiefs of headquarters staff elements have to comply with this policy.

Similar to the other Military Services, the Coast Guard does not currently track the career progression and promotion of pregnant servicewomen. The Coast Guard briefer reported that the Coast Guard has not conducted surveys or undertaken measures to solicit feedback from servicewomen specifically about their workplace and career experiences as a result of pregnancy and/or postpartum leave/lactation requirements.

The Coast Guard does not allow pregnant servicewomen to perform physical duties that could threaten the pregnancy or assign pregnant women beyond the availability of medical attention. While commanders may recommend certain Service members for specific assignments, the Enlisted Personnel Management and Officer Personnel Management divisions make the ultimate determinations when and where servicewomen must be temporarily reassigned because of pregnancy. Servicewomen are deferred from ship duty or overseas assignments during pregnancy and for 6 months after childbirth. Servicewomen who are already assigned on ship duty are reassigned to shore duty by the 20th week of their pregnancies. Servicewomen who are already assigned to overseas locations where adequate housing and medical facilities exist will remain in that location until they have completed their tour. If adequate housing and medical facilities do not exist, pregnant servicewomen are transferred to locations where adequate facilities exist. During this reassignment process, servicewomen are encouraged to reach out to the assignment office to discuss their career goals and desires for assignment.

The Coast Guard briefer noted pregnant servicewomen do not receive adverse evaluations solely for their temporary condition. Postpartum servicewomen may elect to voluntarily mobilize within the first year following delivery if cleared by a medical officer and with approval from the first O-6/GS-15 in the chain of command. Like their pregnant counterparts, postpartum servicewomen requesting transfer are encouraged to reach out to the assignment office to discuss their career goals and desires for assignment.

The Coast Guard briefer concluded the presentation by acknowledging that only a small number of units require physical fitness testing. If a woman assigned to one of these units becomes pregnant, she will likely be reassigned. If they are not transferred from this unit, they will be exempt from the testing requirements unless approved by a physician.

Discussion

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked the Air Force and Coast Guard briefers to elaborate on the details of their flextime policy to allow for breastfeeding or delayed return to work. The Air Force briefer was unable to expand on the policy. The Coast Guard briefer mentioned that their leave policy was updated in June 2019 to include the flextime option for 1 year immediately following the birth of a child. The Coast Guard briefer said that all Service members are able to use a flextime work schedule at the discretion of the commander. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn confirmed this is still a full duty requirement, meaning that those Service members continue to work the same number of hours but with a shifted start and end time.

MG (Ret.) Alexander asked the Coast Guard briefer whether they thought the Coast Guard should begin tracking the career trajectory of pregnant and postpartum servicewomen. The Coast

Guard briefer said that while the Coast Guard does not currently have a process in place, it will be looking into the possibility of implementing something like that in the future.

Gen (Ret.) Wolfenbarger asked the other briefers whether the Military Services were considering this implementation. The Army briefer reiterated that the Army looks at pregnancy as a temporary medical condition. The Army briefer acknowledged that it is straightforward to pull data on the ethnicity and gender of the Service member because these are unlikely to change over that Service member's career. The Army briefer reported that it would be more difficult to pull data for temporary information. This would involve integrating the medical system with the personnel system. The Army briefer reported that this could be cumbersome and could lead to errors in reporting. In terms of implementation, the Army briefer reiterated that the Diversity and Inclusion team for the Assistant Secretary of the Army (M&RA) is taking many things into consideration and that pregnancy may be included but did not have further information at this time.

The Marine Corps briefer echoed the Army briefer, adding that in their experience, they had not heard many concerns in the Marine Corps related to career progression of pregnant or postpartum servicewomen outside of aviation. The briefer noted it would be interesting to see these data.

The Air Force briefer agreed that this should be tracked, adding that the WIT has been very vocal when voicing its concerns over the career progression of pregnant or postpartum servicewomen. The Air Force briefer also mentioned this is a topic that the Air Force diversity initiatives program should look more into.

