

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION TO
OPEN ALL GROUND COMBAT UNITS TO WOMEN**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2016
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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION TO OPEN ALL GROUND COMBAT UNITS TO WOMEN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2016

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator John McCain (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators McCain, Sessions, Wicker, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Lee, Reed, Nelson, McCaskill, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, and Heinrich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman MCCAIN. Good morning. The Senate Armed Services Committee meets this morning to hear testimony about how the Army and Marine Corps are planning to implement the Secretary of Defense's decision to open all ground combat units to women.

We welcome our witnesses this morning: Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus; Commandant of the Marine Corps General Robert Neller; Acting Secretary of the Army Patrick Murphy; and Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley. We thank you for being here this morning and for your many years of distinguished service.

This hearing is not about whether women can serve in combat. The fact is that women have served honorably in our military for years. They have filled critical roles in every branch of our military. Some have served as pilots like Congresswoman Martha McSally who flew combat missions in Afghanistan. Some have served as logisticians like Joni Ernst who ran convoys into Iraq. Others have served as medics, intelligence officers, nuclear engineers, boot camp instructors, and more.

Many of these women have served in harm's way. Women like Army Specialist Monica Lin Brown who ran through insurgent gunfire and saved the lives of her wounded comrades by using her body to shield them from incoming mortar fire. Women like Army Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester who led a counterattack that defeated an ambush by 50 insurgents and saved the lives of her fellow soldiers.

Many women have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our Nation, including 160 killed in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. We honor their service and sacrifice, and we honor them.

That is why when then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta lifted the ban on women serving in combat 3 years ago, I supported that decision. But as I said then, as this decision is implemented, "it is critical that we maintain the same high standards that have made the American military the most feared and admired fighting force in the world." We have a responsibility to do the right thing, but we also have an equal responsibility to do the right thing in the right way. That is what this hearing is about, ensuring that as women move into more positions across our military, the readiness, combat effectiveness, and the safety and wellbeing of all service members, both men and women, remain our paramount priority.

On December 3rd, 2015, Secretary Carter announced that the Department of Defense would lift the ban on women in ground combat units. In advance of this decision, both the Army and Marine Corps sought to assess the physical and readiness impacts of integrating women into their ground elements, including through special field studies. The Army study simulated tasks to determine what the gender-neutral standards should be for each occupational specialty based on physical tasks. The Marine Corps simulated the combat environment with men and women marines living and working together under combat-like conditions.

These studies, while different in their approach, are complementary in their results. For the first time, they helped establish objective, scientifically based standards for the tasks required for ground combat. They found that certain women could meet these standards. But both studies also found that when performing brute physical tasks, on average these higher-performing women were generally comparable to lower-performing men and that in the process, women sustained higher rates of injury than men. Indeed, only two women marines were able to complete the combat activities simulated in the Marine Corps study due to extremely high rates of injury to lower extremities.

In short, the Army and Marine Corps studies demonstrated that biological differences between men and women can have implications when it comes to the sustained physical activities involved in combat.

Rather than honestly confront these realities, some have sought to minimize them. Indeed, we have even heard attempts to disparage the women marines who participated in the study at Twentynine Palms as somehow less than our best. In fact, these women were top caliber marines, self-selected and chosen to participate based on their aptitude and physical strength. I hope that Secretary Mabus and others who have spoken ill of these women will repudiate these comments.

Put simply, I am concerned that the Department has gone about things backwards. This consequential decision was made and mandated before the military services could study its implications and before any implementation plans were devised to address the serious challenges raised in the studies. Indeed, our services now have the authority to begin contracting women for ground combat positions, but the Congress has yet to receive any implementation plans. Our witnesses are here today to address these concerns and the many questions that still remain.

For the members of this committee to perform our oversight responsibilities, we need to know what the gender-neutral military occupational specialty tests will look like, when they will be administered, how often they will be administered, and how they will interact with the current physical fitness standards which are currently gender-normed. We need to know how women service members will be set up for success to serve long and healthy military careers while maintaining high standards. And while the services are committed to maintaining standards that are tied to specific military occupational specialties, we know that over time political pressure will come to bear to increase the number of women in combat arms specialties. We expect to hear the witnesses address these important concerns.

Most importantly, we need to hear from a professional military perspective how integrating women into scout sections, infantry squads, tank crews, artillery batteries, and combat engineers will improve the readiness and combat power of our ground units. After all, that is the overriding mission of our Nation's military.

Recent experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq serve as a stark reminder that close combat remains brutal and uncompromising. Warfare has changed over the years, but the duty of our fighting men and women, from the Second World War to Vietnam to today, remains the same, to close with and destroy the enemy. It is conducted in dangerous and austere environments. No other human activity is more psychologically straining, morally demanding, and more physically stressful. High physical standards alone do not assure success in ground combat. Ultimately these standards must be devised and implemented in a manner that ensures that we treat our soldiers and marines fairly, but that we never offer the enemy a fair fight.

That is why we must be uncompromising in our insistence on training to high standards. That is why we must preserve the small unit cohesion and discipline that ensure small combat units can win and survive on the forward edge of the battlefield. Troops in close combat bear the heaviest burden across the entire Department of Defense. And going forward, it is the wellbeing of those service members, whether they be men or women, that must override every other concern.

Senator Reed?

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to join you in thanking our witnesses for joining us today to provide testimony on how their respective services will successfully integrate women into combat occupations and the ground combat forces in particular.

I would like to thank each of you and the services you represent, as well as the Air Force, which is not represented here today, on the deliberative processes that you have taken in studying this issue over the past several years. Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey initiated this effort in 2013, and since then, each service has conducted research and studied performance to validate occupational standards for every military occupation. While today's hearing is focused on the difficult and challenging aspects of inte-

gration within the ground combat forces, it is important to remember that hundreds of thousands of positions have been opened to service by women over the past several years. Many of these positions were considered not too long ago as available for men only for many, many reasons. This assumption has been disproven by the performance of female personnel in those occupations already open to all genders.

Now that the decision to open all positions to women has been made, it is important that we turn our focus to the successful integration of females into these positions. Leadership is the key to ensuring both individual and collective success, as it was when other military occupations were opened to women. I have every confidence that each of you will implement this decision smartly and successfully.

Part of this process, as I mentioned, is the statutory requirement to establish gender-neutral physical, mental, and technical occupational standards which any service member, male or female, must meet as a condition to serve in any particular occupation, including the combat arms. This is critical. As many members have said over the past several years, it is important that our warfighting capability not be reduced. There is a tendency, however, to equate warfighting capability solely with physical capability. Fighting and winning wars, as I am sure our panelists know well, much more so than I, involves much more than that. I believe that the full and successful integration of women into the combat arms, for a variety of reasons, will strengthen and enhance our warfighting capabilities.

Integrating women into ground combat units also must be reflected in how and who we recruit and how we assess capabilities at the recruit stage to maximize successful service and minimize attrition. Not all women will be able or even interested in serving in the combat arms. But I believe many, particularly those with the required physical ability and the necessary mental toughness for service in the combat arms, may now be drawn to the ever greater equal opportunities provided by military service. I look forward to hearing how the services plan to recruit and assign individuals for service in the combat arms, what plans you have for developing predictive tests at the recruit stage to assess the potential for success of a given recruit, and what challenges you face and foresee.

Finally, I believe it is important for the services, but particularly Army and the Marine Corps, to develop plans and strategies to mitigate the physical stress and toll that a career in the ground combat profession has on every soldier and marine, men as well as women. Part of successful implementation will be ensuring the ability to serve a full career regardless of gender.

I thank you for your time and your expertise and look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCAIN. We would like to begin with you, Secretary Mabus.

**STATEMENT OF HONORABLE RAYMOND E. MABUS, JR.,
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY**

Mr. MABUS. Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, members of this committee, the issues before us today are of vital importance, as you have heard, to the future of the United States Marine Corps, the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense, and our Nation as a whole.

The question at issue is very straightforward: how do we maintain and improve the combat effectiveness of our military as we execute the decision to open all previously closed positions to women.

Serving as Secretary of the Navy is the greatest honor of my life. Every single decision I make is in support of maximizing the combat effectiveness of the United States Marine Corps. For almost 7 years as Secretary, I have been talking to marines face to face about being marines, about making marines, and the marines warfighting ethos. I have seen them at Quantico, at Paris Island, at San Diego, and at nearly every stop that I have made in the almost 1.2 million miles I have traveled as Secretary, including every single forward operating base in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. I have spent time with marines where they are serving and have seen firsthand that this decision to open all previously closed positions to women is putting policy in line with what is already reality, acknowledging the critical role women play and have been playing in mission success.

The Marine Corps is the most formidable expeditionary fighting force the world has ever known. That legacy is proven through the Corps' storied history, from the halls of Montezuma to the valleys of Afghanistan, and that reputation is unquestioned in America and around the globe. No better friend, no worse enemy. The strong traditions of the Marines help make that reputation and among those traditions is a commitment to evolve, to be flexible, in one of the common instructions given to young marines, improvise, adapt, overcome.

Throughout its history, the Corps has maintained its combat power and its lethality by adapting to changing conditions, evolving training and tactics to meet new challenges and new threats. Today's School of Infantry is not the same as it was just 25 years ago during Desert Storm, and the change is even more dramatic since Vietnam or World War II. In a world where the threats and the battle space are all increasingly complex, failing to reevaluate everything from personnel policies to weapons programs can be dangerous if not fatal. A response of "that is the way we have always done it" is not, cannot, and never has been an acceptable rationale.

In the Department of the Navy, we are continually evaluating the way we operate. After Secretary Panetta and Chairman Dempsey set us in 2012 on the path toward opening all billets, including ground combat, to women by this year, the Navy and Marine Corps, along with our sister services, conducted extensive studies on this issue. These studies helped inform the Department's recommendation to Secretary of Defense Carter and his subsequent decision to open all previously closed positions in all services to women. But they were not the only source of information that was gathered in reaching that recommendation.

However, the Marine Corps study has drawn special attention, and at least some of what has made it into public discussion is less than accurate. Among the misperceptions is that the Marines relied on just one study. In fact, their conclusions were based, in part, on a number of studies and reports. I have spent a lot of time closely reviewing all of them, especially the Marines' own study. In addition, I have had numerous discussions with senior Marine leadership, with junior officers, with enlisted personnel.

First and very importantly, I absolutely commend the marines who volunteered for this experiment for their work in assisting the Corps with approaching this integration process. I also appreciate the thoughtfulness, the diligence, and the sincerity of Marine leadership. Their time and effort helped to develop these standards, reinforce the importance of leadership, and set specific metrics for these demanding ground combat jobs.

The most surprising finding of the Marine Corps study was that standards for many Marine Corps military occupation specialties, MOS's, just did not exist. An incredibly important thing that came out of this study was the establishment of operationally relevant, occupation-specific, gender-neutral standards.

The Marines deconstructed every job in ground combat to specifically detail its requirements so that individual members could function better as a team. So what we have now are a set of standards based on the actual requirements and demands for every Marine MOS, and the Corps is more effective and more ready because of this work.

As I thoroughly examined the Marine Corps study, it was clear that the conclusions focused on the average performance of female marines rather than on individual abilities. Averages do not tell the abilities and performance of an individual marine. There were and are capable women who can meet the arduous standards the Marine Corps set for ground combat arms units. And we all know that marines have never been about average.

We also know, as Commandant Neller regularly and very correctly notes and as the chairman in his opening statement said, this is not about women in combat. Women have been serving in combat and serving with distinction, and they have been recognized for it. 422 female marines have earned the Combat Action Ribbon for their service in Iraq and Afghanistan for the various roles they have played, to include the Lioness Program and Female Engagement Teams.

Female marines have enhanced combat effectiveness by running convoys and security patrols, flying close air support missions, and leading engineering platoons. They have performed exceptionally on the front lines in places like Fallujah, Ramadi, and Sangin.

Chairman MCCAIN. Mr. Secretary, I would like you to try to truncate your remarks and summarize. We have other witnesses and questions by the committee.

Mr. MABUS. The Marine Corps leadership have developed thoughtful and deliberate plans to execute this transition effectively. The Corps has already notified the 231 women who have successfully completed ground combat arms MOS training at formal learning centers that they can switch to these previously closed jobs immediately if they chose to.

Part of this transition is the evaluation of the training and education that we provide at every level, from recruits and officer candidates to the highest levels of leadership, and the Secretary of Defense highlighted education and training as a focus area as we begin implementation of this policy.

A point of discussion has been that the Marines are the only service which separates men and women at boot camp. I directed the Marines to brief me on a plan to integrate basic training.

The Marines prepared a very thoughtful briefing and went ahead, which provided timely and informative considerations as the Department of Defense Implementation Group do their important work. With the benefit of their response, we can move forward in a measured and effective way using the lessons of fully integrated, gender-integrated OCS and the basic school, as well as lessons learned as Marines have opened up many MOS's in the past 3 years.

With validated, operationally relevant, job-specific standards, the only test that is important is whether a person can meet those standards. Now, I know that suggestions have been made that those standards might be lowered down the road to achieve some quota, some numerical goal. But that is unacceptable, unacceptable under the law, unacceptable to me, unacceptable to every other senior leader in the Pentagon because it would endanger not only the safety of marines but the safety of our Nation.

Lowering standards would also be unacceptable, absolutely unacceptable, to every marine, especially those women who choose to compete for those positions. One thing is inviolate: standards can never be lowered for any group or any job. Standards will evolve as threats evolve, but they will evolve for everyone equally. But just as there is no good argument to lower standards, there is also no good argument to bar anyone who has met those standards from serving.

That is the American promise. It does not guarantee an outcome to anyone, but it does guarantee opportunity for everyone. For those who want to serve in these trying MOS's, these high standards will not make it easy, nor should they. But every person will have the opportunity. And for those who succeed, they will operate side by side with everyone else who has met the standard to be a marine. Those marines and this Nation will continue to uphold the motto that marines have fought and died under for almost 2 and a half centuries: Semper Fidelis.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mabus follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY MR. RAYMOND E. MABUS

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, members of the Committee, the issues before us today are of vital importance to the future of the United States Marine Corps, the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense, and our nation as a whole.

The question at issue is very straightforward: How do we maintain and improve the combat effectiveness of our military as we execute the decision to open all previously closed positions to women.

Serving as Secretary of the Navy is the greatest honor of my life. Every single decision I make is in support of maximizing the combat effectiveness of the Marine Corps. For almost seven years as Secretary, I've been talking to Marines face to face about being Marines, making Marines, and the Marine warfighting ethos. I have seen them at Quantico, at Parris Island, at San Diego and at nearly every stop I've made along the 1,160,208 miles I've travelled during my time as Secretary, includ-

ing every FOB [Found Operating Base] in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. I've spent time with Marines where they are serving, and have seen first-hand that this decision to open all previously closed positions to women is putting policy in line with what is already reality, acknowledging the critical role women play, and have been playing, in mission success.

The Marine Corps is the most formidable expeditionary fighting force the world has ever known. That legacy is proven through the Corps' storied history, from the halls of Montezuma to the Valleys of Afghanistan, and that reputation is unquestioned in America and around the globe: No better friend, no worse enemy. The strong traditions of the Marines help make that reputation, and among those traditions is a commitment to evolve, to be flexible—in one of the common instructions to young Marines—to improvise, adapt and overcome.

Throughout its history, the Corps has maintained its combat power and its lethality by adapting to changing conditions, evolving training and tactics to meet new challenges and new threats. Today's School of Infantry is not the same as it was just 25 years ago during Desert Storm, and the change is even more dramatic since Vietnam or World War II. In a world where the threats and the battle space are all increasingly complex, failing to re-evaluate everything from personnel policies to weapons programs can be dangerous if not fatal. A response of "that's the way we've always done it," is not, cannot be, and never has been, an acceptable rationale.

In the Department of the Navy, we are continually evaluating the way we operate. After Secretary Panetta and Chairman Dempsey set us in 2012 on the path toward opening all billets, including ground combat, to women by this year, the Navy and Marine Corps—along with our sister services—conducted extensive studies on that issue. These studies helped inform the Department's recommendation to Secretary of Defense Carter and his subsequent decision to open all previously closed positions in all services to women. But they were not the only source of information that was gathered in reaching that recommendation.

However, the Marine Corps study has drawn special attention, and at least some of what has made it into public discussion is—to put it generously—less than accurate. Among the misperceptions is that the Marines relied on just one study. In fact, their conclusions were, in part, based on a number of studies and reports. I have spent a considerable amount of time closely reviewing all of them, especially the Marines' own study. In addition, I've had numerous discussions with senior Marine leadership, junior officers, and enlisted personnel.

First and very importantly, I commend the Marines who volunteered for the experiment for their work assisting the Corps with approaching the integration process. I also appreciate the thoughtfulness, diligence and sincerity of Marine leadership. Their time and effort helped to develop standards, reinforce the importance of leadership, and set specific metrics for these demanding ground combat jobs.

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The Marines deconstructed each job in a ground combat unit to specifically detail its requirements so that individual members could function better as a team. So what we have now are a set of standards based on the actual requirements and demands for every Marine MOS, and the Corps is more effective and more ready because of this work.

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We also know, as Commandant Neller regularly and very correctly notes, that this is not about women in combat. Women have been serving in combat, serving with distinction, and they've been recognized for it; 422 female Marines have earned Combat Action Ribbons for their service in Iraq and Afghanistan for various roles they've played, to include the Lioness Program and Female Engagement Teams.

Female Marines have enhanced combat effectiveness by running convoys and security patrols, flying close air support missions, and leading engineering platoons. They have performed exceptionally on the front lines in places like Fallujah, Ramadi and Sangin—upholding the Marines' incredible combat proficiency and impeccable traditions. This is about opening up the last few MOS's in accordance with the direction by the Secretary of Defense and doing so in a way that maintains or increases combat effectiveness.

Last week, I was at Quantico to have a frank discussion with Marines and see them train. What the visit reinforced in me is just how exceptional these young men and women are. They are mission-focused and thoughtful, they are respectful and proud, and they are intent on doing what Marines do best: developing the world's finest warfighters, irrespective of gender, color, religion or background because those things are irrelevant when it comes to meeting the standards required in combat.

Officers Candidate School and The Basic School at Quantico are already fully gender integrated. The questions I received there from the Corps' newest officers were far broader than the opening of the last few MOS's. There were questions about how to lead in new, ever-changing environments and about emerging threats like cybersecurity.

The Marines of history, those that fought at Belleau Wood, at Iwo Jima, at Hue City, at Fallujah and at Mousa Kala have always represented the best our country has to offer, have always adapted and overcome whatever threat has faced our country. My visit showed me that is absolutely still the case today.

Marine Corps leadership have developed thoughtful and deliberate plans to execute this transition effectively. The Corps has already notified the 231 women who have successfully completed ground combat arms MOS training at formal learning centers they can switch to these previously closed jobs immediately if they choose to do so.

Part of this transition is the evaluation of the training and education that we provide at every level, from recruits and officer candidates to the highest levels of leadership, and the Secretary of Defense highlighted education and training as focus areas as we begin implementation of this policy. A point of discussion has been that the Marines are the only Service which separates men and women at boot camp. I directed the Marines to brief me on a plan to integrate basic training and then to implement that plan by April 1.

The Marines prepared a very thoughtful briefing and way ahead, which provided timely and informative considerations as the Department of Defense-wide Implementation Group, headed by the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, do their important work. I thank the Marine Corps for assembling this information.

With the benefit of their response, we can move forward in a measured and effective way using the lessons of OCS and TBS [The Basic School] as well as the lessons learned as Marines have opened up many MOS's in the past 3 years.

With validated, operationally relevant, job specific standards—these are high standards—the only test that is important is whether a person can meet those standards. I know suggestions have been made that those standards might be lowered down the road to achieve some quota, some numerical goal. But that is unacceptable, unacceptable under the law, and unacceptable to me and every other senior leader in the Pentagon, because it would endanger not only the safety of Marines, but also the safety of our nation.

Lowering standards would also be unacceptable to every Marine, especially those women who choose to compete for these positions. One thing is inviolate: standards can never be lowered for any group or for any job. Standards will evolve as threats evolve, as circumstances change, but they will evolve for everyone equally. But just as there is no good argument to lower standards, there is also no good argument to bar anyone who has met those standards from serving.

The Secretary of Defense's decision to open all previously closed MOS's, including all Marine MOSs, to women is therefore an important step for our military and our country. This isn't about quotas, and this doesn't mean every, or even most, Marines will make it, but it does mean every Marine who wants to will have the chance to compete.

And that is the American promise, which does not guarantee an outcome to anyone, but does guarantee opportunity for everyone.

Americans have always worked to fulfill that exceptional promise made at our founding. We have continually broken down artificial barriers to equal opportunity based on race, religion or gender. Our military forces have followed that same history and made themselves stronger and better and more effective because of it.

Implementing this policy breaks down a last barrier.

For those who want to serve in these trying MOS's, these high standards will not make it easy, nor should they, but each person will have the opportunity. And for those who succeed, they will operate side by side with everyone else who has met the standard to be a Marine. Those Marines and this nation will continue to uphold the motto Marines have fought and died under for almost two and a half centuries: *Semper Fidelis*.

Chairman MCCAIN. Secretary Murphy?

**STATEMENT OF HONORABLE PATRICK J. MURPHY, UNDER
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**

Mr. MURPHY. Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed—

Chairman McCAIN. Your complete statements will be made part of the record. Please go ahead.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The Army remains in full support of Secretary Carter's directive to open every job to every soldier regardless of gender. Following 3 years of study, then-Secretary John McHugh recommended that no exceptions be made in the implementation, and I concur with his recommendation today.

This is the right decision for our Army. Our Army represents America and embodies the best of our values. The personal courage and selfless service made by women in our Army is no different than that exhibited by our men. We owe them the respect and honor to offer them the opportunity to succeed anywhere in our Army based upon only the merits of their performance.

Practically this is the right decision for our Army as well. As our Army gets smaller, our success increasingly depends upon our ability to maximize the contributions of every volunteer that fills our ranks. A soldier's ability to meet established standards that contribute to our success will remain our overriding factor moving forward.

Recognizing these imperatives, the Army began integration efforts several years ago to take full advantage of America's diverse and deep talent. Practical knowledge gained from these efforts complemented by several years of extensive research, collaboration, and practical evaluation have led us to three primary conclusions.

First, that women are capable of performing every job in the Army. This is not to say that every woman can do every job, just like every man cannot do every job. But no job in our Army has standards that cannot be met by women. Therefore, every soldier will have the opportunity, should they choose to do so, to compete against established standards for every position, to include the infantry, armor, and special forces.

Next, we will maintain high individual standards of performance and professional conduct. These standards will continue to be based upon the requirements of the position and nothing else. We will continue to enforce them fairly and objectively across the force. Our guiding principle for these standards is and will remain exclusively their contribution to mission success.

Finally, leadership is critical to integration. As Secretary Carter noted, the performance of teams is important and integration will change these dynamics. Our leaders, enabled by comprehensive and deliberate education, will closely monitor these efforts. We cannot anticipate or control for every impact of integration, but this will not slow our progress. We will continue to monitor and report the lessons we learn so that our Army can collectively integrate the force and share our experiences. But we are prepared to act and benefit from integration now.

Full integration will likely take several years, both to adjust the culture and to grow individual skills within our force. But I am confident that every leader in the Army will understand and re-

spect the increased readiness that integration will bring. Underpinned by strong, professional leaders, we will remain true to the values of the Army and to America and emerge as a stronger, more ready Army as a result.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Murphy and Mr. Milley follows:]

THE JOINT PREPARED STATEMENT BY HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY AND GENERAL MARK A. MILLEY, UNITED STATES ARMY

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION TO OPEN ALL GROUND COMBAT UNITS TO WOMEN

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of America's Army.

Following three years of careful and comprehensive study, the Army recommended all military occupational specialties (MOS) be open to women. In our view, the best-qualified Soldier, regardless of gender, should be allowed to serve in any position.

Every volunteer who swears to support and defend our Constitution should be afforded the opportunity to serve according to their merit in any military career field.

Full integration will result in a stronger Army. Establishing specialty-specific, operationally-relevant gender neutral standards, based on combat experience that are rigorously enforced for both men and women will likely increase overall readiness of the Army to conduct operations anywhere at any time against any foe. Women represent greater than half our population and the Army intends to take full advantage of this talent pool.

The Army has previously and continues to successfully integrate females into units based upon a phased, deliberate approach that maintains Army standards, ensures equitable treatment, and reinforces Army values of dignity and respect. Our guiding principles of implementation are first, to maintain readiness that is standards-based. Second, to have a deliberate and methodical process that is transparent. And third, that leadership and accountability are key to success, with no quotas and equitable treatment. As we continue to move forward to fully integrate our Army, we intend to build upon these principles.

The Army has deployed gender integrated Brigade Combat Teams over the last decade. Since 2011 the Army opened 9 military occupational specialties and approximately 95,000 positions in Combat Arms units, down to company and platoon level. Since 9/11, over a thousand U.S. military women have been killed or wounded while deployed to combat zones. Today, women serve in every Active Duty Infantry, Armor and Field Artillery battalion. The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment was opened to women in 2014, and the Army's Ranger Course was opened just last year. The Army has had success with its deliberate methodical approach. Additionally, over 9,000 women have received the Army Combat Action Badge for "actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy," and two have received the Silver Star for "gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States."

We have identified several tasks required for full integration. We will implement published, measurable, gender-neutral standards based solely on combat requirements and that will not be compromised for any reason. Next, we will initiate gender-neutral training, and assign leaders first, followed by female enlisted Soldiers. This will allow us the opportunity both to learn from measured implementation as well as to build a cadre of female officers and NCO (Non Commissioned Officer) leadership. Additionally, we will improve our accessions vetting to better screen and manage individual Soldier qualifications.

We estimate that effective integration will require 1-3 years of deliberate, monitored effort with continued rigorous assessment. We have already begun to ensure our facilities meet legal and Army guidelines for accession as well as basic and initial training of female Soldiers. Additionally, we are providing leaders and Soldiers with appropriate education to support these changes. This spring, female cadets and officer candidates who qualify will be given the opportunity to request assignment to Infantry or Armor branches. As those women who volunteer complete necessary training for their new MOSs, they will serve as the basis for our integrated programs.

While real challenges remain, we are confident they are manageable. These challenges include: inconsistent enforcement of existing standards and perceptions of double-standards; cohesion; sexual assault and harassment; ignorance of Army policy; small numbers of volunteers or high attrition; injury rates; career management; and discipline. Through a variety of policies, rigorous training, enforced standards,

and leader education—all grounded in the importance of ground combat—full gender integration is possible. The Army will regularly assess our long-term strategies and continue earlier studies to better understand critical areas. Combined, this will inform future policy adjustments and education plans to support full gender integration.

