



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

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MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP (SEE DISTRIBUTION)
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Career Enhancement of Pregnant U.S. Service Members

The women who serve in the U.S. military are vital to the readiness and lethality of our Armed Forces, making important contributions every day to protect our Nation. It is our duty to ensure that our talent management processes permit the opportunity for women to advance in their military careers without avoidable impediments caused by unnecessary policies or inflexible career paths. Outdated or overly restrictive policies that lack medical necessity detract from individual career progression, Service members' quality of life, unit readiness, and the overall retention of highly trained professionals.

To increase the retention of women who serve and to encourage visible career paths for their advancement, the Military Departments must strengthen efforts to support female Service members. We must enable pregnant Service members to safely continue their duties, attend training, and perform critical assignments, including appropriate assignments in deployed environments. Therefore, I am directing a comprehensive review, and if necessary, revision of all relevant policies, including utilization and health policies, to identify and remove unnecessary obstacles to career development or progression. This review will include an examination of duty limitations and the timing of opportunities for career-enhancing assignments and professional military education.

The resulting policies will, at a minimum, permit pregnant Service members to continue to perform their duties or to be assigned new duties whenever appropriate. In furtherance of this policy, pregnant Service members will be allowed to perform their duties in deployed settings, if three criteria are met: the Service member requests to deploy, the obstetrical healthcare provider endorses it, and the commander concurs. If current Service practices and policy already permit pregnant Service members to continue to perform their duties, including deploying, they may continue to do so.

After the Military Services have conducted their reviews, the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) will revise relevant directives, policies, and instructions, including DoDI 6490.07, "Deployment-Limiting Medical Conditions," to clarify that there is no blanket prohibition on a Service member participating in any type of duties, training programs, exercises, or deployments, based solely on pregnancy without a valid medical need for the restriction. These policy changes will forestall unnecessary pregnancy-related limitations on assignments, duties, career development opportunities, command or leadership opportunities, and professional military education. An initial review of directives, policies, and instructions will be complete no later than December 1, 2020, at which time each component will provide a briefing to me on the actions taken to revise



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directives, policies, and instructions in support of this effort. The USD(P&R) will coordinate this effort.

As a subsequent phase to this review, I am also directing USD(P&R) and the Secretaries of the Military Departments to identify changes in policies and practices that will assist our female Service members as they return to duty following the birth of a child. Additionally, I expect USD(P&R) and the Secretaries of the Military Departments to identify changes, including legislative changes, which may be needed to provide Service members with enhanced opportunities to raise families, care for aging parents, or address other life circumstances while maintaining career progression. I encourage you to make Service members aware of flexibilities that currently exist, such as the Career Intermission Program outlined in DoDI 1327.07, "Career Intermission Program (CIP) for Service Members," which allows Service members to "step away" from and later transition back to active duty. Assignment flexibilities, such as increased permeability of Service member movements between components, will incentivize retention in the Military Services, improve readiness, and preserve our substantial training and career development investments in our people.

Your actions in accordance with these directives will reaffirm our commitment to the development and well-being of every Service member, and offer greater flexibility and opportunities for all those who wish to serve our Nation. Together, we will ensure our highly valued female Service members are not compelled unnecessarily to choose between family and career; we will bolster the long-term viability of the All-Volunteer Force; and we will meet the imperatives of the National Defense Strategy.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Matt T. Egan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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