

RFI Category and Number: Gender Discrimination RFI #9

RFI Question:

The Committee requests a **briefing** from the **Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard** on the following:

- a. What policies and procedures are in place to prevent conscious and unconscious gender bias within the promotion process (e.g., performance evaluations, board screenings, etc.)?
- b. What gender specific demographic information has been removed from promotion packages (e.g., first and last names, gender pronouns, photographs, etc.)? Specifically, state whether any gender specific demographic information is still being included. If so, are there plans to remove gender specific demographic information? Provide projected timeline for each demographic modification.
- c. What other actions have been taken to prevent conscious and unconscious gender bias from factoring in promotion reviews/scoring?
- d. Since these actions were taken to reduce conscious and unconscious gender bias, provide trends that have emerged and data on the impact of these policies, instructions, or guidance on selection results.
- e. Provide copies of policies, instructions, or written guidance delivered to selection boards, nomination boards, or promotion boards intended to mitigate conscious and unconscious gender bias.

RFI Response:

- a. Updated Equal Opportunity and Diversity Guidance (Paragraph 6 in the attached Convening Order) is provided to all board members via the promotion selection board convening order guidance. The convening order articulates how diversity is the strength of our Nation and orders the board members to evaluate promotion selection board candidates without regard to “gender or gender identity,” among other diversity groups, based on the “impermissible considerations” defined. (see attached convening order)
- b. As of September 1, 2020, the Navy removed the official photograph in accordance with the attached SECDEF July 14, 2020 Memorandum, which “prohibited the use of the official photographs for all officer promotion selection boards and selection board processes pertaining to assignment, training, education, and command.” The Navy removed photos from all FY-22 promotion/selection boards via NAVADMIN 247/20 (03SEP20) and that removal remains in effect. Recommendations for the additional removal of other gender specific demographic information are being studied by the Institute of Defense Analysis (IDA), by order of SECDEF’s Diversity Working Group.
- c. Task Force One Navy (attached TF1N Final CNO Report) recommended the implementation of a bias awareness video, built on recommendations from a leading experts in reducing biases. The development of this bias awareness training for all board members prior to the board commencing deliberative discussions will help to ensure cognizance of potential biases, while providing methods to identify and reduce them during the selection board. The video script was developed, edited and approved by the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) through the Navy’s chain of command for implementation prior to the FY-23 Promotion Selection Board season (see attached bias video script). Additionally, selection board membership is required to the extent practicable, to match the diversity of the Navy. The Navy is currently 21% female, thereby requiring at least 21% female membership.
- d. Based on the limited selection board run-time that included these revised policies, statistical trends within the promotion selection board processes are negligible. Detailed and extensive diversity selection statistics for the officer and enlisted boards conducted between FY17 and FY-21 were provided to DACOWITS representatives in August 2022.
- e. Copies of the various documents mentioned above are attached.