The Army has an established record of success in opening occupations previously closed to women. These experiences and the results of five careful and deliberate studies have informed and enabled the Army to successfully implement this guidance and increase our overall readiness, thereby making us a more combat effective Army. As the Army moves forward, you have our commitment that we will do so in a manner that is fully transparent to the American people and to the Congress.

On behalf of the Army, thank you for your support of our Soldiers, Civilians, Veterans, and their Families.

Chairman MCCAIN. General Milley, welcome.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL MARK A. MILLEY, USA, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

General MILLEY. Thank you, Chairman. Appreciate it. And Ranking Member Reed and thank you all for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of America's Army and to discuss the Army's implementation plan for full integration of women.

For the record, I fully support opening any military occupational specialty and all military occupational specialties in the United States Army to all soldiers regardless of gender. It is my solemn duty as the Army Chief of Staff to ensure that the Army remains ready to defend this great Nation and to do so, we need the most capable and qualified men and women.

Readiness is the Army's number one priority, and I believe that full integration of women in all career fields will either maintain, sustain, or improve the overall readiness of the United States Army and our capability of the force. If and only if we maintain and enforce rigorous combat readiness standards, we remain a merit-based, results-oriented organization and we apply no quotas and no pressure. We cannot compromise combat readiness and effectiveness for any reason whatsoever.

The Army's implementation plan will be guided by a set of first principles. We will maintain readiness by adherence very strictly to a set of standards, and we will not impose quotas on ourselves. We will execute a very deliberate, methodical, and transparent process. We must not rush to failure. And in this particular project, I believe that slow is smooth and smooth will be fast at the end of the day. We will set conditions by positioning female leaders and units who are engaged and those units' leaders will be accountable. These principles are aligned with the guidance given to us by the Secretary of Defense.

The Army has identified several key tasks required for full gender integration. When the SecDef approves our plan, we have developed and will implement published, measurable, gender-neutral standards based on combat readiness requirements.

Next, we will initiate gender-neutral training for all officers, non-commissioned officers, and junior enlisted. And to ensure the success, our plan calls for the deliberate, methodical approach that begins with assessment, selection, training, and assigning of female infantry and armor leaders, both officers and NCOs, to units. That is our leaders' first principle. And then we will assign junior female enlisted to those units.

I estimate that effective female integration into infantry armor and special forces will require no less than 1 to 3 years of deliberate effort in order to develop the individual skills and grow our leaders. The Army is currently in the process of ensuring our facilities comply with law and DOD policies for accession in gender-neutral living standards at both our basic and individual training.

Additionally, we will provide leaders and soldiers with integration education and training to enhance our integration efforts over the course of this year. This spring, female cadets and officer candidates who meet the gender-neutral standard will be given the opportunity to request either infantry or armor branches, and that process is currently ongoing.

The Army's integration plan is based on a successful record of opening occupations previously closed to women. Since 2011, the Army has opened nine MOS's and approximately 95,000 positions in combat arms units. In fact, today every single active duty infantry, armor, and field artillery battalion has women in them. Additionally Task Force 160th—the 160th special operation aviation regiment—was open to women in 2014, and of course, as you know, the Army's Ranger School was opened last year. These experiences have informed and will enable the Army to successfully implement gender integration to increase our combat readiness.

Make no mistake about it. This process is going to have challenges. But if we proceed with a methodical and deliberate execution and like all previous integration efforts, it is my belief that the Army will be successful.

I have personally witnessed in multiple tours of very intense ground combat—I have personally witnessed women perform, and their tasks were not much different than any other man that was on that battlefield. I have absolutely no doubt in my mind in my professional judgment that some women can perform every single job in the United States Army, to include infantry, armor, and special forces.

Army leaders will continue to assess and we will adjust the process to ensure that our standards and combat readiness are maintained and you, the committee, have my word on this. You also have my commitment that we will move forward in this endeavor in a very transparent and collaborative manner with this committee, with the American people, and with the Department of Defense.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman MCCAIN. General Neller?

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL ROBERT B. NELLER, USMC,
COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

General NELLER. Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, in the interest of time, I would ask that my oral statement be submitted for the record.

Chairman MCCAIN. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of General Neller follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY GENERAL ROBERT NELLER

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, thank you for your continued interest in ensuring the ongoing readiness of the Nation's Marine Corps. Successful execution of gender integration implementation will be key to sustaining our readiness, as well as ensuring all Marines have the greatest opportunity to succeed as valued members of our team.

As you know, then-Secretary of Defense Panetta fully rescinded the Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR) in January 2013. He directed the Services to integrate female service members into the remaining closed military occupational specialties (MOS) and units throughout the Department of Defense beginning in January 2016. Secretary Panetta also offered a period of time to study the implications of this policy change and directed the Services to return with any exception recommendations. The Marine Corps did not stand idle. Under the guiding principles of the Secretary of Defense, we implemented a deliberate, measured, and responsible research effort to better understand the aspects of gender integration in those remaining closed MOS's, and setting the conditions for successful policy implementation. Our research was about "how" to integrate, not "if."

Our first action was to form the Marine Corps Force Innovation Office (MCFIO), led by a General Officer. This group had the primary task to develop what we now call the Marine Corps Force Integration Plan (MCFIP). The MCFIP is a research and implementation campaign plan consisting of four lines of effort:

- 1) assigning female Marine officers, staff non-commissioned officers, and non-commissioned officers serving in combat support MOS's to 20 active and nine reserve ground combat arms units which were previously closed;
- 2) training female Marine volunteers at the entry-level, MOS-producing schools for infantry, artillery, tank and assault amphibious vehicles to gain insights into the relative propensity among new female Marines to serve in various ground combat arms occupations, as well as relative success and injury rates and causes, by gender;
- 3) establishing a Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCEITF) to inform the development and validation of gender-neutral individual performance standards, as well as to conduct scientific research to understand the impacts, if any, of gender integration on unit-level performance (collective tasks) under conditions most closely approximating actual ground combat conditions; and
- 4) opening eleven MOS's that had previously been closed due principally to the co-location restriction within DGCDAR.

In support of our campaign plan, the Marine Corps directly, and through third parties, conducted numerous studies and reviews within the time allotted to ascertain the benefits, impacts, risks, and potential mitigation measures, if needed, of a fully gender integrated ground combat force. This effort included visits to allied militaries with experience integrating female service members in ground combat arms specialties, equipment adaptation studies, literature reviews, surveys, and focus groups. In addition to our Marine Corps Recruiting Command; Training and Education Command; MCFIO; Operations Analysis Division; and the Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity, the following external research partners supported the MCFIP:

- Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
- University of Pittsburgh Warrior Human Performance Research Center
- Michigan State University
- George Mason University
- Research and Development (RAND) Corporation
- Center for Naval Analyses (CNA)
- Naval Health Research Center (NHRC)

A MCFIP status update was included in the quarterly and, subsequently, semi-annual Women in Service Review (WISR) written updates provided through the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of Defense. Additionally, a MCFIP update brief was provided to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) "Tank" sessions on a quarterly basis over the past two years as part of regularly scheduled JCS WISR updates.

Our research has analyzed the performance of individual Marines in our formal MOS-producing ground combat arms courses; as a result, we developed, refined, and implemented improved occupation-specific physical standards and the associated screening tools for obtaining these MOS's. But the individual is only one aspect. The Marine Corps fights in teams—as units—and it was important to understand the relative performance of units as well. We studied both gender integrated and non-integrated units, operating as squads, teams, and crews; and we did this under live-

fire conditions that most closely replicate actual ground combat conditions. This is the first time this level of research has been conducted. To ensure accuracy, our study was peer reviewed by a team from George Mason University.

In my professional opinion, the research we conducted and the plan we executed in response to Secretary Panetta's guidance was deliberate, measured, and responsible. We believe the data was compelling and supported our decision to request an exception to policy based on best military advice.

Marines follow orders. In response to Secretary of Defense Carter's decision in December 2015, the Marine Corps is stepping out smartly to facilitate the integration of all qualified Marines into previously closed MOS's. Informed by our research, integration will be executed in a well-planned and responsible manner. We have already awarded additional MOS's to all Marines who earned it through primary MOS-producing schools, and two female Second Lieutenants are currently undergoing MOS training at the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course. Also, Marines awarded these additional MOS qualifications can now request formal reclassification into the combat arms designation.

We will build upon previous integration experiences and will strictly adhere to the refined individual performance standards that have resulted from the studies we have conducted. The framework of our study was—and continues to be—viewed through three interrelated lenses: first and foremost, the combat effectiveness of our Marine units; second, the health and welfare of our individual Marines; and finally, with an eye toward the best talent management of our total force—both today and into the future. Our readiness will remain the guiding focus as we implement our plan.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all Marines, both female and male, who participated in our Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force experiment. They were volunteers and did not have to put themselves through the demanding rigors of this months-long research. I believe they volunteered because, ultimately, Marines always seek a challenge; want to provide service to their Corps; and because they are committed to being part of a Marine Corps that is the best fighting force in the world.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to our many allied military partners, and to all our research partners.

As we move forward with our gender integration plan, we are establishing a methodology for assessment, just as we do with any plan we execute. The Marine Corps is a learning organization. We will evaluate the success of our plan and inform in-stride adjustments throughout this ongoing process as we: recruit, train, develop, deploy, and retain the highest quality force. Specifically, we will assess our integration efforts to:

- 1) ensure we understand the impact (positive or negative) on recruiting and retention;
- 2) ensure we understand the impact (positive or negative) on the combat readiness of our units; and
- 3) ensure we understand the impact (positive or negative) to relative competitiveness of the individual Marine to be the most successful they can be in achieving their goals. We will seek the greatest talent management objectives in concert with seeking the most combat ready units.

In closing, I'm confident of the rigor we applied to our testing, our methodology, and the proud professionalism of all Marines involved in this process, especially those who volunteered for our experiments and schools, and paved the way to make us a better organization. Your Marine Corps is not focused on the past, but on the future. We have a responsibility to our Marines and the American people to ensure we get this right. Many have strong opinions about this issue. I am very proud that those within our ranks have stayed focused on what is important—training hard and being ready when the Nation calls. The continued success of your Corps is based on a simple tenet: placing the best and most fully qualified Marines where they can succeed and make the strongest contribution to the broad range of missions the Marine Corps executes as the Nation's expeditionary force-in-readiness.

I look forward to your questions.

General NELLER. We are ready for your questions, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. Well, thank you.

General Neller, you made a recommendation to request an exception to policy to keep some ground combat elements closed to women. Is that correct?

General NELLER. Yes, sir. Commandant Dunford made that recommendation, and I was witting and I supported that recommendation.

Chairman MCCAIN. General Milley, do you agree or disagree with General Neller's exception to policy to keep some ground combat elements closed to women?

General MILLEY. Senator, I made the recommendation to open up all MOS's.

Chairman MCCAIN. I see.

Secretary Mabus, your web site has a counter that shows you traveled over 1 million miles on trips as Secretary of the Navy. How many of those miles took you to Twentynine Palms and Camp Lejeune for the purpose of viewing the Marine Corps Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force study?

Mr. MABUS. Senator, I have been to Twentynine Palms several times, and I have been to Camp Lejeune several times.

Chairman MCCAIN. How many of these took you there for purpose to view the Marine Corps Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force study?

Mr. MABUS. I did not, sir.

Chairman MCCAIN. So you with a straight face made claims that the Marine study was flawed and biased even if you did not even go see the study being performed.

The 1,000-page Marine Ground Element Study was released to you on August 31st, and 1 day after the release of the report on September 1st—this is a 1,000-page document—you gave an exclusive interview with the Navy Times in which you stated you saw no reason for an exemption to the gender integration policy. It is important to note you received the recommendation of the Commandant on September 17th, 2015.

General Milley, how were you informed that this decision was going to be made?

General MILLEY. For the gender integration, I was informed—I made my recommendations and then there was a session with the Secretary of Defense, the service secretaries, and the service chiefs.

Chairman MCCAIN. Well, when were you informed that the decision was made?

General MILLEY. The decision for this, opening up the MOS's—I would have to go back, Senator, honestly and check the notebooks and give you an exact date, time. But he made the decision to open it up, we had a session and he announced it to us shortly before the announcement.

Chairman MCCAIN. General Neller, when were you informed of this decision?

General NELLER. Chairman, General Dunford made his recommendation you said on the 17th. I assumed this office on the 24th. I do not know the exact date that the Secretary forwarded his recommendation to Secretary of Defense Carter. But when that was done, that is when I was informed.

Chairman MCCAIN. One of the areas of some concern that have been voiced is the integration of basic training, given the fact that when a person enters basic training, they have not been exposed to the discipline associated with basic training. Is that of any concern to you, General Milley?

General MILLEY. Senator, right now for infantry and armor, the Army does not have integrated basic training, similar to what the Marines do right now for their recruit training. It is at Fort Benning.

I anticipate that after we set the conditions for this year, we will probably enter women into infantry and armor basic training at the maneuver center down at Fort Benning sometime in the early fall, probably September-October of this year. So there are concerns and we have got to make those adjustments between now and then in order to have women received at that basic training center.

Chairman MCCAIN. I move that we require all studies the Marine Corps and Army conducted and considered for the decision to open combat units to women be included as part of the record for this hearing.

I move that we include statements from outside organizations that were submitted in advance of the hearing today.

Senator REED. Okay.

Chairman MCCAIN. So moved.

[The information referred to follows:]

The information has been received and is retained in the Committee files.

**Statement for the Record
Hearing of Senate Armed Services Committee – SD G-50
Implementation of Decision to Open Ground Combat Units to Women**

**Submitted by: Elaine Donnelly
President, Center for Military Readiness
February 2, 2016**

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Thank you for the invitation to submit a statement for the record of this hearing. I am a former member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Armed Forces. (DACOWITS), and the 1992 Presidential Commission on Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. The congressionally-established Commission spent a full year studying a wide range of issues surrounding policies regarding women in combat in 1992. In 1993, I founded the Center for Military Readiness, a non-partisan public policy organization that reports on and analyzes military/social issues.

Much has happened since 1991, 25 years ago - the last time that this Committee had a public hearing on women in combat. The House last had extensive hearings in 1979. The passage of time and advances in technology have not changed the nature and requirements of direct ground combat (DGC). A number of books about recent wars describe in brutal detail the violence and physical demands that often are faced by DGC units that seek out and attack the enemy with deliberate offensive action.¹

Direct ground combat missions at the “point of the bayonet” are unlike any other job in the civilian world, including law enforcement and firefighting. These aggressive, physically grueling missions go beyond the experience of serving “In Harm’s Way” in war zones, where women have served with unquestioned courage.

Issues surrounding the involuntary assignment of women to Army and Marine Corps infantry, armor, artillery, Special Operations Forces and Navy SEALs are as critically important now as they ever have been. And yet, the topic designated for this hearing appears to be skipping over the substance of this life-and-death national security issue.

¹ For example, [Outlaw Platoon: Heroes, Renegades, Infidels and the Brotherhood of War](#), by Sean Parnell, Harper Collins Publishers, 2012, and Sean Naylor, [Not a Good Day to Die – Chaos and Courage in the Mountains of Afghanistan – The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda](#), Berkley Publishing, 2005.

The administration is planning to assign significant numbers of minimally-qualified young women to small fighting units, on an involuntary basis, and to send them to fight ISIS and other vicious enemies under conditions that involve higher risks for women than for men.

This is being done even though officials are well aware that women's physical capabilities are far less than men's and their risks of injury are far greater. This is not a "pro-woman" policy; it is a cruel deception, betraying the interests of uniformed women who deserve better. It is also unfair to men – tantamount to telling Navy SEALs that they should execute HALO (high altitude, low-opening) jumps with parachutes known to fail 30% of the time.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and like-minded activists keep insisting that training standards will not be adjusted to levels that are "gender-neutral" but lower than before. This will not be possible, due to pressures from Pentagon officials who truly believe that "gender diversity is a strategic imperative."² Secretary Mabus has loudly called for gender diversity quotas of at least 25%, while simultaneously denying plans for gender diversity quotas.³

Members of this committee should be challenging contradictory claims such as this. Men and women in uniform, whose voices have been raised but not heard, are facing situations in which men in the combat arms will be less prepared for the violence of combat, and women will be targets of resentment they do not deserve.

In an official survey, 85% of Navy SEALs strongly opposed gender-integration in their physically-demanding units, with 80% saying women aren't strong enough to handle demands of the job.⁴ It's not that Special Operators don't respect military women, it's because their exceptionally demanding missions, and deliberately arduous training, put their lives on the line every day.

An official survey of Army women found that 92.5% did not want to serve in direct ground combat units if the opportunity were offered.⁵ Women should not have to accept double-and-higher injury rates and other career disadvantages competing with stronger men, paying a higher price than men do for volunteering to serve their country.

This Committee has invited to appear before you service secretaries who seem indifferent to the opinions of the troops they lead on this issue, and military leaders who are not in a position to dissent. This is because the administration announced that it would ignore the best

² Navy Public Affairs, "CNO Calls Diversity a Strategic Imperative," Jun. 30, 2006.

³ In May 2015 Navy Secretary Mabus announced that he wants 1 in 4 Marine recruits to be women, and Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michelle Howard wants to see 25% of Navy ship crews to be women.

⁴ Lolita Baldor, AP, Military Times, "U.S. Commandos Say No to Women in Special Operations Jobs," Dec. 10, 2015.

⁵ Lolita Baldor, AP, USA Today, "Few Army Women Want Combat Jobs, Survey Finds," Feb. 25, 2014. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/02/25/army-women-combat/5811505/>

professional advice of the Marine Corps, which centered on paramount concerns: “*survivability and lethality.*”⁶ Members of this committee can do better than the Executive Branch by paying close attention to the Marines’ best professional advice and the solid rationale behind it.

On December 3, 2015, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced his unilateral decision to abolish women’s exemptions from direct ground combat. Two months later, you have asked for testimony on how to implement policies that have been made by the Executive Branch, not Congress.

With all due respect, this Committee should be asking whether military women should be ordered into the combat arms. Diligent oversight requires focus on “survivability and lethality” – paramount factors of concern to the Marine Corps.

This statement will address the designated topic. However, I challenge this committee to take a thorough, objective look at the substance of underlying issues that have yet to be examined:

- *Will the Executive Branch’s policies regarding women strengthen or weaken our military?*
- *Why should the Executive Branch be allowed to determine the military and legal consequences for women, men, and civilian women of Selective Service age?*
- *Will the policies in question help women or hurt them?*
- *Most importantly, will combat effectiveness be improved or degraded?*

Some would have us believe that military history ended on December 3. On the contrary, our military can and will be responsive to orders from a future Commander-in-Chief. The record of this Committee needs to be filled out to the greatest extent possible.

Empirical Facts vs. Mitigation Myths

Section II of this statement sets forth in a brief format major findings of recent research that demand attention. Particular attention should be given to the Marine Corps’ Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCEITF) field tests, which were conducted at west-coast bases for nine months, starting in 2014.

University of Pittsburgh researchers monitored individual and group performances by all-male and gender-integrated teams in tasks common to direct ground combat units such as the infantry, armor, artillery, and combat engineers. GCEITF exercises were designed to test the

⁶ Memorandum for the Commandant, United States Marine Corps Assessment of Women in Service Assignments, Aug. 18, 2015, p. 6.

hypothesis that gender-integrated units, under gender-neutral standards, would perform equally as well as a gender-restricted unit.⁷

The data produced, however, disproved the hypothesis.

All-male task force teams outperformed mixed gender units in 69 percent (92 of 134) of ground combat tasks. Significant disparities in physical size, strength, endurance, injury rates, and early onset of fatigue that affected marksmanship were scrupulously recorded with scientific monitoring techniques. This research was as definitive as possible, short of an actual war.

It is beyond dispute that in gender-mixed units, physical deficiencies had negative effects on the unit's speed and effectiveness in simulated battle tasks, including marching under heavy loads, casualty evacuation, and marksmanship while fatigued.⁸ In some task force units male volunteers compensated for the women's difficulties by taking over strenuous tasks. This "mitigation strategy" would be incompatible with mission effectiveness under wartime conditions. Men and women in uniform are counting on you to assert your policy-making authority, and to restore sound priorities that put the needs of the military, and national security, first.

Circumventing Congress

The Executive Branch is trying to sweep these findings under the rug, or dissemble about their meaning. Some have even claimed that the unilateral policy changes in question are the result of extensive research.

On the contrary, harmful policies are being unilaterally imposed by the Executive Branch *in spite of* empirical research, not because of it. Nevertheless, the Marines' highly-credible, scientific body of research work will not go away; the truth never does.

The high-handed attitude that the Executive Branch has shown in circumventing Congress on this issue ought to offend every member of this Committee.

On December 17, 2015, the Chairman and some members of the House Armed Services Committee sent to Defense Secretary Ashton Carter a letter asking for more information on policies announced on December 3. On New Year's Eve, December 31, 2015, a Defense Department official responded with two pages of equivocal, evasive answers.⁹

⁷ Col. Anne Weinberg, USMC, Deputy Director, Marine Corps Force Innovation Office, Update to the DACOWITS, 18 September 2014.

⁸ See bar graph reproduced in Section IV of this statement.

⁹ [Letter](#) from Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness, Dec. 31, 2015.

- For example, a question about the involuntary nature of direct ground combat assignments was couched in misleading words that avoided the word “involuntary,” even though Secretary Carter confirmed during his December 3 news conference that military women would be assigned on the same involuntary basis as men.¹⁰
- The letter also dodged a question regarding separate-gender initial training, deferring to unspecified “*final implementation plans*.” In less than 24 hours, on New Year’s Day, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus ordered the Marine Corps to begin the process of dismantling their separate-gender recruit training program, which is known to be superior for both male and female Marines.

Adding insult to injury, Secretary Mabus gave the Corps only fourteen days to come up with plans to do this. Mr. Mabus’ arrogant, unjustified action was an affront to Congress as well as to the Marine Corps.

This Committee, the full Senate, and your counterparts in the House have the constitutional responsibility to carefully consider the significant implications of research results produced since 2012. It is up to you, elected officials, to make policies that will affect every man and woman in our military, and civilian women of Selective Service age as well.

Diligent oversight should begin by obtaining and making public the request for exceptions to women in land combat directives that the Marine Corps submitted to the Secretary of Defense in the fall of 2015. The rationale and facts supporting that request always will remain true, even if the administration chose to ignore them.

We challenge this Committee to review every training issue that the Executive Branch is trying to unilaterally decide – from boot camp to BUD/S, recruiting to the 75th Ranger Regiment. This process should begin with candid and objective evaluations of the unrealistic, less than credible mitigation strategies that the Defense Department, the military services, and their largely-civilian contractors are proposing to make this social experiment “work.”

The word “mitigation,” which is never coupled with words like “benefits” or “advantages,” warns of problems ahead. As with substandard equipment, substitutes for sound policies rarely serve as well. Wouldn’t it be better to avoid life- and mission-threatening problems in the first place?

Above all, the risks of being wrong should weigh heavily on your minds. Members of this committee, and the next President of the United States, should take seriously the cautionary words of Brig. Gen. George W. Smith, Jr., Director of the USMC Force Innovation Office:¹¹

¹⁰ Defense Department Press Briefing, [Transcript](#), Dec. 3, 2015.

¹¹ [Memorandum for the Commandant](#), FN #13, *infra*, p. 14.

“To move forward in expanding opportunities for our female service members without considering the timeless, brutal, physical and absolutely unforgiving nature of close combat is a prescription for failure. Our future enemies will be the ultimate arbiter of such decisions – when lives of our Marines are in the balance. Those who choose to turn a blind eye to those immutable realities do so at the expense of our Corps’ warfighting capability and, in turn, the security of the nation.”

II. MARINES SET SOUND PRIORITIES: “SURVIVABILITY & LETHALITY” IN BATTLE

Comprehensive research projects done by the U.S. Marine Corps since 2012 clearly show that in units where physical strength and endurance matter, physical disparities between men and women cannot be ignored in the policy-making process. For this and many other reasons, the case for women in direct ground combat has not been made.

A. Results of Unprecedented Research Deserve Close Examination

For nine months in 2015, the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task (GCEITF) conducted scientifically-monitored field exercises that simulated wartime requirements for direct ground combat units such as the infantry, armor, artillery, and combat engineers. Some of the volunteer task force teams were all-male, while others included women Marines. The women met physical fitness and combat fitness test (PFT/CFT) requirements on an equal basis, and received formal MOS training in advance.¹²

During field exercises simulating ground combat at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, the Mountain Warfare Training Center and in the waters off of Camp Pendleton, University of Pittsburgh experts used body-monitoring and other scientific methods to gather empirical data reflecting actual experience, not theory.

On August 18, 2015, the Marine Corps Force Innovation Office (MCFIO) submitted to the Commandant of the Marine Corps a memorandum signed by Brig. Gen. George W. Smith, Jr., Director of the Marine Corps Force Innovation Office.¹³ The 33-page memo and attached documents, including briefing slides, presented significant facts from the Marine Corps Test and Evaluation Activity (MCOTEA) report on the Task Force research.

Elements of the Task Force research project were designed to evaluate collective performance and unit standards in simulated combat tasks. As the Smith memo stated, this was done because “Marines fight as units.” (p. 3)

¹² Analysis of the Integration of Female Marines Into Ground Combat Arms and Units, marked “Pre-Decisional – Not Releasable under FOIA.” Hereafter, “Marine Corps Analysis.”

¹³ The document above was covered by a “Memorandum for the Commandant of the Marine Corps,” from Brigadier General George W. Smith, Jr., Director, Marine Corps Force Innovation Office, 18 August, 2015, Subject: United States Marine Corps Assessment of Women in Service Assignments.

The following excerpts from the Smith report, and from a 4-page Summary of research results released on September 10, reconfirm results of many previous studies and reports on the subject.