The Space Force briefer reiterated that the Space Force is currently reviewing the best way to track this. As the briefer mentioned earlier, HIPAA is serving as a barrier to an integration of the medical and administrative personnel system. For this reason, the Space Force believes that surveys and the WIT will be critical. The Space Force briefer added that the Service knows servicewomen may experience adverse career effects resulting from their pregnancy or postpartum periods. The next steps are to identify innovative ways to track the adverse effects and eradicate them. The Navy briefer mentioned that they will work with their leadership and legal team to see if it is possible to track this data. The second Navy briefer from the Office of Inclusion and Diversity added that pregnancy is a temporary medical condition, not a disability. The goal of the Office of Inclusion and Diversity is to look at all Sailors as being able to contribute to the Military Service.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked whether any of the Military Services track or have a way to identify complaints through the MEO program or another system about pregnancy discrimination because pregnancy discrimination was not previously a part of the DoD equal opportunity policy. The Army briefer reported that the Service likely did not have any data. In the future, the Army could provide data through the MEO program. The Navy and Marine Corps briefers were unsure if such data exist.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn was surprised to hear that HIPAA was serving as a barrier to tracking the career trajectory of pregnant and postpartum Service members. The Space Force briefer mentioned HIPAA would prevent personnel other than immediate command from knowing whether a servicewoman was pregnant, her medical condition, and the status and timeline of that pregnancy. While acknowledging the benefits of HIPAA, the Space Force briefer noted that to track career progression as it pertains to personnel issues, such as discrimination or adverse

actions, it is important to be able to disaggregate and further explore the data. The Space Force briefer continued that while each of the other Services refers to pregnancy as a temporary condition, it has permanent effects on servicewomen's careers. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn confirmed with each of the briefers that the Military Services have the ability to determine whether a servicewoman has a dependent.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn clarified with the Army briefer the meaning of one of the sentences on the Army presentation: "Assuming the question is in relation to servicewomen continuing on the same promotion and developmental timeline as their male counterparts, pregnancy/postpartum must be reviewed as a temporary medical situation." The Army briefer explained the wording was to ensure the question was related to promotion specifically.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn asked the Navy briefer when the results of the Task Force One Navy listening sessions and biennial Personal and Professional Choices Survey will be available. The Navy briefer responded that they were unsure of the timeline for public dissemination, but the results will be reviewed internally next month and recommendations are due to the Chief of Naval Operations in the next few weeks.

Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn noted the Committee is aware of servicewomen who become pregnant while on ship duty and are reassigned to a unit that is primarily composed of pregnant servicewomen. She asked the Coast Guard and Navy briefers about the process for reassignment for servicewomen and how they ensure these reassignments have meaningful duties.

The second Navy briefer responded that for reassignments while at sea, the rating detailers work with the Deployability Assessment and Assignment Branch to take into consideration the servicewomen's current location, their rating so that they can serve in an assignment with a like duty, their previous duties, and their end of active obligated service. The Navy also takes into consideration the equitable distribution of pregnant enlisted servicewomen in the area and their proximity to a military treatment facility based on the needs of that pregnant servicewoman. The Coast Guard briefer added that typically, if a servicewoman who is assigned to a float unit learns she is pregnant, her chain of command will work with the assignment office to have her reassigned prior to the 20th week of her pregnancy. Typically, the servicewoman will be reassigned to the closest Coast Guard shore unit. The briefer continued that frequently, float units are subordinate commands to a larger shore unit. In these cases, the servicewoman will be reassigned to that parent shore command. Brig Gen (Ret.) Sanborn confirmed with the Navy and Coast Guard briefers that their procedure is for reassignment decisions to be made by a detailer, not the local command.

RFIs 1, 2, and 3

CO-LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHIC STABILITY RETENTION INITIATIVES (R&R)

In 2017, the Committee made three recommendations on potential policy updates to dual-military co-location:

- The Secretary of Defense should direct the Military Services to review and consider revising their active duty dual-military co-location policies to incorporate the best practice from the Navy of establishing additional oversight from a higher-level authority should an assignment manager/detailer be unable to accommodate co-location.
- The Secretary of Defense should consider establishing a DoD policy that would make it mandatory for assignment managers/detailers to work across the Military Services to maximize the co-location of inter-Service active duty dual-military couples.
- The Secretary of Defense should consider expanding the co-location policy to include any active duty dual-military parents, regardless of marital status, who share parental custody of the same minor child(ren) and desire to be assigned within the same geographic location for the benefit of his and/or her minor child(ren).

To date, only the Air Force has revised their co-location policy to assign Service members with court-ordered child custody decrees near their children. DACOWITS continues to be interested in the retention of servicewomen and believes co-location and geographic stability are contributing factors to success in this area.

RFI 1

The Committee requests a **written response** from the **Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)** to provide statistics on the number/percentage of dual-military co-located Service members for each Service branch broken down by gender, race, ethnicity, and grade from 2009-2019.

