



DACOWITS RFI 11

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PREGNANCY IN THE MILITARY

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

The Committee continues to be concerned about the persistence of negative attitudes toward pregnancy and pregnant servicewomen in the military and the fact that their career progression may be adversely impacted by such attitudes. The DoD Military Equal Opportunity Program instruction (DoDI 1350.02) was revised in September 2020 to include pregnancy as a form of prohibited discrimination. Additionally, the Secretary of Defense's Career Enhancement of Pregnant U.S. Service Members memorandum to the Services (dated November 3, 2020) directed a review of all Service directives, policies, and instructions not later than December 1, 2020, and a follow-on briefing of actions taken to implement the direction given by the Secretary to eliminate unnecessary obstacles and limitations on career development or progression of pregnant servicewomen. The Committee will examine pregnancy discrimination in the Services and, to that end, is interested in learning about Service actions, education, and other initiatives to eliminate pregnancy discrimination and to address the cultural bias and stigma that reportedly persists.



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The Committee requests a briefing from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and National Guard identifying initiatives and actions, anticipated or taken, to affect the Secretary's direction in the November 3, 2020, memorandum. In your responses, please address the following:

- a. All Service actions taken or anticipated to comply with the SecDef's direction, to include legislative changes made or proposed, and the estimated time for implementation.
- b. Please provide a copy of the follow-on briefing provided to the SecDef pursuant to his November 2020 memorandum.
- c. How will the Services monitor, track, and enforce policy compliance?
- d. When will/did training begin to educate Service members that pregnancy discrimination is prohibited and on how to address pregnancy in their units? What audiences will be offered this training? Does this training include how to prevent and mitigate negative attitudes and bias toward pregnant and postpartum servicewomen?
- e. Does your Service have any measures in place to track career progression and promotion of pregnant and postpartum servicewomen? If so, what are they? What are the trends?
- f. Has your Service conducted or commissioned any surveys, studies, or taken other measures to solicit feedback from servicewomen about workplace and career experiences as a result of their pregnancy and/or postpartum leave and/or breastfeeding/lactation needs? If so, what were the key findings?



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- **11a. All Service actions taken or anticipated to comply with the SecDef's direction, to include legislative changes made or proposed, and the estimated time for implementation.**
- The Navy Harassment Prevention and Military Equal Opportunity Program Manual, OPNAVINST 5354.1H, was revised in 2021 to include pregnancy as a form of prohibited discrimination.



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- **11b. Please provide a copy of the follow-on briefing provided to the SecDef pursuant to his November 2020 memorandum.**

- No information found.



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11c. How will the Services monitor, track, and enforce policy compliance?

- The OPNAVINST 5354.1H also provides oversight and guidance to the harassment prevention and military equal opportunity program.
- The policy outlines programmatic responsibilities and requirements. It directs that a commander ensures his or her subordinate commands equal opportunity programs are assessed every two years.



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- **11d. When will/did training begin to educate Service members that pregnancy discrimination is prohibited and on how to address pregnancy in their units? What audiences will be offered this training? Does this training include how to prevent and mitigate negative attitudes and bias toward pregnant and postpartum servicewomen?**

Training begins at the accession point with new Recruits, Midshipmen, and Officer Candidates.

- **US Naval Academy:** Current training does include prevention methods or negative attitudes or bias towards servicewomen. Training focus on definition of, identification of and reporting of gender bias and discrimination towards all service men and women.
- **Navy Recruiting Command:**
 - Recruit Training (Enlisted): Covered in OPNAVINST 5354.1
 - Officer Training: Harassment Prevention and Military Equal Opportunity (Formerly Command Managed Equal Opportunity)

Fleet:

- Service member training is delivered through the Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Resolution Options general military training.
- This training is currently delivered at commander discretion.



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- **11e. Does your Service have any measures in place to track career progression and promotion of pregnant and postpartum servicewomen? If so, what are they? What are the trends?**

- Navy tracks talent management through rate/community designators for progression and promotion of all service members via rating milestones.



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- **11f. Has your Service conducted or commissioned any surveys, studies, or taken other measures to solicit feedback from servicewomen about workplace and career experiences as a result of their pregnancy and/or postpartum leave and/or breastfeeding/lactation needs? If so, what were the key findings?**

The Navy conducts an annual engagement survey called the Health of the Force. Every other year, the focus of this survey is on issues and policies relating to service members personal lives and work/life balance including pregnancy, parental leave, and related topics. The Navy is currently midway through the 2022 edition of this HOF-P survey. We have data from 2016, 2018 and 2020.

On Career Experiences:

In 2020, 48% of the female participants reported they have been pregnant since joining the Navy. Fifty percent of these report they continued to feel valued by their command (CMD) after informing them of their pregnancy; slight decrease from 2018 when 59% agreed. Compared to 34% in 2018, 32% of female participants who have been pregnant in the 2020 survey agreed the position they transferred to (if necessary) during pregnancy was career enhancing.



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- **11f. Has your Service conducted or commissioned any surveys, studies, or taken other measures to solicit feedback from servicewomen about workplace and career experiences as a result of their pregnancy and/or postpartum leave and/or breastfeeding/lactation needs? If so, what were the key findings?**

On Command Support during Pregnancy:

In 2020, 41% of female and 55% of male survey participants agree that their command is supportive of pregnant female Sailors. This constitutes a decline from the 2018 survey results when 55% of female and 67% of male survey participants agree their CMD is supportive of pregnant female Sailors. To provide some context, there has been a comparable decline in the percentage of male and female participants who agree their CMD is supportive of male Sailors who take caregiver leave after birth/adoption of child. The percentage of men who agree their CMD supports male Sailors taking full amount of caregiver leave declined from 64% to 48% between 2018 and 2020; percentage of female participants who agree with this statement declined from 63% to 50%.

On Parental Leave:

In 2020, 72% of female and 65% of male participants (including those who do not yet have children) report they would be somewhat or very comfortable taking the full amount of parental leave available to them after the birth or adoption of a child. Focusing on participants with children, 35% of women and 53% of men were somewhat or very dissatisfied with the amount of leave they were able to take after the birth/adoption of most recent child.



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- 11f. Has your Service conducted or commissioned any surveys, studies, or taken other measures to solicit feedback from servicewomen about workplace and career experiences as a result of their pregnancy and/or postpartum leave and/or breastfeeding/lactation needs? If so, what were the key findings?

On Breastfeeding and Lactation:

- We included questions about breastfeeding in the 2016 and 2018 surveys; these questions are also in the 2022 survey that is underway. In terms of time to pump at work, 10% of female participants in 2016 and 12% in 2018 reported they were not given time to breastfeed/pump at work.
- In 2018, 23% had time to pump during breaks or meals and 65% report they were able to take time whenever they needed to pump. In 2018, of those participants who breastfed/pumped, 43% report they were able to pump as long as planned, 48% were not and 9% actual breastfed longer than planned.
- For those were not able to breastfeed/pump as long as planned, reasons included insufficient time (30%), trouble producing enough milk (27%), not having a good place to pump at work (20%), and/or feeling like their coworkers didn't understand (15%).