1. *Definition of Direct Ground Combat*

There is no doubt that women served with courage and distinction in harm's way in recent wars. The missions of direct ground combat units such as the infantry, however, involve seeking out and attacking the enemy with deliberate offensive action.¹⁴

A 4-page Summary of the full body of research, released on September 10, established sound priorities: "In analyzing the results of the research and analysis, the primary consideration throughout has been to understand any impact on the combat effectiveness of Marine ground combat units. Based on the unique role the Marine Corps fulfills within the Joint Force and in the security of the nation, the benchmark of achieving the 'most combat effective' force has remained the unwavering focus." (Sept. 10 Summary, p. 2)

The Smith Memo listed a number of realities that would detract from that focus: "Female Marines demonstrated that they were capable of performing the physically demanding tasks, but not necessarily at the same level as their male counterparts in terms of performance, fatigue, workload, or cohesion." (p. 4)

- a) "The assessment across all occupational specialties revealed that gender integrated teams, squads, or crews demonstrated, with very few exceptions, degraded performance in the time to complete tasks, move under load, and achieve timely effects on target as compared to all male teams, squads, or crews." (p. 4)
- b) "[These] shortfalls . . . were magnified in like units with a higher-density gender integration." (p. 4)

2. *Methodology of Task Force*

Contrary to claims that less-prepared women were involved in the Task Force research over nine months, "[F]emale volunteers within the GCEITF were universally considered to be an above-average to well-above-average representation of the PFC-Sergeant female population throughout the Marine Corps. The male volunteers were considered by their unit leaders and research observers as being an average representation of their male peers..." (p. 4)

¹⁴ "Female Marines earned 422 Combat Action Ribbons in Iraq and Afghanistan." The decorations recognized their courageous service 'in harm's way' in a war zone. "However, none of those awards reflected a female Marine having to 'locate, close with and destroy the enemy' in deliberate offensive combat operations." (pp. 1-2, Smith report)

3. *Minimum Standards Cannot Reduce Risks*

“. . . [D]espite vastly improved and codified individual standards, some level of risk will remain in the infantry and special operator MOSs that I do not believe can be fully mitigated by simply applying a minimum standard.” (p. 5)

- a) “That risk is associated with the unique physical demands of service in the infantry, reconnaissance and special operations occupations that place a premium on the ability to conduct dismounted movements under load.” (p. 5)
- b) “[A] Marine infantry unit must be fully capable of regularly moving dismounted for extended distances with heavy loads. This has been the coin of the realm for Marine infantry throughout history, and the requirement for more distributed operations with less reliance on external logistics support reflected in Expeditionary Force 21 now places even greater demands on the individual infantry Marine.” (p. 5)

4. *Physiology Matters*

“The associated risk is directly linked to the physiological differences between males and females. Simply, size matters when executing a dismounted movement under load.” (p. 5)

- a) “The physiological differences in body fat between males and females – body fat being synonymous with ‘dead weight’ to be added to whatever external equipment load is already being carried . . . places females at a significant disadvantage from the start in infantry-related tasks.” (p. 5)
- b) “On average, females possess significantly less lean body mass, a slighter build that affects stride length and stride frequency as loads increase, less absolute V02 max production, and less power and anaerobic/aerobic capacity than males.” (p. 5)
- c) “The combination of these factors constitutes a potential risk to combat effectiveness for a force that must be self-sufficient for movement and fully capable of extended dismounted operations within the highest intensity portion of the combat spectrum.” (pp. 5-6)

5. *Combat Performance & Effectiveness*

“All-male task force teams outperformed their mixed-gender counterparts in 69 percent (93 of 134) ground combat tasks.” (Briefing Slide #1)

- a) “Physical differences were more pronounced in *“specialties that carried the assault load plus the additional weight of crew-served weapons and ammunition.”* (Slide #2)
- b) “All-male squads were faster than integrated squads on hikes, gorge crossings, and cliff

ascents during the assessment in different environmental settings at MWTC.” (Slide #2)

- c) “Male provisional infantry (those with no formal O3xx school training) had higher hit percentages than the O311 (school trained) females.” (Slide #3 & Sept. 10 Summary, p. 3)
- d) “All-male infantry crew-served weapons teams engaged targets quicker and registered more hits on target as compared to gender-integrated infantry crew-served weapons teams, with the exception of M2 accuracy.” (Slide #3 & Sept. 10 Summary, p. 3)
- e) “All-male squads, teams and crews and gender-integrated squads, teams, and crews had a noticeable difference in their performance of the basic combat tasks of negotiating obstacles and evacuating casualties.” (Sept. 10 Summary, p. 3)
- f) “Depending on the unit, male GCEITF volunteers perceived that combat effectiveness declined with female Marines’ presence . . . Numerous cases of compensation were observed during physically demanding tasks, in which males shifted positions to take over certain aspects of tasks from females.” (Slide #4)

6. Cumulative Impact of Injuries

“The well-documented comparative disadvantage in upper and lower-body strength resulted in higher fatigue levels of most women, which contributed to greater incidents of overuse injuries such as stress fractures.” (Sept. 10 Summary, p. 4)

- a) “These realities are clearly not insurmountable nor are they always manifested during a one-time march under load that reflects an entry-level performance standard. Rather, the risk lies in the cumulative impact of this physiological disadvantage over the course of regular, recurring and increasingly more challenging dismounted movements under load in the operating forces” (p. 6 - Note: Some media reports changed the context by putting in quotes only the first part of this sentence, “These realities are clearly not insurmountable.”)
- b) “This is exacerbated by other physiological factors that, in concert, make females much more susceptible to injuries, either caused by a specific event or through the cumulative impact of repetitive dismounted movements under load.” The disparity in injury rates between males and females at the Infantry Training Battalion (ITB) and during the conduct of the GCEITF assessment, due principally to multiple marches under load, provides an early indicator to that effect.” (p. 6)
- c) “During the GCEITF assessment, musculoskeletal injury rates were 40.5% for females, compared to 18.8% for men”. (Slide #7 & Sept. 10 Summary, p. 4)
- d) “Within the research at the Infantry Training Battalion, enlisted females undergoing that entry-level training were injured at more than six-times the rate of their male

counterparts." (13% vs. 2%) (Slide #5 & Sept. 10 Summary, p. 4)¹⁵

7. U.S. Research Confirms British Findings

"The United Kingdom review on 'Women in Ground Close Combat' . . . highlighted 21 factors likely to change based on the integration of women into ground combat arms specialties, 11 of which would have a negative impact; three of those 11 negative impacts . . . could not be mitigated. (p. 6)

- a) Among the three factors that would negatively impact combat effectiveness without known mitigation strategies are survivability and lethality. This conclusion is based on the analysis that "a woman who is performing to the same physical performance standards as a man will be working closer to her maximum performance standards capacity when carrying the same absolute combat load, and will fatigue sooner than her male counterpart." (p. 6 & Slide #2)
- b) "This conclusion was reinforced in our own research during the GCEITF assessment that highlighted the disparity between males and females in relative movement rates and lethality with various individual weapons within the infantry occupations." (p. 6)
- c) "In particular, the overall accuracy of the female 0311 infantry volunteers declined and the disparity in accuracy relative to their male counterparts increased as the weight of the individual weapon system increased." (p. 6 & Slide #2)

8. High Standards Would Produce Tokenism

There is no reason to believe that if positions are opened, significant numbers of women will want them.

- a) "Based on individual propensity and the ability to meet minimum standards, it is difficult to project a number of female infantry Marines that does not exceed what could be viewed as tokenism." (p. 6)
- b) "After a quarter century of integration and with unquestionably much lower physical standards than the U.S. Marine Corps, the Canadian Army has .4% female enlisted infantry." (p. 6)

9. Potential Loss of Talented Women

"[T]he Marine Corps risks losing a number of highly talented female Marines prematurely due largely to the often extreme physical demands of these infantry, reconnaissance and special

¹⁵ CMR Policy Analysis: [New British Ministry of Defence Review Paper Shreds Case for Women in Ground Close Combat](#), February 2015.

operations occupations.” (p. 7)

- a) “Service in these uniquely physically demanding occupations will place the majority of female Marines at a competitive disadvantage relative to their male peers...” (p. 7)
- b) “We need to continue to attract, develop, and retain our female Marine talent to meet future challenges across the range of military operations. The likelihood of a female Marine being less competitive in these significantly more physically demanding occupations may adversely impact the Marine Corps’ ability to retain top female talent and enable their progression into more senior ranks.” (p. 7)
- c) “Simply, any loss of this MCRC-established momentum, or worse, a downward trend in retaining our top female Marines, would be a tremendous loss for the Corps.” (p. 7)

B. Statements of Principle

The 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces conducted a thorough, year-long study of women in combat policies in all service branches. The Commission’s review was guided by over-arching principles quoted in the Smith report:

“A military unit at maximum combat effectiveness is a military unit least likely to suffer casualties. Winning in war is often only a matter of inches, and unnecessary distraction or any dilution of the combat effectiveness puts the mission and lives in jeopardy. Risking the lives of a military unit in combat to provide career opportunities or accommodate the personal desires or interests of an individual, or group of individuals, is more than bad military judgment. It is morally wrong.” (p. 13)

Brig. Gen. Smith added a passage from the Marine Corps Warfighting Doctrinal Publication *Warfighting*:

“Of all the consistent patterns we can discern in war, there are two concepts of universal significance in generating combat power: speed and focus. Speed is rapidity of action. It applies to both time and space. Speed over time is tempo – the consistent ability to operate quickly. Speed over distance, or space, is the ability to move rapidly. Both forms are genuine sources of combat power. In other words, *“speed is a weapon.”* (p. 13)

The Smith report also quoted from the Presidential Commission report a “fundamental tenet that is as relevant today as it was nearly a quarter century ago.”

“Service members are encouraged to pursue opportunities and career enhancements in the Armed Forces, limited only by the needs and good of the Service. But when it comes to combat assignments, the needs of the military must take precedence over all other considerations, including the career prospects of individual service members.” (p. 13)

"With this primary consideration, the Marine Corps has analyzed factors such as speed and tempo, lethality, readiness, survivability, and cohesion — critical components to fighting and winning in direct ground combat." (Sept. 10 Summary, p. 2)

C: USMC Training and Education Command (TECOM) "Proxy" Tests

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus criticized the Marine Corps GCEITF tests because they drew conclusions from averages scored during task force group exercises.

The criticism is unwarranted, since statistical averages and percentages are derived from the scores of multiple research participants. Conclusions should not be drawn based on the best or worst performances alone.

Secretary Mabus also seems unaware that tests of individual volunteers in "proxy" tests revealed the same disparities in physical strength that were evident in scientifically-measured task force results.

In 2013, the USMC Training and Education Command (TECOM) collected data from 409 male and 379 female volunteers performing five "proxy" tests simulating ground combat element (GCE) tasks. These tests confirmed that gender-related disparities are most significant in events measuring upper-body strength and endurance.¹⁶

TECOM research, among other things, reported the following findings:

- In a Pull-up test of upper-body strength used in the PFT, women averaged 3.59 pull-ups, compared to 15.69 for the men – more than four times as many.
- The Clean & Press event involves single lifts of progressively heavier weights from the ground to above the head (70, 80, 95, 115 lbs.), plus 6 reps with a 65 lb. weight. In this event 80% of the men passed the 115 lb. test, but only 8.7% of the women passed.
- In the 120 mm Tank Loading Simulation, a gunnery skills test, participants were asked to lift a simulated round weighing 55 lb., 5 times, in 35 seconds or less. Quoting the report, "*Less than 1% of men . . . [compared to] 18.68% of the women . . . could not complete the tank loading drill in the allotted time.*" The report added, "It would be very likely that failure rates would increase in a more confined space [such as a tank]."
- In the 155 mm Artillery Lift-and-Carry, a test simulating ordnance stowing, volunteers had to pick up a 95 lb. artillery round and carry it 50 meters in under 2 minutes. Noted

¹⁶ [Naval Health Research Center \(NHRC\) Analysis in Support of the Women in Service Restrictions Review Study, 2013, analyzed in the Interim CMR Special Report, Sept. 2014, U.S. Marine Corps Research Findings: Where Is the Case for Co-Ed Ground Combat?](#)

the report, "Less than 1% of men, compared to 28.2% of women, could not complete the 155 mm artillery round lift-and-carry in the allotted time." If trainees had to "shoulder the round and/or carry multiple rounds, the 28.2% failure rate would increase."

- On the Obstacle Course Wall-with-Assist-Box test, a 20" high box, (used to simulate a helping-hand) essentially reduced the height of the 7 ft. wall to approximately 5'4." Quoting the report, "Less than 1.2 % of the men could not get over the obstacle course wall using an assist box, while wearing [protective equipment] . . . [compared to] 21.32% of women who could not get over the obstacle course wall . . ."

III. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH VS. MITIGATION MYTHS

On October 2, 2016, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter promised, "*My ultimate decision regarding any exception to policy request will be based on the analytic underpinnings and the data supporting them.*" Secretary Carter did not honor that promise.

Two months later, looking uneasy during his December 3 news conference, Secretary Carter arbitrarily brushed aside the Marine Corps' request for exceptions to across-the-board mandates, doing so without any rationale or justification. Secretary Carter dodged a reporter's question about the three-year research being "flawed." Clearly, the biggest "flaw" in the USMC research, done with experts from the University of Pittsburgh, was its failure to support pre-determined conclusions of the Executive Branch.

Advocates of women in combat have tried to discredit the research findings by raising smokescreen arguments. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, for example, criticized the Ground Combat Element Integration Task Force (GCEITF) research methodology because test results reported numerical averages and percentages, instead of individual performances. "*The Marines have never been about being average,*" Mabus said.¹⁷

Either the play on the word "average" was pure sophistry, or Secretary Mabus seriously misunderstands statistical analyses that University of Pittsburgh experts used in scientifically measuring individual male and female task force performances. Data points that determine statistical averages and percentages are derived from the scores of multiple research participants. Conclusions should not be drawn based on the best or worst performances alone.

Instead of assigning higher priority to the needs of the military, both Secretary Carter and Secretary Mabus have put their faith in questionable "mitigation" strategies that do not hold up under close scrutiny.

¹⁷ Ray Mabus, *Washington Post*, "U.S. Navy Secretary: 'Women Should Be Among the Few, The Proud,'" and Hope Hodge Seck, *Marine Corps Times*, "Mabus: I'm Not Asking for Women-in-Combat Exceptions," Sept. 14, 2015.

Mr. Mabus seems incapable of foreseeing the consequences of replacing sound policies with inferior substitutes that cannot prevent catastrophic failures at the worst possible time – in direct ground combat. For this reason and many others, the case for repealing women’s exemptions from direct ground units such as the infantry still has not been made.

Sociology, Statistics, or Superiority in Battle?

The Defense Department and military services invited a number of outside public policy contractors and academic consultants to participate in the Women in Service Restriction Review (WISRR) process. Some of the resulting reports or sections include inconsistent passages and unworkable ideas for “fixing” problems that, in truth, cannot be fixed.

The Department of the Army conducted limited physical tests and largely-sociological research to identify “barriers” to gender-integration in combat arms units.¹⁸ The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), subcontracted most of its work to RAND, which produced a voluminous but superficial report that primarily analyzed surveys and focus groups.¹⁹

Findings resulting from these research projects were skewed even more because Army officials and the Secretary of the Navy predetermined the results by capitulating on the key question: *Should women be assigned to Army and Marine infantry battalions, armor, artillery, and Special Operations Forces, including Navy SEALs?*

It is necessary to carefully scrutinize mitigation myths and reports that are replete with cautionary signs of life-threatening problems, papered over with social science speculations.

Reality vs. Speculation

Mitigation strategies advocated by RAND and other mostly-civilian contractors involved in WISRR projects frequently rely on academic theories, best-case scenarios, overly-optimistic behavioral expectations, and wishful thinking dressed up with statistical jargon, color-coded graphs, and tables signifying next-to-nothing.

These contractors and consultants rarely seek, report, or draw conclusions from the experiences of ground combat veterans. Instead, their recommendations reflect the opinions of the reports’ mostly-civilian authors -- academics, sociologists, behavioral scientists, economists, political scientists, and women’s studies experts – many of whom authored the mitigation strategy reports.

¹⁸ Interview with TRADOC Commander General Robert Cone, American Forces News Service, April, 2013, quoted in CMR: [Seven Reasons Why Women-in-Combat Diversity Will Lower Tough Training Standards](#)

¹⁹ [Memo from USOCOM Commander Adm. William H. McRaven, 22 March 2013, and the resulting RAND Report for USSOCOM: Considerations for Integration Women Into Closed Occupations in the U.S. Special Operations Forces](#)

Members of this Committee should recognize the difference between empirical data and theoretical conjectures that are contradicted by actual experience. Defining insanity, the same socially liberal consultants whose recommendations have encouraged unresolved turmoil in the military for years keep promoting the same social science remedies over and over again, expecting different results.²⁰

With the assistance of respected advisors who have years of experience in land combat and related fields of study, CMR has analyzed mitigation proposals that purport to solve problems caused by policies that the same contractors promoted in the past.

The following topics represent only some of the major flaws in misguided proposals to mitigate problems that will occur in gender-mixed direct ground combat units. Typical mitigation proposals are listed below, followed by responses that the Committee should consider.

A. Training and "Gender-Neutral" Standards

1. ***With Better Training, Women Will Become As Strong as Men.*** "Bottom line, iron-deficient anemic female soldiers, when treated with supplements, run 1-2 minutes faster on a 2 mile run." The Army's surgeon general . . . asserts that the military 'implement multivitamin with iron program for females during intense training.'"²¹

Response: Weight training and iron supplements usually strengthens individuals, but there is no evidence to support the theory that significant numbers of average-sized women can be trained to meet minimal physical capabilities of average-sized men.

²⁰ Several times since the early 1990s RAND has produced papers advocating for women in combat and other liberal military/social policies. In 1997, RAND removed negative information from their own report on women in combat. See CMR Analyzes 1997 RAND Study, Oct. – Nov. 1997. RAND also ignored a congressional mandate in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2006 to produce a report on *de facto* repeal of the 1994 Department of Defense collocation rule. RAND produced what CMR called the Rubber Stamp RAND Report 17 months (and two congressional cycles) beyond the legal deadline.

²¹ LTG Patricia Horoho, Surgeon General & Commanding General, USA Medical Command, Soldier 2020, Injury Rates/Attrition Rates Working Group, 24 June 2015. Quoted by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., *American Spectator*, "Women Warriors and the Bottle -- What Will It Really Take to Make Female Soldiers Combat Ready?", Dec. 23, 2015. In his satirical article, Tyrrell added, "What about steroids? Steroid injections have been found to make those who use them stronger and possessed of greater endurance. Our female recruits might grow mustaches and beards, but that would only make them look for menacing to the enemy. For that matter, why not give the female soldiers testosterone injections? . . . I suggest the Pentagon seek the advice of Lance Armstrong, the celebrated bicyclist and winner of numerous Tours de France."

- a) According to Dr. Hugh Scott, a retired rear admiral and expert in military physiology, "Because average men have ten times more androgenic hormones than women, giving the same extra training to men would make them even stronger."²²
- b) "Weight-bearing exercise is important for healthy bone development, but excessive exercise can have the opposite effect by lowering estrogen levels, which in turn triggers bone loss. This is a contributing factor in the mechanism for stress fractures in females. The use of progestin-containing birth control pills by prospective female candidates for the infantry also can cause a calcium loss from bones – a condition that, in turn, contributes to higher injury rates."²³
- c) The Marine Corps Analysis report noted, "Historically, the non-deployability rate for female Marines is significantly higher than male Marines (up to 4 times higher) . . . predominantly due to medical reasons."²⁴ There is no reason to believe that female physiology will change for female soldiers and Marines.
- d) In GCEITF units, female injury rates were twice as high; six times higher in the Infantry Training Battalion (ITB) for enlisted infantry training.
- e) The U. S. Army Medical Command compared male/female injury rates in formerly all-male units such as field and air defense artillery, and found that female soldiers suffered injuries averaging *double* men's rates in specific MOSs. In the Field Artillery Surveyor Meteorological Crewmember MOS, for example, injuries for women were approximately 112% higher than men's. In the Bradley fighting vehicle system maintainer MOS, the rate was 133% higher.²⁵

²² Letter from Rear Adm. Hugh P. Scott, MC, USN (Ret.), to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, June 22, 2012. Excerpt: "While men and women have an equal number of muscles and muscle fibers, the strength difference relates exclusively to muscle size that is determined by testosterone levels. Because women have less testosterone than men, they have smaller muscle fibers that result in the development of small-size muscles; in effect, women have less muscle to activate. That also is the reason why women develop less muscle when training with weights and exercising."

²³ Rear Adm. Hugh P. Scott, MC, USN (Ret.), commenting via email to CMR on December 23, 2015: "Iron is a critical element for the development of hemoglobin in the red blood cells, which carries the oxygen to all of the organs and tissues of the body. But, for strong bones and muscle strength, women also need calcium and vitamin D. Approximately 75% of American women do not obtain the recommended amount of calcium in their diet to help maintain healthy bone structure. This is a no win situation – try as they may, the powers cannot change unalterable innate bio-physiological mechanisms of the female soldiers, by having them take mineral iron."

²⁴ Marine Corps Analysis, FN#12, supra, pp. 21-22.

²⁵ U.S. Army Medical Command, [Appendix A](#), quoted in CMR Policy Analysis: [Co-Ed Combat Tests Hazardous to Women's Health](#), August 2015.

- f) More than 30 years of studies and reports in the United Kingdom and the United States have found no empirical evidence that women's comparative strength disadvantages can be diminished over time. ²⁶ The list compiled by CMR includes links to a major study done by the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine at Natick, MA, which did not meet expectations that with special training, women could become as strong as men.
- g) The British Ministry of Defence confirmed in a December 2014 report that even the most athletic women experience double-and-higher rates of injury and fatigue that affect speed, ability to march under load, and combat marksmanship. ²⁷

2. **Better Screening Will Improve Graduation Rates.** "While we have seen FLC [formal learning center] graduation rates that range from comparable to considerably lower for females . . . by better screening [of] students before entry, we can substantially improve female graduation rates." ²⁸

Response: The next sentence in this report continues: "The downside of such screening is that we would drastically reduce the number of females eligible for these [FLC] schools. . . We would also slightly reduce the number of males eligible."

- a) These statements summarize a 21-page section of the USMC Force Integration Plan, which apparently was prepared by a consultant or contractor who used complex formulas to suggest ways to increase female graduation rates from military occupation specialty (MOS) schools. The mitigation plan is based on questionable data correlations, speculations, and misplaced priorities.
- b) For example, the suggested plan for boosting women's MOS formal school graduation rates is based on an analysis of known performance scores and graduation rates of volunteer men and women in several Infantry Training Battalion (ITB) experiments in 2013-2014. Under the questionable presumption that performance scores would be similar among non-volunteers in the future, the plan would use basic physical fitness and combat fitness tests (PFT/CFT) to screen potential candidates for the combat arms MOS schools.

²⁶ Interim CMR Special Report, Part I, Partial List of Studies and Reports Relevant to Research on Women in Direct Ground Combat.

²⁷ CMR Policy Analysis: New British Report Shreds Case for Women in Ground Close Combat (GCC), FN #15, *supra*.

²⁸ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, pp. 47-68.

- c) PFT and CFT exercises, which are gender-normed and different for men and women, measure and help to maintain physical fitness; they were never intended to evaluate or prepare individuals for direct ground combat assignments.
- d) Officials would impose gender-neutral standards, such as six pull-ups instead of the current minimum three, thereby excluding many women and some men who could not meet that mark. These recruits would be “removed” from the group sent to formal learning centers for combat arms MOSs.
- e) By deliberately shrinking the pool of potential applicants to individuals most likely to succeed, such a system, in theory, would increase graduation rates, reduce injuries, and minimize T2P2 personnel losses (transients, transfers, prisoners, and patients). The plan also is supposed to reduce expensive retraining and transfer costs when heavy MOS assignments do not work out.²⁹
- f) The plan is problematic for several reasons, starting with misplaced priorities.
 - In tough ground combat MOS training for infantry officers, Special Operations Forces and Navy SEALs, high failure rates are built into the program. Rigorous training excludes the majority of aspirants while finding and preparing the few remaining who really do have what it takes to be a Special Operator under extreme land combat conditions.
 - The primary goal should be excellence and combat superiority, not gender diversity. Gender-neutral standards based on *minimal* fitness tests would leave men less prepared for combat, while setting up women for disproportionate injuries and undeserved resentment.
 - According to Dr. William Gregor, an expert in military physiology, screening programs based on gender-neutral PFT/CFT scores could cause the services to lose hundreds of potential graduates by excluding large numbers of men who very likely would have graduated.³⁰ The proposed screening plan also would exclude great numbers of female prospects who want to serve their country and otherwise would become fine Marines.

²⁹ Army documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act indicate that the estimated re-assignment cost for each individual would be \$30,697 per soldier, with an additional \$17,606 being lost for individuals leaving the Army, not counting higher recruiting costs for women. See CMR Policy Analysis, Co-Ed Combat Tests Hazardous to Women's Health, Aug. 2015.

³⁰ Prof. William J. Gregor is a Professor of Social Sciences, School of Advanced Military Studies at the U.S. Army Command and General College, Fort Leavenworth, KS. In an October 22 email on file with CMR, Dr. Gregor explained how the losses might occur. “To understand the effect of screening you need to keep track of the changes in populations; i.e., how many are screened out and how many graduates are screened out. Table 4-4 through 4-7 will serve as an example. In Table 4-4: women 124 grads/359 started. If I require all women and men to do 6 pull-ups, Table 4-5 tells me that only 184 women start and 70 graduate. Thus, requiring 6 pull ups means 175 women are not permitted to start (359-184) and I lose 54 women graduates, 30% of women excluded would have graduated. However, requiring 6 pull ups for men means only 1620 start but I only exclude 19 from starting

- In a 2013 test, female Marine Corps boot camp recruits were required to perform three pull-ups, the male minimum. The mandate was suspended indefinitely because 55 percent of the female trainees could not do the three pull-ups. (Flexed-arm hangs are permitted instead.)
- In addition to these pre-emptive losses, talented female Marines would be more likely to leave early due to what Brig. Gen. George Smith described as the “often extreme physical demands of infantry, reconnaissance, and special operations occupations.” This would be, said Gen. Smith, “a tremendous loss for the Corps.”³¹

3. **The Public Would Support Restrictive Selection Processes.** Virtually every advocate of women in the combat arms insists that standards should not and will not change.

Response: Based on the fate of previous recruit screening plans, such a proposal would not survive criticism from recruiters and Pentagon feminists attacking “barriers” to women’s careers. Even if adopted, the proposed screening plans probably would meet the same opposition as the Military Entrance Physical Strength Capacity Test (MEPSCAT) — a detailed plan to match individual capabilities to MOS assignments that the Army proposed in 1982.

- Initially, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) supported the MEPSCAT, but later opposed it for being a “barrier” to women’s careers. As a result, the plan was never implemented as planned.³²
- A perfect pullup PFT score is 20 for men, 8 for women. If requirements for men are made gender-neutral, there would be no incentive for men to do 20 pull-ups or more. Over time men will emerge less strong and less prepared for the violence of direct ground combat.
- Many studies in the U.S. and Britain have shown that men are more likely to sustain strength, endurance, and deployability during a full military career.³³ Replacing

(1639-1620) and I lose 18 male graduates; 95% of the excluded males would have graduated. In other words, applying this screening criteria to men is unwise because it only screens out men who actually will succeed. Applied to women this screening criteria avoids training 121 women who will not graduate at the cost of 54 women who would; a potentially reasonable trade-off. The criteria is not gender neutral because it does not identify men who would fail and, thus, is unwise.”

³¹ Statement of Brig. Gen. George Smith, Jr., Director Marine Corps Force Innovation Office, FN #13, *supra*, p. 7.

³² Brian Mitchell, *Women in the Military: Flirting with Disaster*, 1998, p. 109. Also see paper by William J. Gregor, FN #34 *infra*, pp. 5-6. MEPSCAT was recommended as part of the 1982 Women in the Army Policy Review.