Organization	Description
Defense Manpower Data Center	The DMDC provided the Committee with data broken down as specified in this RFI.

RFI 2

The Committee requests a **written response** from the **Military Services (to include the Coast Guard and Space Force)** on the following:

- a. Provide any current or planned policies regarding geographic stability for Service members.
- b. Identify criteria and process for considering exceptions to policy and approval.
- c. Is geographic stability being used as an incentive for personnel retention? Include any changes in trends related to promotion, professional development, schooling, assignments, etc.

Organization	Description
Air Force	The Air Force provided the Committee with responses to some of the questions in this RFI.
Army	The Army provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.
Coast Guard	The Coast Guard provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.
Marine Corps	The Marine Corps provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.
Navy	The Navy provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.
Space Force	The Space Force provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.

RFI 3	
The Committee request a written response from the Air Force on their recent Total Force crossflow policy changes. Provide details on the new policy; the rationale for the change; and any expectations relative to improved retention	
Organization	Description
Air Force	The Air Force provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.

RFI 4	
INCLUSIVITY IN THE SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM (R&R)	
In 2014, DACOWITS began studying the Military Selective Service Act (MSSA). In 2014, the Committee reviewed the SSS' 2013 Annual Report and received a briefing on the constitutionality of the MSSA from the DoD Office of General Counsel. In 2015, the Committee made the following recommendation: <i>The Secretary of Defense should recommend legislation that mandates women between the ages of 18 and 26 fulfill the same Selective Service registration requirements as men.</i>	
In 2017, the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service was established by Congress to review the military Selective Service process and to consider methods to increase participation in military, national, and public service. In September 2020 , the Commission briefed DACOWITS on its recommendations to Congress. During the 2021 research year, the Committee will reexamine the impacts of including women in the MSSA	

RFI 4	
The Committee requests a written response from the Department of Defense on the Department's policy and stated position regarding inclusion of women in the MSSA.	
Organization	Description
DoD	The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI and attached the 2017 Congressional Report on the purpose and utility of a registration system for Military Service.

RFI 6	
WOMEN IN SPACE (R&R)	
DACOWITS recognizes that the standing up of a new Service enables key opportunities to shape a talent-driven and diverse workforce that can incorporate modern policies relating to recruitment and retention. In March 2020 , DACOWITS was briefed that the U.S. Space Force (USSF) intends to utilize innovative career models and personnel processes based on a 21st century approach to Human Capital Management, which include added flexibility for women to pursue opportunities both within and outside of the Space Force; opportunities in highly technical fields for women with STEM backgrounds; Service transfer options to leverage a broad range of skill sets and experiences; offering opportunities for women to serve in leadership roles; and a unique shaping opportunity to establish a values-based culture that emphasizes equal opportunity, fair treatment, and respect.	

RFI 6	
The Committee requests a written response from the Coast Guard on any lessons learned (positive and/or negative) from the creation of the Department of Homeland Security that could be leveraged by the USSF. Please include any innovative approaches to expanding gender diversity at all levels within the organization.	
Organization	Description
Coast Guard	The Coast Guard provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI. While doing so, it noted that it is unaware of the Coast Guard's participation in creating DHS policies or opportunities for expanding gender diversity.

RFI 7

ARMY COMBAT FITNESS TEST (ACFT) (E&I)

During 2020, the Committee examined the development and preliminary implementation of the new age- and gender-neutral Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), which is slated to replace the nearly 40-year-old Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and become the new official test of record. For the 2021 research year, the Committee will continue to review this topic. Of note, the [NDAA for FY21, Sec. 592](#), states the Army cannot implement the ACFT until a study is conducted by an independent entity.

RFI 7

The Committee requests a **written response** from **Army** on the following: The results of the University of Iowa’s independent validation of the ACFT baseline performance standards, to include any assessment that addressed physiological gender differences

Organization	Description
Army	The Army provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.

RFIs 8 and 10

WOMEN IN AVIATION (E&I)

During 2020, the Committee examined women in aviation. For the 2021 research year, the Committee will continue to review this topic. The Committee remains concerned that women have been serving as aviators since the 1970s and that despite the Combat Exclusion policy being lifted in 1993, the overall percentage of female aviators remains low in comparison with their male counterparts.

