

BACKGROUND PAPER
ON
PREGNANCY IN THE MILITARY

PURPOSE

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the Well-Being and Treatment (WB&T) Subcommittee will determine if there are gaps in institutional policies and procedures that obstruct pregnant servicewomen from progressing in their military career and recommend policy changes.

QUESTION #13

The Committee is interested in information the Military Services may have regarding the impact of pregnancy on retention and career advancement of servicewomen. The committee requests a written response from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and National Guard addressing the following:

a. What complaint channels are or will be available to Service members to report violations of the pregnancy discrimination policy, and how will complaining Service members be protected from retaliation?

- As described in DAFI 36-2710, *Equal Opportunity Program*, Service members can file a military equal opportunity (MEO) formal or informal complaint alleging sex (pregnancy) discrimination and/or file an institutional discrimination complaint alleging unlawful discrimination against a DAF headquarters, major command, or field command level policy, directive, or procedure with their local EO office. Moreover, Service members can directly report the allegation to their commander to be addressed as a commander worked issue and/or commander directed investigation when that Service member has not filed a MEO complaint with the EO office. The DAFI 36-2710, *Equal Opportunity Program*, also describes Service members' protections from, and avenues to address retaliation, which include immediately referring the Service member to the IG for investigation. Service members may also report allegations of retaliation to their local IG office, chain of command, or to the DAF IG hotline.

b. Number of complaints your Service has received in the last three (or more) fiscal years - by number, time in service, and percentage of all servicewomen - that report adverse actions, treatment or career impact related to pregnancy (to include childbirth/caregiver leave utilization, lactation accommodations, postpartum health conditions, etc.), as well as survey information/findings that report adverse pregnancy-related impacts or treatment.

- From fiscal year (FY) 2019 through 2021, there were 12 military equal opportunity (MEO) complaints alleging sex discrimination related to pregnancy filed by Servicewomen with DAF EO offices.

DAF Servicewomen MEO Complaints: Sex Discrimination (Pregnancy)			
FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	Total (FY 2019-2021)
4	4	4	12

Note: The DAF EO Program does not collect time in service data for MEO complaints

c. Statistics/exit survey data/other reflecting the number of servicewomen over the last three years, who have separated from the military for reasons related to pregnancy discrimination - by number, time in service, and percentage of all servicewomen.

- There is no specific exit survey data reflecting the number of servicewomen who have separated for reasons related to pregnancy discrimination.

d. Policies regarding female cadets/midshipmen at the Military Service Academies in the event they become pregnant. Are they required to resign or give up their children for adoption? May they continue their studies during the term of their pregnancy? What are the policies for male cadets who father children? Are any policy changes being considered? How many female cadets have been affected by these policies in the last five years? How many resigned from service?

- No response from the United States Air Force Academy at this time.