³³ Interim CMR Special Report, Part I, Partial List of Studies and Reports Relevant to Research on Women in Direct Ground Combat, FN #26, *supra*.

otherwise qualified men with women who meet minimal PFT/CFT requirements would exclude men who have a greater potential for training up to standard in MOS schools, and for staying in the military for a full career. ³⁴

- d) Recruiters who work hard to find qualified, willing recruits are sure to oppose an arbitrary plan to screen out significant numbers of male and female prospects, in exchange for a few female trainees who might, in theory, succeed in previously all-male direct ground combat MOSs.

These negative impacts on recruiting and retention, which are essential for maintaining the All-Volunteer Force, cannot be justified.

4. According to RAND calculations, significant numbers of women will seek infantry training and succeed in that MOS.

Response: RAND's estimates of female success in boot camp are unrealistically high, and costs would rob resources from training for Marines in general. ³⁵

- a) The RAND report done for the Marine Corps, released immediately after the announcement of Secretary Carter on December 3, reflects unrealistically high estimates of female propensity to serve in the infantry. The report "assumes," for example, that 85% of women who complete boot camp and enter infantry training will complete the course, and continuation rates after the first year will be 75%. (p. 112)
- b) The RAND report also glides over additional costs for extra strength conditioning for female recruits in boot camp. It mentions in passing that female recruits would have six months of boot camp and infantry training followed by six months of informal training and about 34 "productive" month in the infantry. Projected scenarios are unlikely, but if they do prove accurate, costs would be disproportionately high for each female involved. (p. 118)

³⁴ William J. Gregor, PhD, Professor of Social Sciences, School of Advanced Military Studies Fort Leavenworth, KS, [Why Can't Anything Be Done? Measuring Physical Readiness of Women for Military Occupations](#), a paper on physiology presented at the 2011 International Biennial Conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society. Excerpt: "The data clearly reveals a very large gap between the physical strength, aerobic capacity and size of Army men and women. Training men and women correctly improves the performance of both groups but it also widens the gap in performance."

³⁵ RAND Report: [Implications of Integrating Women into the Marine Corps Infantry](#), Dec. 3, 2015, pp. 112-120.

- c) These cost/benefit estimates are overly optimistic on women's propensity to join or stay in the infantry. They also show no consideration for budget realities and the need to use limited funds for more productive goals.³⁶
- d) Training investment losses due to disproportionate injuries that would end or shorten women's careers in the infantry are not factored in, except in the non-specific discussion of personnel overages that would be required to make up for losses. As the report states, "[O]ur model predicts that there will be fewer people in the infantry than had the infantry remained closed to women. Therefore, keeping the infantry at the same size (in terms of productive time) will require additional Marines." (p. 118)
- e) Costs for implementation of this "mitigation" measure are left to the imagination. Nor does this section of the report mention costs for ensuring "success" for female officers in Officer Candidate School (OCS), the Basic School (TBS), or the Infantry Officer Course (IOC.) Intangible costs in terms of morale and combat effectiveness would be even higher – perhaps beyond calculation.

B. Mission Accomplishment in Direct Ground Combat

- 5. *Small numbers of women in the combat arms won't affect readiness much.* "[T]he number of females entering these combat arms MOSs and units likely will be a very small percentage – significantly lower than the current 7% female Marine Corps population overall. Thus, the overall impact on unit readiness will be buffered by the dominant numbers of male Marines, and should not show a significant difference."³⁷

Response: This comment disregards administration pressures to achieve gender diversity quotas of 25% or more. To achieve what Army Gen. Martin Dempsey called a "critical mass," standards will be "validated" at levels that are "gender-neutral" but lower than before.

- a) At a January 2013 Pentagon briefing, then-Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey called for a "critical mass" or "significant cadre" of women in the combat arms. Gen. Dempsey added that if "a particular standard is so high that a woman couldn't make it, the burden is now on the service to come back and explain ... why is it that high? Does it really have to be that high?"
- b) Over time in actual practice, this would become known as the "Dempsey Rule," meaning that a standard too high for women will be deemed too high. These changes would affect not just a few people, but the entire culture of the military. In a single

³⁶ Hope Hodge Seck, Military.com: [Opening Marine Infantry Jobs Would Raise Recruiting Costs: RAND](#), Dec. 8, 2015.

³⁷ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, Summary & Conclusions p. vii.

generation, gender-neutral minimum standards could replace high, maximum standards of excellence needed to achieve combat superiority and lethality in battle.

- c) RAND Corporation recommended that since there is not much literature on what the right “critical mass” for women should be in combat units, “[T]he Marine Corps should consider experimenting with various gender mixes for infantry units of varying sizes to determine whether there are optimal gender proportions in different-sized units. However, even if the Marine Corps determines a specific critical mass policy, there may be cases in which women in solo status cannot be avoided. In such cases, additional mentoring mechanisms should be put in place.”³⁸
 - d) This statement confirms that minimally-qualified women ordered into formerly all-male DGC units will be involuntary subjects of a social experiment in which their health and lives will be put at greater risk than men.
6. **Combat arms leaders should balance risks against the benefits of gender integration.** “This decision will clearly be influenced by the levels of risk described, and the ability to mitigate those risks, balanced against the beneficial aspects of integration.”³⁹

Response: There are no “beneficial aspects of integration” that would justify elevated risks in direct ground combat operations. Gender-related deficiencies in tasks such as casualty evacuation, surmounting rough terrain obstacles, speed while carrying heavy loads, and marksmanship accuracy while fatigued would endanger lives, missions, and ultimately national security.

- a) The Marine Corps Assessment noted that for measured tasks in the GCE-ITF field tests, “[I]ntegrated teams typically performed significantly (statistically) worse than all-male teams, especially within the infantry MOSs and the casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) tasks.” The report also provided detailed evidence, related to each MOS, in support of this statement: “Females have less strength than males in both upper and lower body, leading to lower levels of performance on physically demanding tasks.”⁴⁰
- b) Subsequent pages of the report provided brief summaries of detailed data presented in the GCEITF Experimental Assessment Report produced by the Marine Corps

³⁸ RAND: Implications of Integrating Women into the Marine Corps Infantry, Executive Summary, p. xv.

³⁹ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, Summary & Conclusions, p. viii.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 13.

Occupational Test and Evaluation Activity ⁴¹ (See MCOTEA graph reproduced as Section IV in this report.)

- c) In addition to infantry and CASEVAC performance differences, MCOTEA data highlighted physical strength differences, target accuracy with weapons, ability to negotiate obstacles, and occupational-related injuries. In comparison to men, female participants were found to have 40% of upper body strength and 60% of lower body strength.
- d) In addition, the report listed factors affecting survivability, lethality, and mission accomplishment, such as handgrip strength, marching speed under load, VO2 capacity (measuring endurance,) muscle mass, and body size.

In all of these factors, women clearly are disadvantaged. Increasing their numbers, therefore, would elevate risks for all personnel and combat missions. The Marines and other services should not be forced to “tolerate” levels of risk such as this.

7. ***Gender-mixed units performed better in some tasks.*** During task force personnel evacuation (CASEVAC) testing, “the 0341s (mortarmen) showed no differences in evacuation times . . . There was no significant difference between the integrated 0341 squad and the all-male 0341 squad with respect to emplacement and displacement times.” In addition, “During the destruction of captured munitions, integrated combat engineer squads showed no significant differences in times for loading, digging, unloading, or rigging for detonation.” ⁴²

Response: Such results often occurred because men did the heavy work. In 16 of 18 casualty evacuation tests, for example, men in gender-integrated groups performed single-man fireman’s carries. Other men moved more quickly to lift heavy artillery rounds. These reported “male compensations” masked female deficiencies that could cost lives in battle.

- a) The Assessment explained how “male compensation enabled integrated teams to compete at the same level as their all-male counterparts.” In squads with one or more women, male Marines almost always did the heaviest work.
- b) For example, during CASEVAC testing, “the 0341s [mortarmen] primarily used a single-Marine fireman’s carry to move the casualty; in 16 of 18 trials, a male Marine did this . . . The top one-third of the 0331 [machine gunner] results of the low-density [few women] squads was almost exclusively male fireman’s carry results.”

⁴¹ Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force Experimental Assessment Report, Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity, K.M. Moore, Col., USMC, Director (MCOTEA), Approved August 14, 2015, marked Pre-Decisional – Not Releasable Under FOIA.

⁴² All references in this section are from the Marine Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, pp. 16-17.

- c) With regard to 0341 [mortarman] squads, a “masking effect that occurred within the emplacement portion is not captured by the current results. It was observed that when slower members of the squad fell back during the initial movement, their delay was hidden by the fact that the rest of the team began emplacing the 81-mm mortar system concurrently. By the time the weapon system was fire capable, all members had arrived at the mortar firing position.”
- d) In the most demanding portion of the combat engineer testing, “male engineers were responsible for picking up, moving, and lifting 155 mm artillery rounds onto a 7-ton truck, whereas females would position themselves on the truck and only be responsible for receiving the round and preparing it for onward movement.”
- e) The Assessment also noted that when researchers compared integrated 0311 [rifleman] squads to all-male 0311 squads, there were no significant differences in times, but there was an issue with getting assault packs over the wall. “Prior to negotiating the wall, 0311 Marines removed their assault packs and individually threw them on top of the 8-foot wall prior to climbing. Females in integrated squads were often noted as requiring assistance from male squad members in order to get their packs onto the wall.”
- f) Gender-integrated teams showed levels of achievement comparable to all-male units in some exercises, under controlled, limited conditions. As stated above, however, “male compensations” to make up for female strength deficiencies were needed to accomplish common heavy MOS tasks.

It would be unwise to rely upon “male compensations” under battlefield conditions – particularly in battles where there are no extra personnel to replace casualties.

- 8. Gender Integration, Injuries, & Deployability Rates:** “Research conducted by Allied nations indicates that female Marines will be at great risk of overuse injury, but this risk can be mitigated with proper training.”⁴³

Response: The same paragraph notes, “Historically, female Marines become non-deployable at approximately three to four times the rate of male Marines.” There is no evidence to support assurances about proper training substantially mitigating risks of debilitating injury.

- a) The paragraph refers to efforts by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to reduce overuse injuries. The report added, “However, due to differences in operating environments, force composition, public law, and employment patterns, it appears these techniques would be unsuitable for the Marine Corps.” (p. 21)

⁴³ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #17, *supra*, p. 21.

- b) Furthermore, “[S]ome aspects of the IDF policy equate to gender-normed standards. For example, based on their load carriage index (LCI) for tactical movements, female IDF personnel are limited to 33% of their body weight, while males are limited to 60% of their body weight. Such standards violate the gender-neutrality requirement established by the SecDef, and the law prescribed in the NDAA 2014 mandate.” (p. 25)
 - c) “During the GCEITF, there were significantly higher injury rates for hiking MOSs . . . compared to riding MOSs.” (p. 21) “In the U-Pitt data set, the injury rate for Hiking MOSs is 45.3% (63/139); the injury rate for Vehicle MOSs is 11.1% (6/54). (p. 23)
 - d) Over a four year period (FY08-12), female Marines became medically non-deployable (MND) at rates four times greater than men’s. (20.2% - 5.4%) (p. 21) Disproportionate rates of MND losses among women likely would increase even more in the physically demanding combat arms. Personnel losses would be far more disruptive to others in small teams, such as infantry squads and tank crews, than they would be in larger combat support groups.
9. ***Some gender-mixed groups were better at problem solving.*** “During the MSU research, all-male [task force] teams performed better at tasks requiring low-levels of problem solving skills; however, integrated teams with one female perform as well or better at tasks requiring a high degree of problem solving.”

Response: The Assessment continued: “Of note, these live tests were completed with non-fatigued Marines; i.e., Marines were not required to conduct any physically demanding tasks prior to performing the live testing. Therefore, the impact of fatigue was not a factor in this assessment.” (p. 17) ⁴⁴

- a) Fatigue matters. According to the December 2014 report of the British Ministry of Defence, “Survivability in combat is, in part, predicated by physiology . . . There will be some women, amongst the physical elite, who will achieve the entry tests for GCC roles. But these women will be more susceptible to acute short term injury than men . . . [W]omen have a twofold higher risk of musculoskeletal (MSK) injury.” ⁴⁵
- b) The British Ministry of Defense report also found that even “physically elite” women were more susceptible to injuries and early onset of fatigue that affected marksmanship. These factors increased with heavier loads, resulting in a “distinct cohort with lower survivability in combat.”

⁴⁴ Analysis of the Integration of Female Marines into Ground Combat Element Arms and Units, FN #17, *supra*, p. 17.

⁴⁵ CMR Policy Analysis: [New British Report Shreds Case for Women in Ground Close Combat \(GCC\)](#), p. 3.

- c) In addition, "Similar research points to a reduced lethality rate; in that combat marksmanship degrades as a result of fatigue when the combat load increases in proportion to body weight and strength."

Claims that women's undefined "problem-solving" capability would be a suitable trade-off for the physical realities described above are not credible – especially when higher rates of injury and non-deployability due to other medical reasons are factored in.

C. Cohesion & Discipline

10. *Training and leadership can mitigate harmful effects on unit cohesion.* "[A]ny initial detrimental effects on cohesion can eventually be mitigated with good training and solid leadership."⁴⁶

Response: Military cohesion is not about liking others or working on tasks. Experts who testified before the 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces explained that military cohesion is properly defined as mutual trust for *survival* and mission accomplishment in battle.⁴⁷

Horizontal cohesion exists between members of a combat team. Vertical cohesion is properly defined as mutual trust between the Commander-in-Chief, officials in the chain of command, and subordinate troops that they lead. Policies that disregard physical differences would severely degrade both horizontal (unit) and vertical (leadership) cohesion.

Superior strength and endurance are directly related to mutual trust for survival in battle, on which unit cohesion is based.

- a) University of Pittsburgh data showed that all-male task force units outperformed gender-mixed ones in 69 percent (93 of 134) ground combat tasks, particularly in "specialties that carried the assault load plus the additional weight of crew-served weapons and ammunition."
- b) In addition, "All-male squads, teams and crews and gender-integrated squads, teams, and crews had a noticeable difference in their performance of the basic combat tasks of negotiating obstacles and evacuating casualties."⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, (Summary & Conclusions, p. iv)

⁴⁷ Report of the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, November 15, 1992, CF 2.5.1, p. C-81.

⁴⁸ See CMR Interim Report Part II, Section A, FN #26 *supra*, for specific references. The MCOTEA report provides detailed comparisons of the performances of all-male and gender-integrated units.

- c) Gender diversity mandates that disregard obvious physical differences between men and women would be demoralizing as well as dangerous. Subordinates at all levels will witness their leaders assigning highest priority to “gender diversity” goals even at the expense of high standards, survivability, and superiority in battle.
11. **Good Leadership Can Maintain Cohesion:** “In the end, meta-analysis of prior gender integrations efforts found that the detrimental effects on cohesion can be mitigated through good leadership, cohesion-building activities, and a shared sense of identity among men and women.”⁴⁹
- Response:** This unsupported comment is footnoted to RAND National Defense Institute researchers. The comment inaccurately describes cohesion in civilian terms such as getting along socially or working together on tasks, not mutual trust for survival in combat. Findings and observations observed during a short-term, controlled experiment (GCEITF) suggest that cohesion would decline even more during overseas deployments and direct ground combat conditions.
- a) Surveys of GCEITF personnel were conducted during the forming period, the training period, and the research period. Volunteers were divided by gender regarding their support for female Marines in combat roles, with females strongly supporting.⁵⁰
- b) Post-training, cohesion levels averaged medium to good across the ITF, with 31% males and 36% reporting very good cohesion. Post-assessment, the average cohesion levels dropped to medium, trending to poor.”
- c) The report continues, “Analysis suggests that lowering standards or giving women preferential treatment would be detrimental to cohesion and morale.” (p. 30)
12. **Men’s Attitudes are the primary barrier to successful gender integration.** RAND’s report for the Marine Corps identified “hypermasculinity” as the primary cause of resistance to gender integration.⁵¹ Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) also has targeted men’s attitudes as “traditional impediments” that need to be overcome with “proactive measures to mitigate resistance to women going into these specialties.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, p. 21.

⁵⁰ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, p. 30)

⁵¹ RAND Report, FN # 38, *supra*, p. 22.

⁵² TRADOC Commander General Robert W. Cone, interview with American Forces Press Service.

Response: Concerted efforts to promote RAND’s prejudiced definition of “masculinity,” applied to all men, would be demoralizing, divisive, and inconsistent with the honorable “brand” and image of the Marine Corps.

- a) This would be especially so if gender-integration “leadership” programs continue to misconstrue masculinity as anti-women.
- b) Defense Department appointees and contractors want to establish a small army of “gender advisors” and “gender integration oversight boards” to mitigate problems created by determined advocates of a gender-free military.⁵³ This would be an expensive jobs program designed by social engineers who believe that “hyper-masculine” attitudes must be systematically eliminated, while simultaneously forcing women to act like and compete with men.
- c) This a recipe for social incoherence, resentment and division – the opposite of cohesion.

Open-ended expenditures such as this cannot be justified, especially since many of the contractors seeking grants to pursue their agendas have a poor track record of “mitigating” problems they helped to create.

13. Gender integration might improve discipline. “We also see benefits to integrated units in areas in which females traditionally have better outcomes than males; e.g., incidents pertaining to disciplinary issues.”⁵⁴

Response: Male aggressiveness sometimes contributes to undisciplined behavior, but the statement ignores the consequences of inappropriate male-female relationships, both voluntary and involuntary. Incidents of sexual misconduct in the military have increased steeply, year after year, in spite of countless hours of leadership training.

- a) To state the obvious in gender-neutral terms, human beings are not perfect, and combat arms personnel are no more perfect than anyone else. There is no compelling reason to extend complicated male-female disciplinary issues into small combat arms.
- b) Disciplinary issues that would have a profound effect on morale and unit cohesion in small fighting teams would include sexual misconduct of all types, accusations of same, distractions that weaken concentration, deterioration of mutual trust, personnel losses associated with pregnancy/maternity leave, absences during legal proceedings, and other types of turbulence that affect readiness.

⁵³ RAND Report, FN #38, *supra*, Executive Summary, p. xxii.

⁵⁴ Marine Corps Analysis, *supra* FN #12, Summary & Conclusions, pp. iv-v.

- c) Despite enormous efforts to reduce rates of sexual misconduct, the Defense Department's Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Office (SAPRO) report in 2015 that numbers of actual cases keep escalating year after year. There were 2,828 completed cases in 2012 and 4,608 in 2014 – a 63% increase in only two years. Pentagon officials call this "good news," reflecting confidence in the justice system. If so, what does bad news look like?
- d) Disciplinary problems reportedly occurred during GCEITF operations. A baseline survey done among task force volunteers "identified negative opinions towards social cohesion, disciplinary actions, unit readiness, and the overall success of individual Marines."⁵⁵
- e) A 2013 Defense Department study survey of 13,000 women found that those who had served in close combat situations reported twice as many sexual assaults by male colleagues. (4% compared to 2.1%)⁵⁶

There are no benefits that would compensate for the extension of complicated male/female issues into the combat arms.

14. Detrimental effects on cohesion can be mitigated with good leadership.

Response: If "training and leadership" could eliminate these problems, male/female disciplinary issues would have declined long ago.

- a) Despite countless hours devoted to sensitivity and leadership training, various types of misconduct, both voluntary and involuntary, persist in gender-mixed units at all levels and in all communities. These programs, which may have unintended consequences, should be re-evaluated independently.⁵⁷
- b) In an official 2012 survey about moving women into combat units, many male Marines listed being falsely accused of sexual harassment or assault as a top concern. Thousands of men indicated that the change would prompt them to leave the service altogether.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Hope Hodge Seck, *Marine Corps Times*, [Grunt Life: Marines Dish on the Corps' Women in Combat Experiment](#), Sept. 7, 2015.

⁵⁶ Andrew Tilghman, *Navy Times*, [Female Combat Vets Report More Assaults](#), Oct. 14, 2013, p. 10. Researchers found that women in a high-stress, life-threatening combat setting may find it more difficult to identify, diffuse, or avoid high-risk settings for sexual assault and harassment.

⁵⁷ It is possible that some popular but misguided education techniques, such as the edgy role-playing play "Sex Signals," may be making problems worse.

⁵⁸ Julie Watson, AP, [Marine Survey Lists Concerns on Women in Combat](#), Feb. 1, 2013.

D. RECRUITING and RETENTION

15. **Effects on Recruiting Likely Would be Neutral or Positive.** “From a recruiting and propensity perspective, the opening up of these formerly closed MOS/units would likely have a neutral to positive effect, based on survey data.”

Response: The next sentence continues: “However, this presumes a voluntary assignment process, if females were to be involuntarily ordered into combat arms units, this could actually lower propensity and female enlistments.”⁵⁹

- a) What if assignments are not voluntary? During his news conference on December 3, 2015, Defense Secretary confirmed that once a woman joins the military she must follow orders in the same way that men must accept unexpected MOS changes, especially in time of war.⁶⁰
- b) CMR has confirmed that Joint Advertising, Market Research, and Studies (JAMRS) a defense contractor that surveys young people to determine their propensity to serve in the military, has never polled young people (and their advisors) on a key question reflecting the absolute reality that Defense Secretary Carter confirmed in December: *Would you join the Marine Corps/military if women would be required to serve in combat arms units such as the infantry on an involuntary basis?*
- c) Recruiters have a tough job and the All-Volunteer Force depends on their success. But young people deserve full disclosure of the obligations they would have to accept along with the benefits of military service. Many will still want to sign up, but all should know the legal and physical liabilities.
- d) In particular, young women should know that hazards to their health in the new Gender-Free Military would be greater than they are for men of the same age, and “choice” of MOS would not be an option if quotas or military requirements have to be met.

⁵⁹ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, Summary & Conclusions, p. v.

⁶⁰ Transcript, Dec. 3, 2015. In June 2013, while testifying before the House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee, Marine Lt. Gen. Robert Milstead confirmed that women would be assigned on the same involuntary basis as men. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) asked Gen. Milstead about women who aren't interested in “that combat thing.” Could such assignments be a matter of “choice?” He responded by noting that military assignments are not voluntary. “That’s why we call them orders,” he said.

- e) According to non-service specific surveys done between January 2013 and March 2014, the announced change in policies affecting women caused 12% of male respondents and 20% of females to say they would be less likely to join the military.⁶¹
- f) An official 2012 survey found that about 22% of male Marines and 17% of female Marines said they would be likely to leave if women move into combat positions.⁶²

16. **Negative consequences will be temporary.** “[S]ome of the initial negative impacts are likely to diminish over time...attrition rates...when compared to male attrition rates...are also likely to diminish over time.”⁶³

Response: This is wishful thinking that is not supported by empirical evidence or experience.

- a) Personal and family choices are primary reasons why women leave the military before attaining high rank. There is no reason to believe that women will be more likely to forego personal and family choices in order to stay in the military while eligible for the combat arms. An official Army survey suggested that the opposite would be true.⁶⁴
- b) It is more logical to expect that gender-integration issues would persist and trigger even more complicated problems, such as consensual and non-consensual sexual misconduct, in the combat arms. This would erode combat effectiveness, not improve it.
- c) Assurances from the same people who have failed to “mitigate” these problems, despite untold millions of dollars and man-hours devoted to sexual assault awareness training, cannot be considered credible. There would be no benefits, in terms of military effectiveness, to offset the consequences of extending sexual misconduct problems into the combat arms.

17. **Previous gender-integration efforts in the military were successful.** “A thorough review of previous gender-integration experiences, in particular the opening of Marine Corps logistics and aviation occupational fields, suggested that unit and personnel readiness do not change

⁶¹ USMC Recruiting Command presentations titled [Female Enlisted Marine Accessions Brief to DACOWITS](#), Col. Smitherman, March 2014, p. 7; and Col. T. D. Trenchard, [Efforts to Influence Propensity to Serve and Increase Female Accessions](#), 19 September 2014, p. 7. CMR obtained additional data regarding propensity to serve in the Marine Corps from June 2011 through Spring 2014.

⁶² CMR: [Survey of Marines Fails to Show Support for Women in Direct Ground Combat Units](#), posted on www.cmrlink.org, February 2, 2013.

⁶³ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, Summary & Conclusions, p. v.

⁶⁴ AP and *USA Today*: [Few Women Want Combat Jobs, Survey Says](#), Feb. 24, 2014. Among Army women surveyed, 92.5% said they would not accept land combat assignments if they were offered.

significantly following gender integration. . . Ultimately, the effect of gender integration, at both the unit and individual Marine level, was largely determined by leadership and training.”⁶⁵

Response: The information provided to support the claim primarily relates to military women’s careers and lack of bias against them. This is nothing new.

- a) For decades, Defense Department reports have indicated that military women are promoted at rates equal to or faster than men.
- b) In addition, Marine logistics and aviation MOSs are not comparable to infantry and other direct ground combat battalions that seek out and attack the enemy with deliberate offensive action. The issue is combat effectiveness, not career opportunities.
- c) In Afghanistan and Iraq, some Marine and Army women served “In Harm’s Way” in Female Engagement Teams (FETs) and Cultural Support Teams (CFTs). These teams deployed with DGC forces in war zones, working with and gathering intelligence from civilian women and children. These missions were dangerous and worthy of respect, but they did not fit the definition of direct ground combat: seeking out and attacking the enemy with deliberate offensive action.

E. History, Other Countries, Selective Service and Future Evaluations

18. *Gender diversity will be accomplished in the same way as racial diversity.* “Further integration of females into the combat arms brings with it many of the general benefits of diversity that we experience across the spectrum of the workspace, both within the military as well as the private sector.”⁶⁶

Response: Unity of purpose in war is far more important than gender diversity, a quality that has little or nothing to do with combat effectiveness. Potential adversaries of the United States do not waste time on social engineering and mandates for “gender diversity metrics,” another name for quotas.

- a) President Harry Truman strengthened the armed forces when he confronted irrational prejudice in the military with his 1948 Executive Order outlawing racial discrimination. The Order advanced equal opportunity, but its primary purpose was military necessity.
⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Marine Corps Analysis, FN #12, *supra*, p. 18.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Summary & Conclusions, p. iv.

⁶⁷ Report of the Presidential Commission Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, November 1992, Commission Finding (CF) 1.33 and CF 1.33A, p. C-40.

- b) Racial differences are not consequential in battle, but gender differences are profound and relevant to ground combat realities. Assigning highest priority to gender diversity will not alleviate reality-based concerns about combat survivability and lethality in battle. There is no military need to assign women to combat arms units that attack the enemy.
- c) The Pentagon has enthusiastically embraced recommendations of the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC), which instigated the drive for women in land combat in its 2011 Final Report.⁶⁸ The Defense Department and military services are enthusiastically implementing MLDC recommendations for “gender diversity metrics,” another name for quotas. The MLDC also called for a “Chief Diversity Officer” (CDO) to enforce diversity quotas through the promotion process.
- d) The MLDC report admitted that the new “diversity management” would *not* be about “treating everyone the same,” adding, “This can be a difficult concept to grasp, especially for leaders who grew up with the EO-inspired mandate to be both color and gender-blind.” This concept, if implemented, would be a radical departure from the military’s honorable tradition of recognizing individual merit.