RFI 8

As a follow-up to the [December 2019 response to RFI 5A](#), the Committee requests an updated **written response** from **Navy and Marine Corps** on the following:

- a. The total number of (officer) pilots by rank, broken out by gender. In addition, provide the total number of designated female pilots (officers) by platform. Provide whole numbers, as well as the percent of the total community, broken out by rank and gender.
- b. The total number of Naval Flight Officers (NFOs) by rank, broken out by gender. In addition, provide the total number of designated female NFOs by platform. Provide whole numbers, as well as the percent of total community, and breakdown by rank.

Organization	Description
Marine Corps	The Marine Corps provided the Committee with data broken out as specified in this RFI.
Navy	The Navy provided the Committee with data broken out as specified in this RFI.

RFI 10

The Committee is interested in recruitment and retention of female officer aviators (paygrades O1-O9) and the initiatives in place to encourage female aviators to remain in on Active Duty at the end of their service commitment. Despite female aviators being eligible to fly non-combat aircraft for 45 years and combat aircraft for 26 years, only a few have advanced to the highest ranks, and the overall percentage of senior women in aviation remains low.

The Committee requests a **written response** from the **Military Services (to include the Coast Guard)** to address the following:

- a. What is your Service doing to attract more female officer pilots? Provide the annual accession rates for each of the last 10 years for female officer pilots.
- b. Provide annual retention rates for each of the last 10 years for female officer pilots who remained on Active Duty upon the completion of their Service obligation. Compare to retention rates for male pilots. In addition, please provide a separate breakdown for NFOs, Combat Systems Officers, and Air Battle Managers.
- c. Discuss any ongoing initiatives to improve female aviator retention.
- d. What monetary incentive bonuses are available for aviators to remain on Active Duty beyond their service obligation? What has the take rate been by gender?

Organization	Description
Air Force	The Air Force provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.
Army	The Army provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.
Coast Guard	The Coast Guard provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.
Marine Corps	The Marine Corps provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.
Navy	The Navy provided the Committee with responses to all the questions in this RFI.

RFI 13

Over the past few decades, the Committee has examined pregnancy and parenthood issues, resulting in many recommendations. For 2021, the Committee will examine the impacts of pregnancy and the postpartum period on a servicewoman’s ability to progress in her military career, to include pregnancy discrimination.

During the [September 2020 business meeting in response to RFI 6](#), the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) provided a briefing and indicated that the DoDI 1350.02, Military Equal Opportunity Program, is currently under review and that pregnancy discrimination will be added as a subset of sex discrimination – pending final coordination and approval.

The Committee requests that **ODEI** provide a copy of the newly revised DoDI 1350.02 and an accompanying **written response** that explains the new provisions related to pregnancy discrimination, the deadline for Service implementation, and any measures directed to be taken by the Services.

Organization	Description
Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI)	ODEI provided the Committee with the requested policy document and responses to all the questions in this RFI.

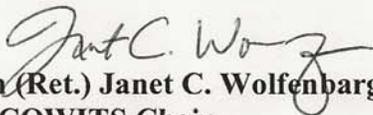
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Date: 2021.02.09 12:35:14 -05'00'

**COL R. Elaine Freeman, USA
DACOWITS Military Director &
Designated Federal Officer**

Report Certified by:


**Gen (Ret.) Janet C. Wolfenbarger, USAF
DACOWITS Chair**

Committee Members in Attendance:

MG (Ret.) George Alexander, ANG
CAPT (Ret.) Kenneth J. Barrett, USN
VADM (Ret.) Robin Braun, USN
Lt Gen (Ret.) Judith A. Fedder, USAF
COL (Ret.) Many-Bears Grinder, USA
CMDM (Ret.) Octavia Harris, USN
MG (Ret.) Ronald Johnson, USA
Ms. Robin Kelleher

MAJ (Ret.) Priscilla W. Locke, USA
LTG (Ret.) Kevin W. Mangum, USA
Brig Gen (Ret.) Jariisse J. Sanborn, USAF
BG (Ret.) Allyson R. Solomon, ANG
RADM (Ret.) Cari B. Thomas, USCG
FLTCM (Ret.) Susan Whitman, USN
Gen (Ret.) Janet C. Wolfenbarger, USAF

Ex-Officio in Attendance:

Ms. Jacquelyn D. Hayes-Byrd, Executive Director, Department of Veterans Affairs' Center for Women Veterans (USAF Ret.)

Absent Member:

Ms. Therese A. Hughes