19. *In other allied nations, harmful consequences have not materialized.* Marine Corps Force Innovation Office personnel conducted several visits to exchange information with commanders of gender-integrated units in allied armies. “[A] thorough review of the experience of NATO and Allied nations was conducted. The review of these studies indicated that concerns about the detrimental impact of women on military readiness and cohesion have not materialized.” (p.19)

Response. The allied nations in question, Great Britain, Israel, Canada, and Australia do not use women in direct ground combat units comparable to DGC units in the United States.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *From Representation to Inclusion, Diversity Leadership for the 21st-Century Military*, Final Report, March 15, 2011. Instead of being blind to racial and gender differences, the MLDC report recommends race and gender consciousness. It repeatedly pushes for “diversity metrics,” which are supposed to enforce race- and gender-conscious “inclusion” that goes beyond EO [equal opportunity], and “needs to become the norm.” (p. 18, 97)

⁶⁹ Neither Britain nor Israel use female personnel in DGC units comparable to those in the United States. See CMR Policy Analysis: *New British Report Shreds Case for Women in Ground Close Combat (GCC)*, FN #15, *supra*, and CMR: *Israeli Defense Force Decides: Armored Tanks Will Stay All-Male*. The Canadian Forces (CF) are allied with the U.S., but their primary mission is peacekeeping, not offensive warfare. In a 1989 decision by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, all combat positions in the Canadian Forces (CF), except submarines, were opened to women. The primary purpose was equal opportunity. No attempt was made to consider the impact on operational readiness or unit effectiveness. (Presidential Commission Report, CF 1.129, P. C-67) The Australian push to assign female soldiers to land combat units was the direct result of a sex scandal at the nation’s military academy. Even though Australia offered various incentives, interest among women has been low. The culture of the Australian military is not comparable to that of the United States.

- a) None of these allied nations have militaries that engage in direct ground combat to the extent that America's armed forces do.
- b) There are no discussions of gender-integration policies of potential adversaries, such as North Korea, Iran, and jihadist forces such as ISIS and Al Qaeda.

20. Selective Service Registration on an equal basis is only "fair."

Response: When the U.S. Supreme Court decided the 1981 *Rostker v. Goldberg* case, which upheld women's exemption from Selective Service obligations, the court recognized and deferred to the diligent oversight that Congress had given to the issue in 1979. At the present time, however, Congress has not determined what the policy should be on Selective Service registration, and the administration is not likely to retain or defend women's exemption in court.

- a) In the landmark *Rostker* ruling, the Supreme Court upheld the right of Congress to exempt women from Selective Service obligations on the same basis as men:

"The purpose of registration was to prepare for a draft of combat troops. Since women are excluded from combat, Congress concluded that they would not be needed in the event of a draft, and therefore decided not to register them . . . Men and women, because of the combat restrictions on women, are simply not similarly situated for purposes of a draft or registration for a draft." (453 U.S. at 77-78)
- b) Professor William A. Woodruff of Campbell School of Law, who retired from the Army as a colonel and served as a Judge Advocate General, notes that the *Rostker* decision was an easy call. Since women were not eligible for direct ground combat, they were not "*similarly situated*" with men and did not have to be treated the same as men under Selective Service law. "However," wrote Woodruff, "if we remove the combat exclusion, the obvious result is that women and men are 'similarly situated' and the justification for *Rostker* is no longer present."
- c) In a May 14, 2014 letter the Defense Department acknowledged that the "factual backdrop in the *Rostker* decision was in the process of changing, but "the Court in *Rostker* did not consider whether other rationales underlying the statute are sufficient to limit the application of the Military Selective Service Act to men." There are three things wrong with the current situation:
 - Decisions as consequential as this should be made by Congress, not federal courts.
 - No one can predict or guarantee what a future Supreme Court will decide.

- The Executive Branch and its key appointees are on record in favor of imposing Selective Service obligations on an equal basis; they cannot be counted on to defend the legality of exempting women from Selective Service obligations.

The Administration and its key appointees are on record in favor of imposing Selective Service obligations on an equal basis; they cannot be counted on to defend the legality of exempting women from Selective Service obligations.

- Ordering women to register for Selective Service is not necessary; there is no need to draft women to be “combat replacements.” If there is no need for such a draft, there is no need to register women.
- In all wars in American history, women have volunteered to support the war effort and will do so again.
- Unlike Israel, which has conscription, this is a free and so-far secure country. Young people should not be conscripted when there is no compelling national reason to deprive them of their freedom.
- Military conscription would be especially unfair to women, who do not have an equal opportunity to survive, or help fellow soldiers survive, in a direct ground combat environment. Nor is there a need to burden the Selective Service system to register great numbers of individuals who are not qualified for military service.

Some people have argued that registration should be scrapped all together, which would be unwise. The system is a relatively low-cost insurance policy that should not be dropped because of gender integration.

21. Gender-integration policies will be monitored and assessed.

Response: In July 2015 the General Accountability Office (GAO) reported that the Department of Defense has no plans to evaluate the results of this social experiment – the most consequential since the disastrous Vietnam-era Project 100,000.⁷⁰ GAO recommends that the Defense Department devise such a plan, which will very likely involve outside contractors such as RAND.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Kelly M. Greenhill, *New York Times*, [Don't Dumb Down the Army](#), February 17, 2006. During the Vietnam War, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara created Project 100,000 to help approximately 300,000 men who annually failed Army aptitude tests. Many “Category IV” recruits, known as “New Standards Men,” were relegated to “soft skill” jobs or the infantry, where they were 2 ½ times more likely to die in combat. Eleven times more had to be re-assigned, and 9 to 22 percent required remedial training. New Standards Men involved in the failed experiment fared no better than non-veteran counterparts, and many suffered post-combat psychological problems.

⁷¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report, [Military Personnel: DoD is Expanding Combat Service Opportunities for Women, but Should Monitor Long-Term Integration Progress](#), July 2015. A section of Brig.

- a) Since the 1990s, RAND has provided to the Defense Department reports that misstate issues and declare "success" for the consequences of their own policy recommendations, despite contrary evidence.⁷²
- b) If RAND or other organizations that advocated for women in the combat arms are invited to evaluate the results of their own recommendations, and to withhold problematic information, all social experiments will be declared "successful," no matter what.

The Executive Branch's unilateral plans to order military women into the combat arms rely upon best-case scenarios and unsupported assumptions that are not the basis for sound policy. This remains a social experiment with known and unknown high risks to individual lives, missions, and national security.

The next Commander-in-Chief, therefore, must take the lead, starting with orders to all appointees and military officials to provide complete and candid information on what has been done to our military during eight years of social experimentation since 2009.

Current military leaders must follow orders, but the next president will have the power to change existing directives in the same way that the current president imposed them. Leaders of the next administration should be prepared to restore sound priorities, putting the needs of the military first.

* * * * *

The Center for Military Readiness is an independent, non-partisan public policy organization, founded in 1993, which reports on and analyzes military/social issues. More information is available on the CMR website, www.cmrlink.org.

General George Smith's memo cited in FN #13, *supra*, supports a "Long-term Assessment" of the results of gender integration. It mentions RAND and/or CNA (Center for Naval Analysis) to do the assessments, for as long as 10 - 20 years. (Sec. 5, p. 10) Appendix II of the GAO report cited above lists many outside organizations that have been working on various phases of the Women in Services Restrictions Review (WISRR). The Defense Department Office of the Under Secretary for Personnel & Readiness lists RAND as the primary contractor.

⁷² CMR Analyzes 1997 Rand Study, and Rubber Stamp RAND Report Promotes Women in Land Combat, Oct. 1, 2007.

IV. GCEITF Measurements of Differences in Performance Tasks Simulating Direct Ground Combat

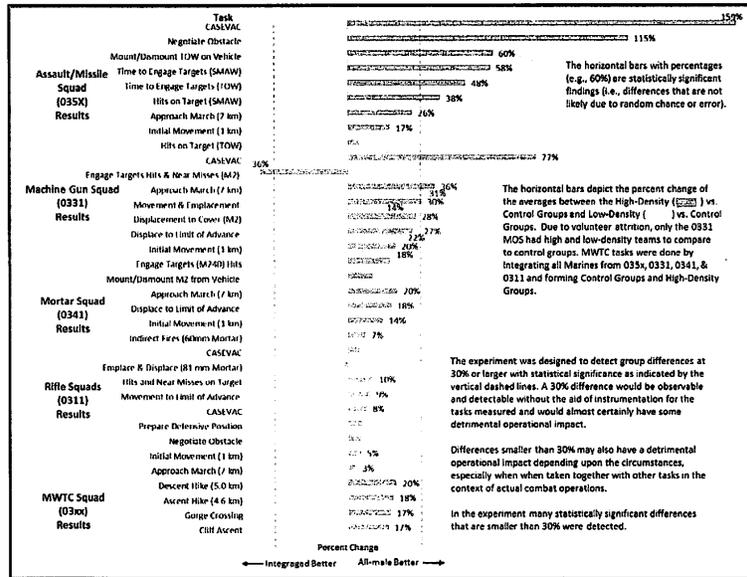


Figure 12. Infantry Summary Comparison of Percentage Change of All Tasks

Figure 12 presents a summary of the differences observed when comparing all-male infantry squads to integrated task force squads. The horizontal bars depict the percentage change observed when comparing the average all-male squad result to an average gender-integrated squad result on common infantry tasks such as casualty evacuation (CASEVAC). The numerical percentage presented adjacent to the bar is indicative of statistical significance, which is related to the size of the difference, variation, and the number of trials for that task. When a bar shifts to the right of the centerline the all-male group's average is better than the integrated group's, and vice versa. (Darker bars indicate "high density" units with more than two women; lighter bars represent "low density" units with two women or less.) (pp. 9-10)

Machine Gun Squad (0331) results were better for gender-mixed units in the "Engage Targets" category, but high-density squads took significantly longer to displace from the firing line compared to both the all-male and low-density integrated 0331 squads. (p. 25)

(Source: Marine Corps Operational Test & Evaluation, Activity Report, 14 August 2015, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force Experimental Assessment Report – For Official Use Only – p. 29)

Physiology, Sports Science and the Debate Over Women in Ground Combat Units**Testimony submitted to the US Senate Armed Services Committee****Paul O. Davis****February 2, 2016**

Every year in professional sports, millions, perhaps billions, of dollars are spent on personnel costs — scouting, recruiting, healthcare and salaries — all in the name of winning a game. The objective is simple: maximizing and bringing to bear the physical abilities of the world's best athletes. Similarly, in the military, the top of the human performance ziggurat is represented by the combat arms — infantry, armor, artillery, engineers, and at the pinnacle of fitness and physical ability, special operators. Given these similarities, sports medicine — the science of human performance — provides valuable insights into the ingredients in fielding a winning combat team, and the costs of compromising.

The current controversy over opening ground combat to female service members would benefit from the objective analysis of data. In the 1980s, our research group, the Institute of Human Performance, was asked by the Marine Corps to discern the relationship between the Marines' PFT (physical fitness test) and combat performance. Our efforts and the results of this study are highly relevant to the inflamed debate on women in direct ground combat units. And while opinion inevitably plays a major role in this debate, all sides will benefit by considering our observations principally because they are based on scientific research.

The conclusions based on our research results should influence objective discussion. While this study was conducted nearly 30 years ago, it has relevance today since all the metrics remain unchanged: A minute is still 60 seconds, gravity's force is still 32 feet per second squared, and consuming one liter of oxygen still burns five calories. While the contentiousness and framing of an issue such as this one change over time, science remains the same.

Research Design

Our group of kinesiologists, exercise scientists, sports medicine physicians, and biomechanics experts scoured the peer-reviewed published research and all the technical documents describing infantry performance as far back as World War I. We then took to the field and embedded as "grunts" in infantry battalions to get a worm's-eye view of life in the fleet.

Living the life of a rifleman was essential for several reasons. Our credibility was enhanced by sleeping in the same fighting holes, humping through the same knee-deep mud, and bearing all of the customary loss of amenities that make up the working environment of a combat Marine. Doing whatever the Marines were doing brought a certain level of appreciation and established in real time how fitness benefits mobility and load carriage in ways that might not be apparent to observers wearing white lab coats and carrying clipboards.

Over a five-year period, we developed a taxonomy of job tasks for the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 0311 (rifleman) in four theaters of combat operations: jungle training at Fort Sherman, Panama's jungle survival school, High Altitude Winter Training at the Marine Corps' Mountain Warfare Training Center, desert operations at Twentynine Palms Marine Base, and amphibious operations around the world. All of our observations and measurements resulted in

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the obvious conclusion that combat tasks at altitude and in the snow had the highest metabolic and muscular fitness demands.

We then created a combat simulation course and randomly selected 200 Marines from two infantry battalions to undergo physiological testing at the Navy's Health Research Center in San Diego. Later, they spent a day out of their one-month deployment at 9,000 feet performing a series of linked combat tasks.

Our election was to test individual Marines, thereby avoiding the confounding effects of group interaction. On an individual basis, the weakest link can best be identified, rather than camouflaged by other Marines picking up the slack. All the Marines were tested for marksmanship with their issued M-16A2 at the beginning and the end of the day's foot movements. The energy costs of the day's effort were equivalent to those of a half-marathon.

What We Found

In essence, our results demonstrated a clear relationship between marksmanship and fitness. This is an important statistic when you keep in mind that all the Marines were very fit compared to age-matched civilian populations or troops from other services. In an average group of service personnel including non-combat forces, the differences would likely have been staggering.

Physical size is extremely important when carrying loads that approach 100 pounds. The harsh effects of altitude exacerbate the strains on endurance. Small Marines struggled to move towed loads, and their times were considerably slower on long marches employing snowshoes. On road marches, the pace of the group tends to slow to that of the stragglers — hence our attention to the performance characteristics of Marines who were self-pacing. Physical size is a very big part of performance. That's why the martial arts and other "combat" sports (such as boxing) have weight classes.

A forklift is illustrative of the biomechanics of load carriage and lifting. If I choose to purchase a forklift with a maximum lift of 3,000 pounds, and every lift approaches that maximum, the machine is going to fail in a relatively short time. If I have a functional reserve of 2,000 pounds, the useful lifespan of my forklift is significantly lengthened. A practical, human example is that of firefighters performing on-the-job tasks. Not surprisingly, less-fit firefighters have a higher frequency of lower back injuries.

The Marine Corps PFT has general predictive validity but lacks precision when loads are added. Aerobic fitness is an important quality in combat, but running tests provide an advantage to lighter individuals. As loads are added to an individual, the effects to lighter individuals are more deleterious. Simply stated, larger Marines can carry greater loads with less performance degradation.

Our data has great value in cutting through the emotional issues that have obfuscated the question of how combat effectiveness would change with the introduction of women to the combat arms. Our research cannot address risks or benefits related to unit cohesion, equal opportunity, fraternization, conscription, recruitment and retention, harassment, or related

issues. But it has much to offer on the issue of combat effectiveness, as well as the related issue of injury potential.

Applying the Data to Today's Debate

Imagine for a moment that you can build a team from scratch based only on candidates' physical characteristics. You do not know the sex of the potential team members; you only know how each measures up in those areas that scientifically predict a successful outcome: aerobic fitness (particularly absolute aerobic power unadjusted for body weight), muscular strength (as represented by maximal lifting capacity), and anaerobic power. These are the underlying factors that coaches employ to create a winning sports team. Sport-specific variables can then be added to optimize team performance for a given sport. So, for example, for baseball we could add variables like batting averages, speed to first base, fastball speed, etc. For our military team, marksmanship would weigh very high, as would load carriage and dynamic strength. But the basic fitness dimensions must be present before we add specific skills.

Science is based upon empirical evidence. If we start with a hypothesis that there is no difference between men and women (in Marines, or other groups), we should structure our decision about whether to integrate women into ground combat units in such a way that we maximize the likelihood of making the right decision and minimize the consequences of making the wrong one. The object of combat is to effectively employ violence to defeat the enemy on the battlefield. Accordingly, we want to field a team whose physical characteristics maximize our chances of success.

In statistical analysis, there are two types of decision errors (or wrong decisions) known as Type I and Type II errors. A Type I error is detecting an effect that is not present. A Type II error is failing to detect an effect that is present. If we decide that female Marines perform less well than male Marines when, "in reality," they are equals, then we have made a wrong decision (Type I error). What are the consequences of this wrong decision? Qualified female Marines would not be assigned to infantry units, and arguably, their promotions or career paths might be affected.

If, however, we decide that female Marines perform equivalently to male Marines, but, "in reality," they are poorer performers, then we have also made a wrong decision (Type II error). What are the consequences of this wrong decision? In this case we accept people who would reduce combat effectiveness. What would be the results of less qualified Marines being added to a unit? Marines might get killed, and the likelihood of winning on the battlefield is eroded. That's a pretty severe downside.

Sex Differences, Peak Fitness, and Sustained Combat

Motivated individuals at virtually anytime in their lives can improve their muscular and cardiovascular fitness. In sports, the objective is to achieve peak fitness with a target event, such as the Olympics. In the military, for many non-combat arms service members, the target event will be graduation from basic combat training. During this period, impressive fitness

improvements take place as new service members are challenged to do things that, for many, are outside of their comfort zone.

But basic training is but a first step for those entering combat arms fields, who will progress through job-specific advanced individual training and toward the harsh reality of sustained combat. And it is in this environment of sustained combat that fitness is most severely tested. The practical reality is that no one can stay at his or her peak levels. But in a combat environment, fitness must be kept above a minimum threshold for combat effectiveness. If that threshold is at or near an individual's peak level, attempts to continuously work at or above of his or her daily functional limits will result in injury. This is why study after study shows women (and weaker males) incurring injuries disproportionate to their numbers.

There is also the somewhat more intangible issue of combat leadership to consider, which is also tied to physiology and fitness. There are women, in small numbers that can exceed the physical work capacity of some men — men who are at the tail of the left end of the frequency distribution curve. But because of the reasons discussed above — load-bearing capability, fitness degradation, and the rigors of sustained combat — women are not found at the far right end of the frequency distribution curve, exhibiting the ability to sustain a level of fitness that will allow them to lead from the front, as is so often the practice of infantry officers up to and through the rank of lieutenant colonel. Leadership is paramount in the warrior ethos. It is infectious and critical to *esprit d'corps*, be it at the squad, platoon or company level.

Lessons from Public Safety

Proponents for integrating women into the combat arms point to law enforcement and fire fighting as examples where women have assumed a visible presence. There are similarities between ground combat and particularly the fire service. But the differences are more striking. Both require bouts of heavy lifting, but the fire service is heavily unionized and the shift schedules are constrained to 24 hours. Few fire departments require any form of retention standards, meaning once out of the academy, the requirement to demonstrate the possession of perishable fitness constructs is no longer in evidence. In the face of threats of employment opportunity litigation, entry-level standards have progressively been lowered to accommodate women. Even where entry tests are used, it's important to realize that all such tests are but a snapshot of the capabilities of an applicant in a very narrow time-bandwidth. Combat can stretch over weeks and months and bring with it significant degradation in performance. And public safety is not without its own sexual harassment issues. Despite the fact that the first women firefighter came on board nearly 40 years ago, harassment charges continue. There is no evidence to support that the addition of women has improved mission effectiveness within law enforcement or fire suppression.

Focus on the Mission

The worst-case scenario should always be the driving force for training. The whole idea behind training is sweating today to avoid bleeding tomorrow. Our applied research conducted in a harsh environment is still relevant. And, keep in mind, our study only measured a single day's

activity. Performance degradation is bound to happen in a sustained theater of operation. The better news is the more fit at the front end, the longer the degradation slope.

For a number of years, I worked as a fitness consultant for the Washington Redskins. Then-coach George Allen challenged me to lay awake at night, thinking of any scintilla of training, no matter how miniscule, that would give his team an edge over the nefarious Dallas Cowboys. With an intensity rivaling Patton's, Coach Allen was consumed with winning. Suggesting that we add women to the squad would not have been well received. There is no professional sport where women are present, except in separate leagues. Our military must focus on winning with similar intensity. If you lose sight of the mission, the war is lost.

If politics is the art of compromise, then science is the practice of the probable. In the book of *Ecclesiastes*, 9:11, it goes something like this: "...for the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Somerset Maugham added: "But, that's the way to bet."

Paul O. Davis, Ph.D., FACSM is a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine and director of First Responder Institute. He is a recognized expert witness, having participated in over 60-employment standards lawsuits and was the Principal Investigator of the multi-year, global environmental physiology study for the Marine Corps. He is the co-author (with Dr. Brian Sharkey) of the seminal textbook Hard Work: Defining Physical Work Performance Requirements. In addition, Dr. Davis is the creator of the Firefighter Combat Challenge, the Military Battle Challenge, and provides color commentary for ESPN, Versus, CBS Sports, and Discovery.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your testimony.

General Milley, I was, as you I think suggested in your comments, very impressed that three female officers graduated from Ranger School, very demanding. From your professional experience and my retrospective experience, they would seem to be entirely capable of leading an infantry unit in combat. Is that your conclusion?

General MILLEY. Yes, Senator. I would say that those three women that graduated could perform satisfactorily in an infantry unit in combat.

Senator REED. And your approach and I presume the approach of the Marine Corps also will be moving forward on a step-by-step basis and integrating what you learned as you move forward so that it is clear this is going to happen from your standpoint, but that it is going to happen in an informed, careful way so that the capability of the unit combat effectiveness is not jeopardized. Is that fair to say?

General MILLEY. Absolutely correct, Senator.

Senator REED. One other aspect of this issue too—and I think it was alluded to in all the testimony, and it is also reflected in a great deal of academic research recently—is that it seems that groups' collective intelligence increased as the number of women joined the group. And in fact, I think, General Neller, that one aspect of the Marine Corps study was that in those problems, those field problems that had more challenging cognitive elements than just simply brute strength, the study found that the integrated teams performed as well or better than the all-male teams. Is that a fair estimate?

General NELLER. Senator, in the evaluation we did in that one particular part of the trial, there was a positive aspect of problem solving when the teams were integrated.

Senator REED. Right.

And I think one of the other aspects—and again, this is more observation than conclusion, but we see battlefields that are increasingly more complex. I mean, what you have seen in Afghanistan and Iraq is not a force-on-force, front line of LD [Line of Duty]—it is cultural activities. It is integrating with the community. It is picking up intelligence. It is doing lots of things that have a much more significant cognitive development than I would—again, this is more anecdotal than anything else—suggest might have happened on the battalion versus battalion warfare of World War II and other combat we have engaged in. That might suggest strongly that this direction is exactly the right direction to take.

One other aspect, of course, is that—and I assume this, but I want your response—if in fact the Marine Corps is not granted an exemption, you are fully prepared and expect the Marine Corps successfully will integrate women into their ranks. Is that correct?

General NELLER. Senator, the Secretary of Defense has made a decision that we will not grant an exemption. So we are in the process and we have a plan, which we submitted, to successfully integrate women into these previously restricted MOS's and previously restricted units.

Senator REED. And you are confident that the Marine Corps will succeed as it always seem to succeed.

General NELLER. I want every marine to succeed, Senator. So that is our goal.

Senator REED. Yes, sir. Thank you for that.

One of the other aspects going forward with respect to this issue is that essentially being able to recruit individuals in a very difficult, for want of a better term, market—roughly 25 percent of the young people that are of enlistment age are physically and other-

wise qualified right now because it is generally looked at as male dominated. But this would expand—i.e., giving the options for women would expand—the number and the quality, I presume, of recruits that you could access. Is that a fair judgment? Then I will ask Secretary Mabus and Secretary Murphy to comment.

Mr. MABUS. That is a very fair judgment, Senator. As you correctly pointed out, only one out of four Americans aged 18 to 24 qualify for our military for physical reasons, educational reasons, or criminal records. And to shrink that pool deprives us of a lot of talent.

Senator REED. Secretary Murphy?

Mr. MURPHY. That is correct, Senator, that we do not want to exclude 50 percent of the potential talent pool in America. We need all the able bodied men and women, the best and the brightest and the toughest, to join our ranks to sustain the all-volunteer force that we have had.

Senator REED. Just a final comment/question very quickly and that is this is not just about the individual qualifications, it is also about the group performance. And that is a concern you all have to take into consideration as you move forward. But I just reflect, Secretary Mabus, for the longest time, submarine crews were all male because of the presumption that in that close, confined, extended tour, 6 months at sea, that dynamic would not work. And you have successfully and the Navy has successfully integrated the crews on submarines so that they are both male and female. And what I am hearing is that the record is very, very good in terms of performance. Is that fair?

Mr. MABUS. That is absolutely correct, Senator. The decision was made in 2010. Women have been going to sea in submarines since early 2011, and they perform magnificently and there has been no decrease and we think an increase in combat readiness for those submarines.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Cotton?

Senator COTTON. I first want to associate myself with the views of General Neller and General Milley, that to discuss women serving in combat is something of a misnomer. Women have been serving valiantly in combat certainly for the last 15 years and in reality much longer than that. So this is not really a question of women being in combat. This is about a limited number of roles, primarily in the Army and the Marine Corps, although the Air Force and the Navy do have some elite special operations forces that will be impacted. And within those two services, it is primarily about infantry and a few other combat-related roles.

General Neller, since your service had requested an exemption, I would like to direct this question to you. Secretary of Defense Carter has said he is confident that you can address all concerns of implementation. The Ground Combat Integration Task Force, though, did conclude that there are irreducible and obvious physiological differences between men and women. That is one reason why there are men's and women's athletic events at the Olympics.

Could you elaborate a little bit on how you plan to address these implementation questions?

General NELLER. Well, Senator, we learned a lot from the evaluation and the additional studies and other countries we looked at. So there are a lot of pieces to how we are going to implement this in a successful way. Part of it is going to be the standards that have been established to get into the entry level before you actually enlist, when you are at recruit training, and then the MOS qualifications. We are going to look at other ways to improve the physical capability of not just female but all infantry marines to reduce injury because incidence of injury is a concern.

But I am not sure how far we can go with that just based on the simple fact in the infantry, the load-bearing requirements and the oxygen use, endurance between men and women—there are always exceptions. I mean, they are what they are.

So we are going to look at this. We are going to monitor it. Part of our process is a continued study and evaluation to see what we can do and cannot do to mitigate this because at the end of the day, we have to maintain our readiness and we want every marine to be successful.

Senator COTTON. Thank you. I am confident that whatever the policy direction you receive, you will do the very best job you can, as will General Milley, to ensure that your marines and your soldiers are set up for success, men and women alike.

Secretary Mabus, I would like to go to an interview conducted last September about the study the Marine Corps conducted. You said, “it started out with a fairly large component of the men thinking this is not a good idea, and women will not be able to do this. When you start out with that mindset, you are almost presupposing the outcome.”

Which men in the Marine Corps had that mindset?

Mr. MABUS. What I based that on, Senator, was some of the conclusions drawn from that study that were presented to me, which was that the marines that were chosen, the marines who volunteered and who I brag on for doing that—they did a great job in terms of establishing standards.

However, some of the conclusions that were drawn was that male marines did not know how to—had not had any experience—

Senator COTTON. Well, Secretary Mabus, the conclusions speak for themselves. You are questioning the motives of the Marine Corps leader in that statement it sounded like to me.

Mr. MABUS. No, sir, I am not. I am speaking to the conclusions that were drawn, that the male marines in that experiment—most of them had had no experience working with women in these occupations, and they simply did not know how to do that. And that was one of the conclusions, and that was one of the conclusions that said you had to provide that leadership, which is part of the implementation plan, that leadership, to make sure that all marines, male and female, know how to deal with the other gender in these very demanding roles.

Senator COTTON. Well, let us speak about the female marines in that study. You also were quoted in that interview as saying, “I mean, in terms of the women who volunteered probably should have been a higher bar to cross to get into the experiment.” Do you owe an apology to the women that participated in that study?

Mr. MABUS. Senator—and I have the entire interview here. I know exactly what you are talking about. What I kept talking about was there were no standards for any of these when you started out. So the only thing that the women—

Senator COTTON. The women in the Marine Corps' physical fitness test—the women in that study outperformed the average female marine, as compared to the man performing the average male marine. So the women were actually out performing the average female marine as compared to men in that study.

Mr. MABUS. On the generalized physical fitness test, combat fitness test, nobody had had to meet a standard for these ground combat units. Nobody. There were no standards in there. One of the ways that General Neller just talked about that you ensure the integration is successful is by training to these very intense physical standards and starting at recruit training, starting at MOS schools, starting there and not just going to the very basic physical fitness test or combat fitness test.

Senator COTTON. Thank you. My time has expired.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator McCaskill?

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you.

I think one of the questions we have to address now is registering for the selective service. As some of you may know, there was a Supreme Court decision back in 1981 when in fact the question was put in front of the Supreme Court whether women should be required to register for the selective service under current law. Justice Rehnquist wrote, "the existence of combat restrictions clearly indicates the basis for Congress' decision to exempt women from registration. The purpose of registration was to prepare for a draft of combat troops. Since women are excluded from combat, Congress concluded they would not be needed in the event of a draft and therefore decided not to register them." So in other words, the rationale that Rehnquist used for saying there was no requirement of women to register for the selective service has now been eliminated.

And I guess I want to ask all of you your sense of this. Part of me believes that asking women to register, as we ask men to register, would maybe, possibly open more recruits as women began to think about, well, the military is an option for me. And if you would briefly go down the line and give me your sense as to whether or not Congress should look at requiring selective service registration for all Americans.

General NELLER. Senator, it is my personal view that based on this lifting of restrictions for assignment to unit MOS, that every American who is physically qualified should register for the draft.

Senator MCCASKILL. Secretary Mabus?

Mr. MABUS. Senator, I think you correctly pointed out this needs to be looked at as part of a national debate, given the changed circumstances.

The one thing you did say, not selective service-related, but that we do believe that this will open up recruiting, that more women will be interested in—I will just talk about the Marines—in the Marines because these last restrictions have been removed.

Senator MCCASKILL. Secretary Murphy?

Mr. MURPHY. Senator, I believe that, yes, there should be a national debate and I encourage the legislative body to look at that. I would say that unlike the decision in 1981 where we are now in the longest war in American history over the last almost 15 years, that we have had over 1,000 women killed or injured in combat. Now, with this implementation, if you can meet the standard, you are on a team no matter what MOS it is. So I highly encourage that national debate, ma'am.

Chairman MCCAIN. You would encourage what?

Senator MCCASKILL. The debate.

Mr. MURPHY. The national debate, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. You were asked for your opinion, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. MURPHY. Yes.

Senator MCCASKILL. General Milley?

General MILLEY. Senator, I think that all eligible and qualified men and women should register for the draft.

Senator MCCASKILL. Well, I do too. I think it is the right thing going forward.

I know that the Air Force has established a goal of having 30 percent of its active duty applicant pool be women. Have there been any goals established in either the Army or the Navy?

Mr. MABUS. No, Senator.

Senator MCCASKILL. Secretary Murphy or General Milley, either one?

Mr. MURPHY. Senator, approximately 14 percent of our soldiers are women. At West Point, when I was a professor there in 2000, 16 percent were women. Now it is 22 percent are women. But the Army looks to be reflective of our society.

General MILLEY. Senator, you asked about goals.

Senator MCCASKILL. Right, just a goal.

General MILLEY. The short answer is no. We have not set a goal for women in the infantry or the armor in terms of numbers or percentages whatsoever.

Senator MCCASKILL. Okay.

General NELLER. Senator, could I just—

Senator MCCASKILL. Sure, sure.

General NELLER. Right now, just under 8 percent of the Marine Corps are female marines, officer and enlisted. Even prior to this decision, I directed our recruiting to look at the possibility of increasing the number of women in the Marine Corps to 10 percent and to see if we can make that goal.

Senator MCCASKILL. I want to briefly give a shout-out. I do think there is some culture here. Nobody here wants the standards to be lowered. And I think frankly the people who really do not want the standards to be lowered are women. The last thing in the world a woman needs is to join a unit with everyone looking over their shoulder saying, well, you are not the same as we are. So I do not think anybody here thinks that standards should be lowered.

And I want to point out that the sapper course at Fort Leonard Wood—I do not think that anybody think that sappers—that course is easy. Obviously, you are combat-trained in that course. For people who are not aware, this is for specially trained combat engi-

neers. And they have been taking women since 1999 at Fort Leonard Wood for this course. And it is tough.

Now, the interesting thing about that, while there have not been a lot of women that have taken it, the percentage of women who have completed is identical to the percentage of men who have completed, 50 percent. So I would certainly urge all of you to take a look at what Fort Leonard Wood has done and how they have done it in one of the toughest physical challenges. You know, it is not the same as combat training, but they have to be combat-ready to graduate from the sapper course. So I certainly wanted to give a shout out to what I think is great work being done at Fort Leonard Wood.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Wicker?

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much.

And let me just say there is a real risk for anybody discussing this issue to appear insensitive or politically incorrect. And I really appreciated the way the chairman began the discussion this morning by outlining the very significant role that women, including members of this committee, have made for the military in terms of aviation, in terms of very, very difficult and demanding jobs. And, Mr. Chairman, I appreciated you pointing out that is not what this hearing is about.

What this hearing is about and what this change is about is the very demanding subspecialty of close combat. And as the chairman pointed out, close combat is brutal. It is physically brutal. The training for that is physically brutal. And so the question is how can we open this to a group of people when the physical realities seem to indicate that this is really a departure from what can work.

Let me ask General Neller and General Milley. General Neller, let me start with the infantry officer course. Women have entered this course. Am I correct? But no women have passed this course. Am I correct there?

General NELLER. Yes, sir. 29 marine officer females have attempted and have not yet successfully completed the course.

Senator WICKER. Why is this test so rigorous? Why is it necessary it be so rigorous?

General NELLER. It is an MOS-producing school.

Senator WICKER. And for the benefit of people watching that might not know all of our jargon, tell us what MOS—

General NELLER. Military occupational specialty. This is where a marine officer goes to become MOS qualified to lead an infantry platoon, rifle platoon, or a weapons platoon. So the standards that exist there involve tactics, physicality, physical fitness, understanding weapons, and it is a very tough and demanding course.

Senator WICKER. Why?

General NELLER. Because they are going to lead their marines in combat, and they have to be able to lead from the front and they have to be able to understand all aspects of their profession. And they have to be physically fit enough and strong enough to be able to withstand the rigors of combat. And so the attrition is 25 percent of the men that go to this course. So it is a very tough, demanding course.

Senator WICKER. General Milley, would you comment on that in the same vein, sir?

General MILLEY. I would agree with General Neller in that the rigors of ground combat are brutal and they are hard, and we have very, very high standards and they are directly related not to gender. They are related to the combat tasks that you are expected to execute engaged against the enemies of our country. And we have developed and the Marines have developed very, very rigorous standards over many, many years. So those that make it, great. And if they do not, then they do not.

Senator WICKER. You know, we have had testimony from Secretary Mabus that reducing the standards would be unacceptable. Members of this committee have reiterated that. That is absolutely something that must not be done. But it is hard to imagine down the road, 5 years from now, 10 years from now, if we do not have successful graduations from this physically demanding program—it is hard to imagine that this conversation will not take a different tone. And I do not see how we can guarantee that in the future, these standards will not be diminished.

And so I would just say, you know, I realize that you are in a tough spot, and you two generals have given us your best military judgment and that is what we are asking you in the testimony here.

But as Senator McCain mentioned, we have an overriding mission, and that is to overwhelm the enemy however we engage them. And in this special part of combat where it is close combat, it never needs to be a fair fight. We need to put our strongest and we need to put our best and we always need to have the best people.

Let me ask you this, General. When people who are unlikely to pass the test are admitted, are we expanding the pool of candidates to accommodate women candidates for the infantry officer course? Are they keeping someone who might pass from getting a shot at this? Is that a consideration that we need to think about at all?

General NELLER. Senator, any officer at the basic school who wants to compete for an opportunity to be an infantry officer has the opportunity to do that.

Senator WICKER. Are there limited numbers of slots?

General NELLER. There is a number per course, but if the course were full, they would be able to elect to stay. But each graduating class has a certain number. And there is a period of time. Sometimes the course is full and we allow a group of officers to stay and prepare. There is actually a preparation time because of the rigors of the course. So there is no effort to deny anybody an opportunity to compete.

Senator WICKER. Well, I appreciate the task that you have been given as somebody who takes orders, and I wish you the best. We want to work with you, but I must say I have serious misgivings about moving to this particular point in our military.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I hope my good friend from Mississippi is not suggesting that if all of the positions are opened up to women, that standards will

automatically decline over time. That is what it sort of sounded to me like you were saying. So I hope that is not—

Chairman MCCAIN. I am sure the Senator can give you an explanation in private.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was pleased to hear everyone who has spoken today talk about the performance of women on the battlefield time and again and pleased to hear most of you say that if a woman meets all the standards for the position, that she is qualified and that she should be allowed to serve and that should be the end of the discussion and that now the important thing is to focus on implementation of this policy. So I appreciate that and hope that on this committee and in Congress, we can do everything possible to support you in that effort.

Secretary Mabus, you have received criticism, as has been indicated this morning, for your support of combat integration. And I wonder if you could elaborate. You alluded to why you think this is so important. But can you elaborate on why you think it is important and how you think it could strengthen our all-volunteer force?

Mr. MABUS. Senator, a more diverse force, as you heard from the question from Senator Reed, diversity of outlook, diversity of experience is a stronger force. We have proven it over and over again. When we integrated the armed forces in the late 1940s, we came out with a stronger force. The same thing when we began to recruit larger numbers of women in the 1980s, we came out with a stronger force. The same thing when you repealed Don't Ask, Don't Tell, we came out with a stronger force at the end. And as long as you keep the standards and as long as those standards are not arbitrary, that they are operationally relevant, they are job-related, then gender ought to be irrelevant because what a marine on the line wants to know about any marine on either side is did they have to meet the same standards. Do they have to do same things that I had to do to be here?

And that is why I believe that this will strengthen the armed forces, that this will strengthen the Marine Corps. Senator Reed asked about submarines. We have seen how it has strengthened Navy units that are fully integrated, and it is virtually every one. So I do believe that a more diverse force, not about quotas, not about gender, but just about experience and perception, is a stronger force. And that is all of our jobs, is to make this a more effective, more lethal fighting force.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Secretary Carter directed the services to provide their final detailed implementation plans no later than January 1st of 2016. General Neller and General Milley, can you confirm that those implementation plans have been provided? And do they have to be approved, and has that been done yet?

General NELLER. Senator, we provided our plan to the Secretary of the Navy, and he forwarded it to the Secretary of Defense. We are still waiting for those plans to be approved, and we expect that that is going to happen here shortly.

Senator SHAHEEN. General Milley?

General MILLEY. Same thing, Senator. We provided our plan to the Secretary of Defense, and we are waiting on approval.

Senator SHAHEEN. And you expect that to happen in the near future?

General MILLEY. I really do not know when. I do expect it at some time in the relatively near future, but I do not know when.

Senator SHAHEEN. Again, part of that directive required the services to begin implementation no later than April 1st, 2016. So are we assuming that we are on course to do that? Is everybody in agreement with that?

General MILLEY. Well, it is no later than 1 April pending approval. So the Secretary had a session with us and he told us execute when I have approved your plan. The target date is 1 April, but we are not supposed to execute prior to his approval.

Senator SHAHEEN. General Neller?

General NELLER. The same thing, Senator. As General Milley said, this is not going to happen 1 April that we are going to see—I mean, some of it has already happened. We have got 239 females in what were previously restricted units in MOS's they already hold, and we have been doing that for several years. So that is already ongoing. But beginning to recruit those that can meet the standards that now exist before you go to recruit training, while you are at recruit training, and the MOS standards at school—that has not yet begun, and that is going to take some time.

Senator SHAHEEN. I am out of time, but my final question was, does part of the plan address a response to concerns that may be raised by other folks who are part of this effort about fully implementing the policy? We will submit that for the record to ask you to respond to that.

[The information referred to follows:]

Mr. MURPHY. Yes. The Army is providing leaders and Soldiers with integration education and training to enhance our integration efforts. This is supporting leadership efforts to facilitate the cultural change necessary to ensure successful gender integration into all Infantry and Armor units.

General NELLER. The Marine Corps will use both an Education Plan and an Assessment Plan to address the concerns and questions of service members during integration. The Education Plan will use a train-the-trainer approach to connect with all Marines throughout the Corps in both the active and reserve components. The curriculum will include classes on the Integration Plan, relevant orders and directives, best practices, leading institutional change, and understanding cognitive/unconscious bias. Marines will be led through relevant vignettes to foster healthy discussion and address potential issues. Mobile training teams made up of trained subject matter experts will start training O-5 and O-6 level commands throughout the Corps this May. Those leaders, in turn, will educate and train their subordinates until every Marine has been addressed by his or her leader regarding this issue. The Marine Corps will also use our online integration education portal to provide additional, enduring resources for all Marines to help address these issues as they arise.

Furthermore, the Integration Implementation Assessment Plan provides a feedback mechanism that will help Marine leaders evaluate the progress of integration and identify any issues that need to be addressed. A variety of direct and indirect indicators will be available to help determine whether Marines have questions or concerns about integration that persist or could negatively affect progress. Other indicators such as reenlistment rates and propensity to serve in ground combat arms MOS's will reflect progress. Finally, the Assessment Plan will collect empirical performance-related data that can be used to further inform Marines and challenge misconceptions about integration.

Both the Education and Assessment Plans are enduring plans that will comprehensively, responsibly and convincingly inform Marines, both leaders and subordinates, how to successfully manage integration throughout our Corps.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ernst?

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have a statement followed by questions.

Chairman MCCAIN. Without objection, your statement will be made a part of the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator Ernst follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY SENATOR JONI K. ERNST

As I have said on numerous occasions, I fully support providing women the opportunity to serve in any military capacity, as long as standards are not lowered and it enhances our combat effectiveness. However, I remain concerned that some within the Administration, and some of my colleagues in Congress, are rushing toward this historical change in policy without much concern for the second and third order effects to our men and women in uniform and our combat capabilities.

In order to ensure women are fully integrated into these previously closed positions, the implementation strategy must be fully developed, and methodically and deliberately implemented, to include having an understanding of second and third order effects to ensure we do not set women, or men, up for failure. These are the men, and will be the women, who meet our enemies in close combat—their lives depend on it.

Over the past few weeks, I have visited Fort Bragg, NC and Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia to speak with Soldiers and Marines about this topic. During my trip to Fort Bragg, I sat down with special operations soldiers and paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division to discuss gender integration. At Quantico, I had the same open discussion with Marine infantrymen and scout snipers. Both of these groups comprised mostly of mid to senior level NCOs and junior officers—the servicemembers who over the past 14 years of war have met the enemy in close combat—and who will do so again in the future with their female counterparts.

Our discussions began with the understanding that gender integration is the new policy, and now it is time to move forward. Primarily, these young Soldiers and Marines were concerned that gender integration was not being done for the right reasons—to enhance their combat capabilities—and instead as a social experiment. To this point, even as a supporter of gender integration, I share their concern due to the haphazard way this process has been led by some in DOD's civilian leadership. This was especially troubling as we witnessed a distinguished military leader muzzled, inappropriate comments from civilian leadership about our female Marines, and disturbing, unmerited, and unprofessional assertions that our Marine leaders do not value the service of our female Marines.

The other primary concern expressed by these Soldiers and Marines was the implementation strategy, for which I also share their concern. This Congress is being asked to support a policy for which the implementation strategy—which is key to ensuring our military will maintain its combat effectiveness—has not yet been fully developed or revealed. Nor has it taken into account the impacts on women's health, lodging, physiological differences between men and women which could lead to female physical fitness test scores, on average, being lower than their male counterparts, and how that could affect their ability to compete for promotions, schools, and senior command positions.

For example with command positions, most of our Army senior leaders have served in elite units during their time as junior and field grade officers—which is often key to being slotted into command positions from battalion commander and above. GEN Milley is a Special Forces veteran, and others have served in the elite 75th Ranger Regiment like the Army Vice Chief of Staff, LTG John Nicholson—who may be confirmed as the next commander of our troops in Afghanistan, our next potential CENTCOM commander, the 18th Airborne Corps Commander, and division commanders of the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions, the 10th Mountain Division, and 3rd Infantry Division.

Also, while there have been three female graduates of Ranger School in the Army, the unfortunate truth is an Infantry officer without a Ranger tab is often looked down upon by their fellow infantrymen, and tab-less Infantry officers are often not as competitive for senior leadership positions.

In the Marine Corps, some of our female Marines have voiced concerns that they anticipate there will be pressure to lower standards if not enough of them are able

to qualify to serve in combat positions. Lowering standards for more female participation is against the best military advice of our military leaders, but I agree with these women that the pressure will come—likely from civilian leadership—who have motives other than supporting gender integration to enhance our nation's ability to destroy our enemies on the battlefield.

Female Marines have also voiced that leadership and training will not solve physiological differences between men and women, and some are worried that they will be involuntary assigned to combat MOSs or even assigned to an infantry unit in a support position which would require them to meet the higher physical standards for infantry units.

Furthermore, retention of female Marines and their ability to continue to serve if they are injured while serving in a combat position is an area of concern for some of them. The data is clear—women do get injured at a higher rate than their male counterparts when performing combat arms tasks. Will we allow women to continue to serve in another role or will we medically discharge them if they are injured while serving in a combat position or combat unit? If it becomes commonplace that female combat arms Marines are injured while training, how will that impact unit cohesion, especially for those who will be platoon and company commanders?

After nearly 15 years of war, our country, and many within this Administration, are disconnected from our combat soldiers who have borne the brunt of the battle. These Soldiers and Marines are the best we have. They have taken the majority of the casualties since the founding of our nation and on the battlefields from Yorktown, Gettysburg, Iwo Jima, and Normandy—they have made the difference between Americans enjoying life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, or being subjugated by foreign powers. Their life is one of mostly suffering and hardship, and they honorably carry that mental and physical burden not only in service, but afterwards as well. We must honor them by ensuring this process moves forward in a thoughtful and methodical way.

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Let me be clear. I fully support providing women the opportunity to serve in any military capacity as long as standards are not lowered, our combat effectiveness is maintained. But in order to ensure women are fully integrated into these previously closed positions, the implementation strategy must be fully developed and methodically and deliberately carried out. It must include an understanding of second- and third-order effects to ensure that we do not set women or men up for failure. These are the men and will be the women who meet our enemies in close combat. Their lives depend on it.

That is why over the past few weeks I have visited Fort Bragg, North Carolina and Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia to speak directly with Army and Marine infantrymen about this topic. I spoke with groups comprised mostly of mid- to senior-level NCOs and junior officers, the service members who over the past 14 years of war have met the enemy in close combat and who will do so again in the future with their female counterparts.

After those conversations, it is clear that we need to ensure that we are taking into account the impacts on women's health, lodging, physiological differences between men and women which could lead to female physical fitness test scores on average being lower than their male counterparts and how that could affect their ability to compete for promotions, schools, and senior command positions.

I would encourage all of the members of this panel and our witnesses to go talk to our service members, hear for yourselves what their concerns are, and help ensure we ultimately get this right.

Our combat armed soldiers and marines are the best we have. They have taken the majority of casualties since the founding of our Nation and on battlefields from Yorktown, Gettysburg, Iwo Jima, and Normandy. They have made the difference between

Americans enjoying life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness or being subjugated by foreign powers. Their lives mostly involve suffering and hardship, and they honorably carry that physical and mental burden not only in service but afterwards as well. We must honor them by ensuring this process moves forward in a thoughtful and methodical way.

General Neller, I would like to start with you, sir. As you know, some of our female marines have voiced concerns that they anticipate there will be pressure to lower standards if not enough of them are able to qualify to serve in combat positions. While I am glad that lowering the standards for greater female participation is against your best military advice, I agree with these women that pressure may come likely from civilian leadership who may have motives other than supporting gender integration to enhance our Nation's ability to destroy our enemies on the battlefield.

Also, in order to boost participation, some female marines have voiced that leadership and training will not solve physiological differences between men and women, and some are worried that they will be involuntarily assigned to combat MOS's or even assigned to an infantry unit in a support position which would require them to meet the higher physical standards for infantry units.

Do you share these concerns, sir? And what concerns do you have regarding the retention of our best female marines who may now be assigned to combat arms MOS or units?

General NELLER. Well, Senator, as the committee members in unanimity have talked about today, we would have to do everything possible to not lower standards. In fact, we should be looking at how we can raise the standards to improve our capability.

Right now, there is no intent to involuntarily assign anybody who wants to compete in any of these MOS's. A little more problematic is the assignment of a marine in a non-combat MOS but assigned to one of these units because in the past, because it was restricted to men, we did not ask the communicator or a supply marine if they wanted to go to an infantry battalion. So we have established an assignment policy, which has a minimum physical standard, before we would do that.

So we are working our way through that and that is part of the implementation process. But we are aware of that. That is kind of an outlier that was not considered as part of this decision.

As far as career progression, there are a lot of things we do not know and we are going to find out and we will have to continue to monitor. We are looking at this as a decade, minimum, long study to see how this all turns out, what effect is there on propensity to enlist, propensity to reenlist. What is the competitiveness for promotion? What is the injury rate for all marines? Because we really have not looked at this in the past because there were enough people, and there are still enough people.

So those are concerns, but they are concerns about something we do not know the answer to. So there are a lot of different views, as you found, when you talked to people. So we are taking all of this into consideration. We are going to try to mitigate as much of this as we can. And then we will come back and report, and we will keep the data and we will be able to have a better analytical view

on how this is all working as we go through this in a very methodical, objective way.

But the three lenses we are looking through in this whole process is the effectiveness and readiness of the unit, the health and welfare of all the marines, and the ability to manage the talent.

I think one of the things that I am confident is going to be—in fact, I know it has already happened—is the assignment of female marines to previously restricted units in the MOS's that they have. In the past, if you were an infantry or armor battalion commander and the best—pick an MOS—intelligence officer, communications officer, motor transport officer in the division was a woman, she could not work in your unit. So now you have the opportunity to have her serve with you. So the talent pool has expanded, and that should make the unit better.

Senator ERNST. Very good. Thank you, General.

General Milley, many of the command positions—with those positions, most of our Army senior leaders have served in various elite units. You have served in a special forces capacity. Many of those advancing to very high levels within the Army have served in Ranger regiment and other high-performing infantry type units.

While there have been three female graduates of Ranger School in the Army, which I applaud—I think that is tremendous—the unfortunate truth is an infantry officer without a Ranger tab is often looked down upon by their fellow infantrymen, and tabless infantry officers are often not as competitive for senior leadership positions, just like many of those that will serve in these elite type units with very, very high standards.

So as you branch female officers to infantry and potentially accept branch transfers for captains and field grade officers, how will this affect their ability to integrate into the infantry community and be competitive for those higher levels of command?

General MILLEY. A couple of points, Senator. One is you are correct. There is an institutional bias, especially in the infantry, if you do not have a Ranger tab, on career progression. So we encourage all infantry officers to attend Ranger School, a very demanding school, as you well know. And for women, it would be the same thing. If they go in the infantry, we would encourage them to go to Ranger School because it does enhance your performance and skills, but it also enhances your credibility with peers, superiors, and your subordinates as well. So Ranger School is a very important school especially for the infantry.

As far as long-term goes, the core business, the core business, of the United States Army is to close with and destroy the enemies of our country in close combat. And that means infantry and armor, supported by attack aviation and aviation and combat engineers. But infantry and armor is the very essence of the United States Army. And those, as we note and we are here discussing, have been previously closed. So the senior officers of the Army over many, many years have been infantry and armor officers because that is the essence of their business, so to speak. So I would expect that over time, 25–35 years sort of time, we will see women in infantry and armor units eventually rise to command.

We opened up Apache helicopters 25 years ago and recently we now have Apache battalion commanders that are female. So I think the same phenomenon will occur over an extended period of time.

Senator ERNST. Very good, gentlemen. I appreciate that.

I do have one question and I would just like a response for the record, follow-up. But, Secretary Mabus, I was disturbed to read that the Director of Naval Intelligence has not had active clearance for over 2 years. Your decision to keep him in a position with such great responsibility without access to critical information sets a terrible example for our sailors and makes a travesty out of naval intelligence and our national security. And for the record, I would like to know what is preventing you from having a sailor with an active security clearance in this position today. And I would like a follow-up on that, sir.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Do you want to respond now?

Mr. MABUS. Senator, I am as frustrated as you are about this particular individual. There is an investigation ongoing. We have no information one way or the other as to whether anything improper happened. But because of the sensitive place that he occupied, I felt that I had to withdraw his access to classified information until the investigation was finished. The investigation has drug on and on and on. And we are in the process of putting up another officer to take that person's place.

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. 2 years is a very long time not to have access. And I do believe that there should have been another officer assigned to that billet.

Mr. MABUS. Senator, I agree with you. This has been a very long, very drawn-out process, and it has been frustrating for everybody involved.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Heinrich?

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

What I find fairly remarkable in this conversation is the amount of consensus from both our witnesses and from people on the dais here that we should simply set MOS standards based on the performance that we need for the job and then let the chips fall where they may. And sometimes in the case, for example, of the military infantry officer school, that is going to be some very, very difficult standards to meet. That said, I have no doubt that some day a woman is going to meet those standards.

So, General Neller, I wanted to ask you, given your previous support for a waiver, do you have any concerns with that kind of approach of simply setting the bar where it needs to be for the performance that you need and then letting the chips fall where they may?

General NELLER. Well, Senator, it was brought up by Secretary Mabus—and it is a fact—that part of the value of the evaluation we did was to come up with these standards. So now we have these standards. I mean, there were always standards. There were standards because any of these marines that were involved in the evaluation completed an MOS school which had task admission standards to which they had to successfully complete. So it was not like there were no standards. To get into the school, the females had

to go and pass the male scoring on the male PFT [Physical Fitness Test] and CFT [Cadet Field Training].

So where we are now is we have a decision. We provided our best military judgment based on what we learned in an evaluation involving teams, crews, and squads, something that has never ever been done, not just in the history of the United States, but from what we can tell, nowhere. No one ever looked at it in this way.

That said, we have a decision and we are in the process of moving out, and we have established a process to where any marine who wants to serve in these physically demanding MOS's has to meet a certain standard. And we will see where the chips fall.

Again, our hope is that everyone is successful, but hope is not a course of action on the battlefield. So we will learn and we will study and we will do everything we can because it is important, as General Milley brought up and everybody has brought up, that we have to be successful on the battlefield. And marines have always been successful on the battlefield, and I am confident we will in the future.

Senator HEINRICH. General, as you heard, Secretary Mabus brought up the fact that there were surprising gaps in set standards for some of these MOS's. Do you have an opinion as to what the impact on the service is going to be simply on the Corps of clearly articulating the standards in all of these MOS's and how that will impact overall performance for the Corps moving forward?

General NELLER. I think, based on the fact that we have set these standards and that the overall quality of the marines that serve in these MOS's should be higher than it was in the past.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you.

Secretary Mabus, I was hoping you could expand a little bit on what Senator Reed brought up around the transition particularly within attack submarines, how that is going on the USS [United States Ship] *Mississippi*, and how you feel about that process overall.

Mr. MABUS. The process of integrating women onto all of our submarines—as you know, it started with ballistic missile strategic submarines and guided missile submarines. It is now moving to attack submarines. It has gone fine. In all of these, the first two have completed a lot of cruises now. We have got a lot of experience under our belt. We have seen that women earn their dolphins at the same speed as men do in the submarine service.

It is part of the implementation experience that we can bring to bear for this, having a detailed implementation plan, having a well thought-out way to do it, having a deliberate but timely way to do it. The attack submarines were done last because of the closer quarters, and a few, but only a few, physical changes had to be made. And we are very pleased not only with the integration of women officers, but the beginning of the integration of women enlisted on all types of Navy submarines.

Senator HEINRICH. Well, thank you, Secretary, for your work on that.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Lee?

Senator LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to all of you for your service to our country and for your testimonies today.

This is a subject like so many others that we cover on this committee that is of exceptional importance to our country, to our national security. As we approach this issue, which is fraught with a lot of opinions, a lot of facts, a lot of details, I hope that we will maintain our focus on maintaining the readiness and the capability of our men and women in service and especially on the safety of the men and women who protect us.

First of all, General Milley, I wanted to follow up on a question that was asked by Senator Ernst to General Neller. She asked General Neller whether women might be involuntarily transferred into some of these combat positions against their will. Do you want to provide an answer from the Army perspective?

General MILLEY. I am going to have to give you "it depends." Right now, we have no requirement because we are filling our needs for the infantry in both officer and enlisted, and currently we do not involuntarily put anyone in the infantry, but again, we are meeting our needs. 10 years, 15, 20 years in the future, it depends. So look back at World War II. A lot of people were involuntarily put in the infantry. But right now, we do not and I do not anticipate that situation at any time in the near future.

Senator LEE. Okay. Thank you.

General Neller, the Marine Corps report stated that there were some noticeable differences in performance between all-male squads on the one hand and those that were gender integrated, not just squads, but teams and crews as well. In your professional military opinion, could you tell us what were the most notable reasons for these differences and then also whether these are factors that could easily be remedied through training and improved techniques and processes?

General NELLER. Senator, when we put together the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, there were infantry and in infantry you have mortars, you have machine guns, you have rockets, you have TOWs [Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided]. There were tank crews, artillery crews, amphibian vehicle crews, and light armor vehicle crews. So in each of those, there were some number of differences between the integrated and the all-male crews, squads, or teams, but the two that were most significant, what we would call load-bearing units or the infantry, march under load with a weighted load over a distance. And then the other was during a fire and movement drill with load, as you get fatigued, the effect on your accuracy when you fired your weapon.

So the study showed two things. Under the march under load, the heavier the load, the more degraded the ability of the integrated squads. And then when you would do movement to contact, the accuracy of the integrated squads and the firing of females due to physiological things that are documented was lower.

Senator LEE. And are those things that can be remedied through improved training and techniques?

General NELLER. I think to some degree but a lot of it is—we learned that being—and the same applies to any one of a smaller stature. Being big, strong, having a certain body mass gives you an advantage. So one of the things I have heard as I have gone around and talked to the female marines is, hey, I am out working out, I

am lifting weights, I am getting bigger, and now I am outside the height and weight standards. Are you going to change the height and weight standards? And we are looking at that right now. So we know that mean body mass has an effect on your ability to carry a load.

As far as the conditioning and your ability to have a higher level of energy and exert yourself, that is what we are going to find out, what we are going to learn.

And again, we did this for just 5 months. We do not know what is this going to do over years and years and years of being in these particular occupational fields. We know anecdotally what the effect is on the male body, and we do not have data yet, and eventually we will, of what the impact is on the female.

Senator LEE. My understanding is that one of the findings in the report that was released by the Marine Corps indicated some evidence of higher injury rates among women than men when asked to perform the same tactical tasks. Can you tell us how this factor, when extrapolated across combat units in the Marine Corps—call you tell us how that might impact your overall military readiness and capability and how you could deal with that?

General NELLER. We know from data that we have now for certain points of training that female marines suffer a higher incidence of injury, normally lower body injury, than men. So part of the review, not just for body size and height and weight, is also conditioning. So the one way we believe we can do this is through better preparation, better conditioning to mitigate that. So that is something that we do not know what we do not know. And that will be one of the things that we are going to have to continue to study and monitor as we go through this.

Senator LEE. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator King?

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before beginning my questions, I cannot resist pointing out that 40 years ago I sat back where you folks are sitting, and my boss, Senator Bill Hathaway from Maine, led the effort to open the military academies to women, which at the time was a radical idea. So there is some history here for me in this conversation.

It seems to me that this is really about talent pool. Mr. Secretary, you mentioned that. Mr. Secretary, you also mentioned it. We need the best people we can get, whoever they are, wherever they come from. And the shocking figure that we have already discussed today is that only one out of four young people is qualified for military service either for physical or other kinds of intellectual issues. We need people. And the secret of the success of this country in my opinion is access and opening up access to more and more people. And I have no doubt that limiting access to virtually any job, eliminating 50 percent of the talent pool is always a bad policy.

The question, it seems to me, though is how do we design gender-neutral standards that are in fact gender-neutral but also meet the requirements of the job. And that is going to be the challenge. General Neller, I thought your exchange with Senator Lee was very informative. And the issue, for example, of weight. I visited the Marine Corps officer school in Quantico and saw what

those young people have to carry. As I recall, the lightest pack was something like 75 pounds and they go up from there. I think your response was an important one, that this could be a question of, A, who physically can do it regardless of gender and, B, training and readiness over a period of time.

I think the great danger, though, is that we do not let the standards diminish in order to meet some kind of arbitrary requirements. The word "goals" has been used here. Goals, unfortunately, can often turn into quotas. And, Mr. Secretary, I presume that that is not your intention in any way, shape, or form.

Mr. MABUS. Absolutely not, Senator. Number one, it would go against the law. But number two, you cannot lower standards. This is not about quotas. It is not about equality of outcome. It is about equality of opportunity. And you have got to keep those standards. You have got to keep them job-related. You have got to keep them very rigorous, and you have got to evolve those standards as our threats and as our challenges evolve, but they have got to evolve for everybody.

Senator KING. I would assume that the performance of women in these very rigorous top-end MOS's, Ranger School, Marine training, will improve over time as they are given the opportunity to set their sights on that career. General Milley, would you agree with that?

General MILLEY. I would expect that to be true over time as women's experience in those skills is expanded over time. Absolutely.

Senator KING. And it seems to me, General Neller, that may be one of the answers to the data that you developed in this initial study because it was an initial study. In other words, you did not have 2, 3, 4, 5, 10 years of women who had worked through this process. Would you agree that that may be the case?

General NELLER. We would have liked to have had more time to look at this because I think anyone that does this type of analysis would tell you that a year-long is not enough to draw a lot of conclusions. We have the data that we have. So that is why, Senator, part of our implementation process is to continue an analysis of a whole number of variables and factors.

And I do, though, agree that the women that are in the Marine Corps today are very different, not that the ones that were there before were not of quality and great Americans and served our Nation well, but the overall quality of marines in general is much higher than it was when I joined this organization 40 years ago. And our hope is people will maybe see this as an opportunity and then they will want to compete in whatever it is.

So I think—I mean, I have got a daughter. I raise my daughter in the way I raise my daughter. She is very competitive. And I think people raise their girls, females, Americans. They do different things than they did 30 years ago. It is a different place. So we will find out.

That said, there are certain physiological differences that exist. There are always going to be people that are outliers.

I think what Senator Ernst asked me was a fair question. Where does the top of the women capability overlap with the male capability, and is that going to make them competitive in the long run?

We are going to find that out, but that is part of what we do not know.

Senator KING. And it seems to me part of what this whole—
Chairman MCCAIN. Your time has expired.

Senator KING. I am sorry.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Fischer, with Senator Sessions' indulgence.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my thanks to Senator Sessions. I need to get to the chamber to preside, but I did want to ask a few questions here.

When we are going to be looking at monitoring the implementations, how well prepared do you think we are at that process specifically with regard to making changes? If I could ask Secretary Murphy and Secretary Mabus about that. How do the services plan to track the outcomes of the changes and ensure that when we see any unintended consequences come forward that we can act on those promptly and be able to address any concerns that we see? Secretary Murphy, if you would like to begin.

Mr. MURPHY. Thanks, Senator.

As we said, Senator, we are going to have gender-neutral, operational-relevant standards with no quotas whatsoever. But as the Army, we assess everything as we move forward. We assess physical fitness, how you are doing your job, OER's [Officer Evaluation Report], *et cetera*. So we will continue assess this as we move forward and make sure we are doing what is necessary to accomplish our mission, and that is to fight and win our Nation's wars.

Senator FISCHER. And do you have that in your implementation plan? It is always good to say you are going to be flexible, you are going to be able to address it, but are there really steps that are laid out in your plans?

Mr. MURPHY. Yes, ma'am. I would also like if the Chief could respond as well, that would be helpful.

Senator FISCHER. If we could have Secretary Mabus first please.

Mr. MABUS. As part of the formal process of looking at this continually, one of the things that is required by the law and one of the things that is in everybody's implementation plan is that the inspector general of each service will look at, number one, whether these standards continue to be validated, job-oriented, mission-specific, gender-neutral, but number two, what are the results of this integration. The first report is to be undertaken this year as we begin the integration process, and each service has already ordered that review to go forward.

Past that, as Secretary Murphy has very correctly pointed out, we are always looking at every single standard as threats evolve. As I said in my opening statement, infantry school today is very different than it was just 25 years ago because our threats have changed, and we are going to continue to do that. And that is one of the things I think that marines do exceptionally well. They adapt. They improvise and they overcome.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

And, General, would you like to have any comments?

General MILLEY. Just briefly. We have developed explicit written, gender-neutral tasks, conditions, and standards for every MOS in the United States Army right now today. And when we execute for

the infantry, armor, and special forces, those will be implemented. They will be tested and they will be validated and they will be monitored closely. The Secretary of Defense has established a Secretary of Defense level organization to monitor implementation. We have done the same thing at the Secretary of the Army, the Department of the Army Secretary, and we will be doing routine monthly and quarterly monitoring of implementation and execution of this.

Training and Doctrine Command, United States Army, has primary responsibility for phases one and two. Our plan has four phases. And phases three and four primary responsibility is General Abrams and Forces Command, which is the operational force. That will be coming up next year and the year after that. So it is a very, very rigorous program of implementation and monitoring.

Senator FISCHER, And thank you for that very clear explanation. I appreciate it.

General Neller, you had mentioned before that the Marines had studied some foreign militaries and what they have done with the integration of their women into the combat positions. Can you comment on any of the findings that you had?

General NELLER. We looked at the Canadian, the Australian, the UK [United Kingdom], and the Israeli militaries. The first three have integrated these MOS's. The numbers are very small, but the lessons they learned in speaking to the service members there that were part of that was leadership, maintenance of standards, setting up a cohort or some number of people to support so that the individual females in this case did not go down there completely cold. But the number one thing was the standards. They also mentioned the potential benefits of gender-separate recruit training.

The Israelis I believe had done this at one time, and then they have walked away from it. They do have one predominantly female border unit. But they do not allow women to be assigned in these combat MOS's, infantry, armor, or airborne.

Senator FISCHER, What would be their reasons for that with the Israelis? Is it due to the standards that are in place, or is it concern about the neighborhood they live in?

General NELLER. I think there are a number of reasons, Senator, but I think one is they are just trying to take and make the best use of the talent of the population that they have. So if you go to an Israeli school that teaches these, the majority of the instructors are females teaching ground combat things.

Senator FISCHER, Thank you, sir, very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator Sessions.

Senator REED [presiding]. On behalf of the chairman, let me recognize Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And to all of our witnesses, this is an important issue, and I echo what Senator Heinrich said about the degree of consistency among the witnesses and folks here serving.

A story that I find relevant. Women were not allowed to run the marathon in the Olympics until 1984. There was a belief that physically they would not be able to run it. The longest race for women in the 1980 Olympics in Moscow was a 1,500-meter, and even that

was somewhat recent. It had been an 800-meter was the longest race a woman could run.

Today, 30 years later, the men's world record in the marathon is 2 hours and 3 minutes, and the women's world record in the marathon is 2 hours and 15 minutes. There is an advantage to men. But that women's world record time would have won the gold record in the men's marathon during most of the history of the Olympics.

And now—and this is a joke—the marathon is for wimps now because now there are ultra-marathons. One common ultra-marathon event is a 2-day run, 48-hour run. Men have the edge on the track. The women's record is 370 kilometers in 2 days, and the men's record is 430 kilometers in 2 days.

But there is another one that is kind of interesting to me. How fast can you through-hike the Appalachian Trail, 2,200 miles? And there is a record for doing it all on your own, not having support, having to carry everything, big backpack carried. The men's record is 58 days and the women's record is 54 days. The woman has the record for having to carry it all.

Combat and military service is different. But what this tells me is—and, General Neller, you kind of talked about it. Daughters raised today are going to be raised different than daughters 30 years ago. When there is a social cap or ceiling or limitation, that sort of gets absorbed by people and they do not even focus on what they might be able to do. They get raised in a particular way with the thought that that cap is going to be there. When the cap is lifted, all of a sudden there are all kinds of possibilities and people start to focus on opportunities they might have and train themselves up for them. And just like when you lift the ban on running the marathon in the Olympics and allow women to do it, suddenly there are fantastic marathoners, ultra-marathoners, AT [Appalachian Trail] hikers with packs.

Parenthetically the physiological difference in women in carrying weight leads a lot of backpack manufacturers to make different packs for women that can actually erase some of that physiological difference.

I have a high confidence—a high confidence—in the American military and all the service branches to do this because you are always are super can-do and you always figure it out. I mean, I have that confidence in you.

One of my kids, as some of you know, has been through ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] and OCS [Officer Candidate School] and TBS [The Basic School] and IOC [Infantry Officer Course] with women. It is more of a norm now than an earlier generation of Marines. And he understands how hard it is for everybody and that this will be a challenge to implement. But this is a can-do operation that is going to figure it out. I have complete confidence in them.

I am kind of interested in the topic of standards setting. And, General Neller, you talked a little bit about this. I tried to write this quickly down. You talked about in preparing for integration of women in MOS's and studying it, you did a lot of studies of the standards. I think you said because of our standards setting, our overall quality will be higher for men and women.

I would kind of like to ask all of you. Was the standards setting that you did and analyzed around the integration question, set aside integration of women into MOS's—did it have strong, independent value for your service branches to do that standards setting and analysis exercise in terms of figuring out what the right requirements for the MOS's are given the nature of contemporary warfare? And that is a question I would like each of you to address.

General NELLER. The standards that we established were established on 30 September, actually before the decision was made, because we recognized, as part of the analysis, that whether there was going to be an exception granted or not, we needed to have a more performance-related standard. I mean, there's training on the things you did. So we actually codified it. And so since that time, the men that have gone through infantry training battalion, armor school, artillery school, engineer school have been getting their MOS qualification based on the standard. And the completion rate has been 99-plus percent. So that just goes to the overall quality of the marine that we are getting now.

So I have every confidence that if there is a female marine out there who can meet the other standards before they come into recruit training or what they have to do at entry level training and recruit training, we will find out. We will know because the females that did go through this training and get awarded the MOS—they did not have to do this. So, again, Senator, we do not know yet what we do not know. There are things you can train to, but you have to have the physiological capability to move fast and bear a load and lift heavy weights.

Senator KAINE. I see my time has expired. Thank you.

Senator REED. Thank you. On behalf of the chairman, Senator Sessions.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you very much. And I thank all of you for sharing your thoughts with us on this important matter.

General Neller, the Marine Corps did a study and completed it in 2015. Is that correct? And what was the purpose of that study?

General NELLER. Senator, the purpose of the study was after Secretary Panetta in January 2013 stated that there was going to be no exception for gender to assignment to MOS's in unit and gave the services a period of time to take a look at this. It was the final process of what we did. We first put female marines in previously restricted units and MOS's that they had. We sent 448 females through infantry training battalion to see how they would do, and then we realized we could not assign them to a unit, so we had to create a unit and we wanted to see how they did in the context, not just meeting individual standards but how they would function within a squad, team, or a crew.

Senator SESSIONS. And do you feel like that was, as reasonably as you can, a fair analysis of the challenges that you would be facing if you moved to integration of combat units?

General NELLER. The evaluation was designed to try to replicate, as best we could in a live fire environment, those types of skills or tasks that you would have to do in combat.

Senator SESSIONS. Now, the purpose of the report says this. "Central to this historic research effort has been the clear recognition that the brutal and extremely physical nature of direct ground

combat, often marked by close interpersonal violence, remains largely unchanged throughout the centuries of warfare despite technological advancements.”

Now, you served a long time in the Marine Corps. Do you agree with that?

General NELLER. The character of war may have changed with the overall nature of war, depending upon the fight you are in, at the end of the day can still come down to that type of an environment. Yes, Senator.

Senator SESSIONS. Now, the report said this. The Marine Corps fights as units. Therefore, developing and maintaining the most combat-effective units must always be at the forefront of any contemplated institutional change. Do you agree with that?

General NELLER. I do.

Senator SESSIONS. And do you agree with the report’s finding, “combat effectiveness, the health and welfare of individual marines, and talent management,” are key evaluating factors on the performance?

General NELLER. Those are three of the major lenses through which we looked at the report and looked through implementation.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, here are the summary of the research findings. See if they are inconsistent with your experience in the Marine Corps. Overall, “all male squads, teams, and crews demonstrated higher performance levels on 69 percent of the tasks evaluated—that is 134 tasks—as compared to gender-integrated squads, teams, and crews. The integrated squads were superior in two events out of the 134.” The rest I guess were equal. Do you dispute that or is that consistent with your experience?

General NELLER. That is the data that we derived from the evaluation.

Senator SESSIONS. Speed is important in combat. “All male squads, regardless of infantry MOS, were faster than the gender-integrated squads in each tactical movement.”

Lethality. All-male 0311 squads—that is the rifle infantry, rifleman squads “had better accuracy compared to gender-integrated squads. There was notable difference between genders for every individual weapons system except the probability of hit and miss with the M-4.” That is the individual carbines. Is that what the report found, and do you dispute that?

General NELLER. No, sir. That is accurate as to what we found.

Senator SESSIONS. Also it found all-male infantry crew-served weapons teams engaged targets quicker and registered more hits on target as compared to gender-integrated infantry crew-served weapons teams with the exception of M-2 accuracy. Was that part of the report?

General NELLER. It is.

Senator SESSIONS. All-male squads, teams, and crews in gender-integrated squads, teams, and crews had a noticeable difference in their performance of the basic combat task of negotiating obstacles and evacuating casualties. So that is the combat lethality question.

Health and welfare of the marines themselves. You put them in very stressful positions. “In addition to performance, evidence of higher injury rates for females when compared to males performing the same tactical task were noted. Within the research at the in-

fantry training battalion, females undergoing that entry level training were injured at six times the rate of male counterparts.” Is the injury rate a factor you need to consider when you put people through training?

General NELLER. Yes, Senator.

Senator SESSIONS. During the assessment, “musculoskeletal injury rates were 40 percent for females compared to 18 percent for males.”

And one more thing that people talk about. We cannot let it dominate our thinking. But how do you evaluate all of that? I mean, how do you evaluate the risk of injury and the ability to perform effectively on the battlefield when you consider the integration of combat forces? You made your recommendation, but how do you evaluate that?

General NELLER. Well, Senator, when we evaluate it, we are going to find out. This is part of what we found out and also what we found out, that we believe that there are ways that this can be, to some degree, mitigated. How much? Again, we do not know what we do not know. So the physical capability of the individual marine, their susceptibility to injury, their overall fitness, this is all part of the evaluation that everyone has talked about. And General Milley stated it on there. We have got very specific questions in areas that we are going to monitor as we go through this implementation process.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, I have served in an Army Reserve unit for 10 years with fabulous women, soldiers and officers. The commander of that unit now is the first one that has received two stars in the unit’s history. She is a two-star general and doing a great job, and we have tremendous military soldiers and officers who are women. And it is an important part of the military. And I think you are wise to do this careful evaluation and let us see how we can continue that tradition in the most smartest way.

Senator REED. On behalf of the chairman, Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You were just asked a series of questions relating to differences in performance of women and men. And I think, General Neller, you indicated that there may be ways to mitigate these performance differences. But I am wondering. Did you come to the conclusion that—and we always have to worry about attributing cause and effect to any performance differences. So did you come to a conclusion that there is something innately about being a female that causes these kinds of differences in performance? Have you come to that conclusion?

General NELLER. Senator, I think the data, not just from this evaluation but data that exists throughout the sports world or other place is that there are physiological differences between the average male and the average female. Now, the question is to what degree can we mitigate that. So the conclusion, if we have come to anything, is, hey, these are things that we need to pay attention to. Now, whether they will manifest themselves in the future or not, we will find that out.

Senator HIRONO. So in those instances where what we are measuring is something that requires physical strength—I mean, there will be some women who are physically a lot stronger than men,

but as a general proposition that where physical strength is measured, women will come out—they will be less able to perform. That is the conclusion you have drawn.

General NELLER. On the average, yes.

Senator HIRONO. So when we talk about gender-neutral standards—let me turn to that because nobody here is talking about lowering of standards. But there are some concerns that some of these standards that relate to performance necessary for the job may be unnecessarily high or inaccurate. We are not talking about lowering of standards.

So my question is how are these standards validated. Who validates these standards for the Marines, for the Army? Secretary Mabus, would you like to respond to that?

Mr. MABUS. The uniformed head of each service validates that they are occupationally relevant, that they are mission-oriented, and that they are gender-neutral.

Senator HIRONO. I think, though, that may be difficult really to measure. So I think what I heard you saying is that the implementation and to make sure that these standards actually are required for a performance on the job, that there will be monitoring and re-evaluation of these standards because one hopes that standards are somehow set by a neutral objective body.

So in addition to the physical standards that must be met, I assume that in a combat situation, one also cares about things such as the mental state of the person or the judgment of the person. Are those part of the MOS standards?

General NELLER. The MOS standards for the entry level—there is a basic general technical classification test score that you have to meet. And so when you go through your academic part of your training—and there is academics in any of these. Some for gunnery and artillery and tanks is very complicated. It involves mathematics and things. So there is an intellectual piece to this, and you are going to find out some people may be superior in this area. But at the basic level, at the entry level, whether it is an infantry platoon commander or a junior marine or soldier in a squad, the physical requirements that they have to perform are—you cannot ignore those facts.

Now, as people become more senior, then it starts to balance out, and your ability to exercise judgment and your ability to make decisions—that may become more important, but it does not remove the requirement for the physical requirements that you have to perform.

So to the point on who validates, we have looked at this. We have training commands who have an analyst and people that do this for a profession. We know exactly from every step what you have to do to load a Howitzer, to load a tank, to lift—you know, it is very mundane stuff, Senator, like, hey, you have to lift an artillery round that weighs 98 pounds up to the truck. So there are certain fundamental tasks to be part of a tank crew, a gun crew, to be in a rifle squad. And so those were the things that we looked at that we thought were the mission-essential tasks to be effective in these MOS's. And we have had third parties look at this because we wanted to ensure that the standards were valid and they were not too high or too low.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Tillis?

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Actually I want to continue maybe along that line of questioning.

One of the things that I have had in my discussions with some of you and others is that this process has been good and that it has really made you think about documenting and setting standards for things that you kind of knew you had to do but you had not articulated them. So that is healthy.

And I have heard other discussions. And when we have looked at it, maybe we need to raise the standards a little bit. To what extent do we run the risk of being able to do that because it appears to be lessening or diminishing our opportunity to provide women more opportunities in combat positions, which I happen to support? General Neller, do you want to start with that?

General NELLER. Senator, I think the standards—I cannot speak for the Army, but I looked at their standards and their standards are different but they are also I think fairly demanding and would show a high probability of being able to be successful in any of these ground combat MOS's whether they be load-bearing MOS's or non-load-bearing.

So whether they are too low or too high, we have done an analysis as to what is kind of the average. We are producing a large number of marines to do these things. In the Army, an even larger number. So we are looking for that point to where you have to do this in order to be effective and be effective within the team. And there are always going to be individuals that fall across the spectrum on that scatter chart.

Senator TILLIS. And, General Milley, maybe if you respond to that, you could share whether or not—as you are going through this and thinking about women having increasing opportunities in combat roles, can you think of any physical standards that you think should be lowered?

General MILLEY. No, not physical standards.

But let me make a comment on standards, though. I do not want anybody on the committee to think that either the Army or the Marines or the Navy or the Air Force did not have standards until we suddenly went through this. The United States Army has standards since Baron von Steuben showed up at Valley Forge. We are a standards-based Army. We are a standards-based military. Always have been. And they are written down and they are codified and we adjust them over time based on the realities of battlefield, new technologies, et cetera, et cetera.

In this particular case, for infantry and armor, we have developed a new set of gender-neutral standards. And those are measured against one thing, neither male nor female. They are measured against the requirements of combat. And to answer Senator Hirono's comment, those have been rigorously reviewed. We will be glad to provide them. Peer-reviewed through all kinds of technical analysis. But we are definitely standards-based. These are rigorous, and they will be fairly applied to both males and females.

Senator TILLIS. General Neller, the Marines have the entry-level recruit training that is segregated I guess. It is on a glide path to be integrated. Do you believe that is a good idea?

General NELLER. I would not describe it as segregated. At entry level, at recruit training at MCRD [Marine Corps Recruit Depot] Paris Island—

Senator TILLIS. That is a great point

General NELLER.—we allow our female marines to train separately, and then as they get further into the training, they do more and more integrated training with the male recruits.

Senator TILLIS. What in your professional military opinion are the benefits of that approach?

General NELLER. Because of the data we have on the physical differential and because of the opportunity for these female recruits to be led by female drill instructors and female officers, they see females as role models. There is no distraction and they are allowed to compete. They see other women that can lead and compete. They get an opportunity to improve their physical fitness, and then that gives them an opportunity to gain some confidence before they would then be put in—is there going to be eventually—I mean, once they graduate as marines, every part of our training from marine combat training to our MOS training of the operational force is fully integrated, men and women serving side by side.

Senator TILLIS. Do you agree, as some do, that it sets them up to actually better compete for those positions as they progress through their training?

General NELLER. My personal view right now is at the beginning that initial part is critical and sets them up for success.

Senator TILLIS. And, Mr. Chair, I will just close with this comment. I would like to get from the Secretaries, given the work that has been done, the policy that is being implemented, some understanding of what the long-term cost could potentially be as we implement this program, anything from MILCON [military construction] costs to health care costs, a number of other factors. We have heard numbers about injury rates, a number of other things. I am assuming that that was looked at before the policy recommendations were put into place, and I would like to get that information. We will make a request to your agencies.

Thank you.

The information referred to follows:

Mr. MURPHY. We do not anticipate any significant increase in pay and allowances as a result of implementing gender integration. The Occupational Physical Assessment Test will ensure Soldiers have the proper physical aptitude for their military occupational specialty. The estimated cost for this testing is \$2.1 million per year.

Mr. MABUS. The Department of the Navy has identified the primary areas where costs will be incurred for complete integration. The DoN has fully integrated all previously closed occupational specialties in both the Navy and Marine Corps. Additionally, recurring costs of integrating the Submarine community are included. The two primary areas impacted by the decision to fully integrate women into the Armed Forces are the Marine Corps and the Naval Special Warfare community. Below are the estimated costs with integration of females within the Department of the Navy:

Submarines:

- *Ohio*-class
 - \$5.5 million non-recurring expense (planning)
 - \$6.6 million per ship (\$5.4 million labor/\$1.2 million material)
- *Virginia*-class (Block IV)
 - \$8.5 million non-recurring expense
 - \$1.5 million per ship

- Specific *Los Angeles* and *Seawolf* submarines will be evaluated for integration as demand for female billets dictate, on the basis of cost-effective privacy and berthing modifications over the remaining service life of the hull. With the expected construction of two *Virginia*-class submarines per year, the submarine force anticipates that the pace of integration will not exceed construction rate of the *Virginia*-class; making it unlikely that the submarine force will exercise the option of modifications to *Seawolf* or *Los Angeles*-class to sustain integration of women. Should modifications be deemed necessary, Navy will notify Congress per title 10 United States Code, section 6035.

Naval Special Warfare (NSW):

- Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) barracks
 - \$175 thousand for security cameras and associated hardware, i.e.:
 - night vision IP cameras: \$93 thousand,
 - data storage servers: \$72 thousand, and
 - installation: \$10 thousand
- San Clemente Island Facilities
 - \$100 thousand for head/showers
- Minor berthing and head adjustments will be required to facilitate integration of women in NSW pipeline training. NSW officer candidates are able to reside off base, while enlisted members are housed in on-base facilities. NSW strives to provide privacy while minimizing segregation in order to optimize integration.

Marine Corps:

- Facilities Requirements
 - \$977 thousand projects completed
 - \$1.5 million projects remaining

Medical Costs:

- The extent to which healthcare is expected to increase or decrease is not known at this time and a lack of historical data on women's injury rates associated with the full integration of females in combat prevents estimation.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Blumenthal?

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing.

I want to thank all of the witnesses who are here today for your extraordinary service to our Nation and for your very thoughtful and insightful testimony today.

In the military, as elsewhere, women are breaking down barriers and proving they are equally capable professionally and personally. And I happen to believe that our military will be made stronger by the policies that you are implementing, policies that are the result of planning an action that began in 2012, and our military will be made stronger as we open billets to women without lowering standards and without imposing quotas.

And I think, Secretary Mabus, you made that point extremely well, and I am going to quote it again. Lowering standards would be unacceptable to every marine, especially those women who choose to compete for these positions. I think that is a very profoundly important point here, that women do not want standards lowered. They do not want outcomes dictated or quotas for positions. It is simply about equal access, in fact with higher standards not lower standards.

And the other point that you made very well I thought, Secretary Mabus, is that this is not about women in combat. Women have been serving in combat and have been proving themselves in combat. In fact, they served, for example, in Iraq in the Lioness Program where female marines and soldiers volunteered to join combat troops at checkpoints and conducted outreach operations with Iraqi women. I remember listening to Admiral McRaven describe

the role that women play with his special forces teams in both Iraq and Afghanistan. And I am very proud of the work that they have done in the Army as well. U.S. Army Special Operations Command created an all-woman cultural support team to work along with Green Berets and Army Rangers in combat zones. And just last year, women again proved they are capable of competing in combat positions by meeting the grueling gender-neutral standards required to pass Army Ranger Schools, including a native of Connecticut, Orange, Connecticut, Captain Kristen Griest.

I want to ask a question that focuses on a different part of this process, as the ranking member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, whether we are doing enough to plan—both the Department of Defense and the VA [Veterans Affairs]—for the cooperation that is necessary to meet the needs of our women veterans after they leave the service. Connecticut just opened a women's health care center within the West Haven facility, a profoundly important step forward, but many facilities, hospital facilities and others, around the country have failed to provide those women-oriented health care centers. And they require specialties that are not present for men. So I would like to ask that question generally of this panel, whether there has been sufficient planning, what more should be done for our women veterans.

Mr. MABUS. Well, Senator, as you very correctly pointed out, women have been serving for a long time with distinction and are becoming an ever-increasing part of our veterans community. And we owe all of our veterans that have served us so well that standard of care.

And I think that speaking for the Defense Department, we are trying to make it more seamless as you leave the service and you move into the VA system. We are trying to make it an easier process, a process that does not put the members under stress. To a point that Secretary Murphy made a good bit earlier, now 18 percent of Navy is female. At the Naval Academy, this year it is 29 percent that are female, and it is going up every year. And so that is something we have got to pay very close attention to not only while people are in but as they transition back to civilian life.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Ayotte?

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Chairman.

I want to thank each of you for your leadership and service to our Nation.

I fully support giving women the opportunity to both meet and exceed the high standards set by each of our branches of the military. But as the chair of the Readiness Committee, what I would like as a commitment from each of you is that as we implement this policy, that we ensure that individual and unit standards are focused solely on combat readiness and nothing else. And I think the women of this Nation would want that. I think the women who are going to have the opportunity and who have served so admirably and defended this Nation already in combat would want that. So I want to make sure that I have the assurance of each of you that that will be the case.

General NELLER. Yes, Senator.

Mr. MABUS. Absolutely.

Mr. MURPHY. Yes, ma'am.

General MILLEY. Yes, Senator.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you.

I want to bring up an issue, when we talk about women serving in our military, that is really one that has bothered me, and that is that we have women guards who are guarding the prisoners and terrorists at Guantanamo. And they are women who are fully qualified, capable to guard anyone there. Yet, there has been a court order in place since January of last year for, in particular, the 9/11 terrorists that essentially says that the women who are guards there are not permitted to actually transport the 9/11 five to legal meetings and commission proceedings. And Senator Capito and Senator Scott and I went to Guantanamo. We met with the women guards there. And I can assure you what they told us is we just want to do our jobs.

So as we are here having a hearing today on giving women an opportunity in all billets in the military, here we have a billet that women are already serving and yet there is a court order in place that I believe OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] has not stepped up aggressively enough to stand up for the rights of our women in the military to perform their jobs and that we have essentially let terrorists dictate terms that are completely unreasonable, not based on any religious views, even though they are claiming it. And your predecessor—not your predecessor but the former Commander of SOUTHCOM [United States Southern Command], General Kelly, was very upset about this, brought this to my attention. Previously Secretary Carter has been before this committee and also described this as outrageous.

So I would like to know, especially General Milley—most of these women guards serve in the Army—and Secretary Murphy as well, but all of you, what do you think about this. And should we not be more aggressively standing up for the rights of our women in the military to do their jobs rather than what exists right now, which is the right of the 9/11 terrorists that are bogus in terms of the ability of our women to do their jobs in the military? So I want to get your comment on this.

General MILLEY. I personally think it is ridiculous that these women are not allowed to do that job. I probably have other words that cannot be said behind this microphone right now about how I feel about that whole situation. I agree with you, Senator.

Mr. MURPHY. Senator, I concur with the Chief. And let me be clear. We do not take orders from the terrorists but there was a court order here and we take an oath to support and defend the Constitution.

But I will tell you, ma'am, that I will go back—I am now 4 weeks into this job. I will go back and meet with our general counsel, Mrs. Starzak, and look at this issue and report back to you.

Senator AYOTTE. I would appreciate it because I have been completely unsatisfied, having been a former prosecutor myself, with the level of defense that has been given and advocacy on behalf of our women in the military here. So I hope you will do that, please. Secretary Mabus?

Mr. MABUS. I share exactly your words. It is outrageous. Women need to be able to do the jobs that they are qualified to do.

General NELLER. Senator, I agree with the rest of the panel.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you all, and I do appreciate your willingness to pursue this, Secretary Murphy, because I think we can do a much better job for standing up for their rights as opposed to what is in place right now. To me, to let these 9/11 terrorists dictate what our women in the military can do is outrageous. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Gillibrand?

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have had a lot of discussion about the Marine Corps' assessment, and I want to clarify something. I think we can all agree that the women who volunteered to do the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force assessment were exceptional in their willingness to participate in a study that they were not specifically trained for and did not have the experience necessary to actually compete in that study effectively.

The design of the research overall was very flawed. First of all, these female marines were screened for the basic physical fitness test, but were competing in a large part with male marines who had years of experience and training and many of them in combat positions.

Further, there was no bar that the groups competed had to meet. Rather, they were competing against each other. So all we really know from the study is that groups that had the right experience and training and more training did better. We do not actually have data that can be used because these women who were asked to participate did not have the same training and experience as those who had been doing it for a long time.

And similarly, on the injury rates, for those women who did do this, they only had the basic standard PT [Physical Training] test. They did not do specific training to do these missions and to complete them.

So I just want my colleagues to fully understand that this assessment is not designed to give us the data that we actually need. I think it is fundamentally flawed.

So, Secretary Mabus, I would like your view on that, and then, General Neller, I would like your view on that.

Mr. MABUS. When Secretary Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Dempsey set us on this road, they said that the default position—that the assumption was that every position would be opened and that any sort of exception would have to be very narrowly tailored and would have to be based on job-specific individual standards.

And the Marine test, as I have said here before, did one great thing that General Neller has talked about, and that is it codified the standards that each individual marine in a unit had to meet in order to get that MOS.

But I think we have to focus on individuals. If an individual meets that standard, if an individual meets the gender-neutral, combat-specific, job-specific standard, then that person should get to do the job.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Well, I just think that too many of the Senators who were listening to that summary of what the Marine study showed are having a misimpression. We are not comparing average women to average men. We are talking about extraor-

dinary women. And if you look at the three women who just completed Ranger School, these three women are extraordinary women. And so if we were to assess can they do the job, yes, they can do the job. But again, to base too much or to rely too much on a study that did not have that level of training and rigor ahead of time so that they had the same experience, the same background, it is unfair to draw too many conclusions from it is all I want to say. I just hope you do not draw any conclusions.

And also, no one mentioned the fact that when they actually tested for complex problem solving tasks, the mixed units did better. So there is an area where women are improving the results of these units.

And we all know that combat is going to continue to become more and more complex over time. Warfare is going to continue to become more and more complex over time. So please do not lose sight of the assets that these extraordinary women are going to bring to your missions. They have skills beyond what a typical marine may have. And so that is going to enhance what you will be able to do long-term.

General Neller, I would love your thoughts too.

General NELLER. Well, Senator, first of all, I think it would be unfair to any of those marines, but particularly the females that participated in the GCEITF, to say they were not trained. They all went to MOS school, and so they received and have now received the MOS whether it is infantry, artillery, armor.

When I look at their physical data, the male PFT, pretty consistent. The one differential was in pull-ups. But as you said, these were exceptional female marines. They did not have to do this. They volunteered. They did our Corps, our country a great service, and we owe them a debt of gratitude. And that is one of the reasons their unit received a meritorious unit accommodation at the conclusion of their training.

Now, after they went to the MOS training, they formed into this Ground Combat Element Task Force for 4 months of preparatory training where they trained with men and developed the skills that they needed to go do this evaluation.

Senator GILLIBRAND. But the 4 months does not compare to the years that a lot of these units had been already working together doing this MOS.

General NELLER. None of these marines had been in this unit. This was a formed unit. But it is fair to say—I will agree with you—that their experience in these MOS's was probably not up to the level of their male counterparts. But in every other standard that I can tell, I would say that they were as good, if not better, in overall quality in their service as their male marine counterparts.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Chairman MCCAIN. So do you believe that the study was fatally flawed?

General NELLER. Sir, I do not. We have had the study peer-reviewed by numerous groups.

Chairman MCCAIN. So you think it was a legitimate study.

General NELLER. Within the time we had, yes, Chairman.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Sullivan?

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the hearing.

I appreciate all of you testifying today on a very, very important issue, but I think from your testimony and the questions you are seeing from the members of this committee, it is certainly not an easy issue.

You are talking about schools. I happen to have been through the Marine infantry officer course, a recon school, SERE school. These are very difficult schools that most men have a hard time with because it is about a tough profession.

I think Sergeant Major LeHew, when he was talking about this recently, the Marine Corps sergeant major put it very succinctly. In regards to infantry, there is no trophy for second place. You perform or die. Serious, serious discussion here.

And I am a Marine infantry officer but like General Neller mentioned, I am also someone who has three daughters, three teenage daughters. All their lives, my wife and I have been telling them that if they work hard, earn something, that they should be able to do anything anyone else does—anyone.

So I support the opportunity for women to serve in any capacity in the military as long as the standards are not lowered. And I think you are seeing that as a consensus here.

One thing that has not been talked about enough—I want to talk a little bit about the process. We know that Secretary Panetta allowed the services to request an exemption, and after thorough study with hundreds of marines and men and women serving gave their all to put together a study.

Secretary Mabus, I have to tell you I have been very disappointed in terms of the process, how you have dealt with the Marine Corps' desire to look at this really difficult issue. As soon as the Marines published their study, within 24 hours of this 1,000-page study, you came out and said you saw no reason for an exemption. Did you read the study?

Mr. MABUS. Senator, what I said, I said countless times, since the time that Secretary Panetta and Chairman Dempsey had set us on this path, that the presumption was that we were going—

Senator SULLIVAN. You said I do not see any reason for an exemption the day after the study was published. Based on what?

Mr. MABUS. The conclusions.

Senator SULLIVAN. Did you read the study?

Mr. MABUS. I have read the study.

Senator SULLIVAN. Did you read the study before you stated that?

Mr. MABUS. I had read the conclusions that the Marines drew from the study prior to that, and those conclusions which were based on averages and not on individual marines—

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask another question related to the study. And Senator Gillibrand just talked about it. You then implied that the women marines involved in the study were not the top-flight marines. General Neller I think just said that was not the case.

And then on public radio, you essentially told the American people that the Marines were not looking at this in an objective manner. You said, "it started out with a fairly large component of the

men in the Marine Corps thinking that this is not a good idea and women will never be able to do this. When you start out with that mindset, you are almost presupposing the outcome." I think the only person presupposing the outcome in this entire process was you.

General Neller, were you presupposing the outcome on this after millions of dollars and hundreds of marines to put together this report? Is that what you were doing, sir?

General NELLER. We were all waiting for the results of the study, but I think we had been out and visited and we had seen some things. But there was a lot of analysis that had to be done, and it was a short period of time. No, I was not presupposing it.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me just make another point. I think, Secretary Mabus, for whatever reason you have seemed agitated, annoyed about what the Marines have been doing about their study—your public statements. And yet, they were the only service, as far as I can tell, doing the hard research on a very, very difficult issue. To me it seems like you might want to think about complimenting the leadership of the Marine Corps as opposed to implying that they were not taking this seriously. They were clearly taking it seriously. In my view, they were probably the service that was taking it the most seriously.

Let me ask one final question that relates to this. On January 1, you directed the Marines to come up with a detailed plan to integrate boot camp within 15 days. Now, I am a little biased here, but I think it is commonly known that the Marine Corps probably has the best basic training of any service in the United States military, probably any service in the world.

I have been on this committee for a year. I do not think I have seen a more outrageous or ill-advised order from a service secretary to tell the Marines that they are going to take boot camp, which has been honed and put together for the benefit of the American people over decades—and you are going to tell them and order them to get a detailed plan in 15 days. Is that even remotely possible? And why did you issue such an order when nobody on this committee thinks that that was remotely possible to integrate boot camp? Did you read the Kassebaum-Baker report, unanimous committee?

Mr. MABUS. Senator, it was not only possible, but the Marines met that. They had been working on this for months and years—

Senator SULLIVAN. Did you read the Kassebaum—

Mr. MABUS.—how boot camp is organized. And you will be happy to know, Senator, that they met that deadline. They fully briefed me on January 14th and came up with—

Senator SULLIVAN. That is because the Marines are a can-do organization, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. MABUS. The Marines are an incredibly capable organization. I am in awe of the Marine Corps and of individual marines and the sincerity and the service and the work that they have done on behalf of this country. And as I said in my opening statement, it is the greatest honor of my life to lead the United States Marine Corps and the United States Navy.

What we have come to, because the Marines did such a good job of coming up with this, is the Marines have developed a very delib-

erate plan, a very ordered plan to begin to look at lessons learned and how they can more fully integrate boot camp to give us better marines, which they have done. As Commandant Neller and I have talked about several times, boot camp has changed over and over and over again and always with the same aim and that is to make better marines, to make a better Marine Corps, and have a more lethal, more effective Marine Corps.

Senator SULLIVAN. How does your order square with the Kassebaum-Baker unanimous committee recommendation on the integration of our boot camps in the military?

Mr. MABUS. Well, Senator, I looked at all sorts of reports, but I also have gone on my almost 7 years—

Senator SULLIVAN. It does not. Does it? I mean, it directly contradicts the unanimous recommendation of that committee. Right? Just for the record.

Mr. MABUS. I think that is a completely irrelevant point, Senator.

Senator SULLIVAN. It is not irrelevant.

General Neller, do you think in your professional opinion having 14 days, because—you probably did not take the day off on New Year's Day because you got an order and you were probably working on it. Do you think having 15 days to put together a detailed plan to integrate the Marine Corps boot camp, an issue that has been studied, debated, on one of the most incredibly important institutions in not only the Marine Corps, in my view the United States military—do you think that was a reasonable request? It sounds like you did it, which does not surprise me. That is the Marine Corps ethos. Was that a legitimate request to do that within 14 days, one of the biggest issues I am sure the Corps as an institution has been struggling with for years—14 days to do that?

General NELLER. Senator, what we did is we briefed the Secretary on how we do recruit training, and in part of that discussion, I believe—I am not going to speak for him, but he understands and has a better view of why we do it the way we do it. And as he stated, part of that discussion is that we are always trying to get better, and we will continue to look at ways that we can further improve recruit training.

Chairman MCCAIN. You are not answering the question, General. You are not answering Senator Sullivan's question. Repeat the question.

Senator SULLIVAN. Was it a reasonable order, given the years and years and years that the Marine Corps has been looking at this and studying this and committees like the Kassebaum-Baker unanimous committee said it was not a good idea, to have 14 days to come up with a, "detailed plan to integrate Marine Corps boot camp?" I just think it was outrageous, but I am wondering in your professional military judgment.

General NELLER. When we briefed on the 14th, we did not provide a plan of fully integrated recruit training but talked about how we do conduct recruit training.

Chairman MCCAIN. Well, it is unfortunate.

Your time has expired.

You know, Secretary Mabus, this would have been a lot easier if you had not called in the press immediately and debunked what

many of us view was a legitimate study without even reading it, and I do not believe that you read a 1,000- page document in one day. I am sorry. But I do not believe it. And so your handling of this issue has really complicated the whole situation for those of us who fully support the integration of women in the military. It was done on a peremptory, "go to the media first" fashion.

General Neller, I would just like to ask. Do you want to, for the record, articulate the concerns that you have about this entire evolution?

General NELLER. Senator, there are a lot of concerns that we have talked about, and General Milley articulated them. There are a lot of things we do not know.

I will tell you that one of my biggest concerns is that the perception, which is totally inaccurate, that the Marine Corps does not value the service of the females that serve in the Marine Corps. As I stated earlier, we are looking at how we can increase the number of females in the Marine Corps. This is about combat effectiveness. This is about health and welfare of the force. This is about talent management, putting every marine in the place where they can best contribute.

So we have been given an order to integrate. We have, we believe, a fully detailed plan to integrate. We are going to give every marine the opportunity to compete. We have the standards that we think will allow them to be successful.

Chairman MCCAIN. I asked if you had concerns, General.

General NELLER. I have concerns about retention. I have concerns about injury rates. I have concerns about propensity to reenlist, career progression. I have concerns about what is going to happen if the numbers are low, which they probably will be at the beginning. But I think the plan that we have—again, I have concerns about things I do not know what the answers are going to be too, Chairman. But I think we have a plan in place where we can monitor that. And I would ask that we continue to be required to come back to this committee and report on how we are doing on implementation.

Chairman MCCAIN. Senator Reed?

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator, so I believe that Kassebaum report was done in 1997.

Senator SULLIVAN. I believe it was 1998.

Senator REED. 1998. So we are looking at an evolving situation. I just want to make that clear in terms of reference to the report.

The final point I want to make is that what I have discerned from the entire panel is this is going to be a very careful, orchestrated, multiyear process, which will be reviewed, should be reviewed, should be reported back to the committee, and that the ultimate test will be the effectiveness of units. And that rationale is because that is what makes Marine regiments work, its platoons, companies, battalions that function, and that will be the test. And I think unless anyone disagrees with me, I will conclude with that point.

Chairman MCCAIN. I thank the witnesses.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:38 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR KELLY AYOTTE

USE OF INVOLUNTARY SEPARATION TO ACHIEVE BUDGET DRIVEN END STRENGTH
REDUCTIONS

Eric Fanning wrote in his nomination hearing two weeks ago, “Without any future increases to the budget, in order to achieve an [active component] end strength of 450k by 2018, a reduction of 40k soldiers, the army will require approximately 14k (35 percent) involuntary separations.”

1. Senator AYOTTE. Secretary Murphy and General Milley: What number of those 14,000 soldiers who the Army will have to order to leave the service involuntarily will be well-performing individuals who are not retirement eligible?

Mr. MURPHY and General MILLEY. A board process is used to determine those Soldiers and officers selected for separation, therefore it is impossible to predict the outcome of the selection process. However, the Army projects that 75–85 percent of the involuntary separations will not be retirement eligible. The largest programmed losses are officer losses. Those losses will be determined via promotion selectivity targeting younger year groups from the “Grow the Army” years 2007–2011.

2. Senator AYOTTE. Secretary Murphy and General Milley: Is it safe to say that many or most of those soldiers will have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan at least once or twice?

Mr. MURPHY and General MILLEY. Yes. Of the personnel selected by involuntary separation boards, approximately 95 percent have deployed at least once for 30 days or greater. This includes over 500 Captains and 260 Majors with more than 18 months deployment time. We are committed to treating every Soldier with dignity and respect, recognizing their service and sacrifice.

3. Senator AYOTTE. Secretary Murphy and General Milley: Will you continue to do everything in your power to minimize the use of involuntary separations for well-performing service members—especially those not eligible for retirement?

Mr. MURPHY and General MILLEY. Yes. The Army uses an iterative, systematic, and flexible personnel drawdown plan to achieve future force structure requirements. Involuntary separations are only used sparingly and as necessary to supplement routine attrition to achieve targeted endstrength goals and timelines.

4. Senator AYOTTE. Secretary Murphy and General Milley: Will you let me and my staff know if there is anything I could do to assist you in that effort?

Mr. MURPHY and General MILLEY. At this time, we believe we have all of the necessary authorities to execute the drawdown, however, we will engage with you and your staff if future needs arise.

5. Senator AYOTTE. Secretary Murphy and General Milley: Do you commit to fully complying with section 592 of the FY2016 NDAA?

Mr. MURPHY and General MILLEY. Yes, the Army continues to be in compliance with the reporting requirements of Section 592 of the FY16 NDAA and commits to remaining so.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEFF SESSIONS

COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS

6. Senator SESSIONS. Secretary Mabus and Secretary Murphy, if it is demonstrated by objective data that this new policy lessens the combat effectiveness of our combat forces in any way, will you amend this new policy?

Secretary MABUS. Every decision I make is in support of maximizing combat effectiveness. The Department of the Navy is committed to sustaining and improving combat effectiveness through systematic application of standards. As part of its recent study, the Marine Corps established standards required to maintain combat effectiveness; therefore, anyone who meets those standards will—by definition—maintain or enhance combat effectiveness. The Department’s ability to put the best and most capable Sailors and Marines in the military occupations for which they are most qualified increases the overall combat readiness of our force. Integration of women in our military has enhanced combat effectiveness by running convoys and security patrols, flying close air support missions, leading engineering platoons. They have performed exceptionally on the front lines in places like Fallujah, Ramadi and Sangin. As we access women into newly opened positions we will continue to

carefully evaluate—as we always do—the combat effectiveness of our forces and make decisions that best support our Sailors and Marines.

Secretary MURPHY The Army is committed to maintaining and enforcing rigorous combat readiness standards. We anticipate that the full integration of women will maintain or improve the Army's overall readiness. The Army cannot compromise combat readiness and effectiveness for any reason whatsoever. Our Army leaders will continue to assess and ensure that our standards in combat readiness are maintained. If at any time we see combat effectiveness or readiness decline or deteriorate by objective data then we will advise the Secretary of Defense and this committee and provide our recommendations on any policy changes required.

COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS

7. Senator SESSIONS. General Milley and General Neller, in your professional military judgment, will this new policy improve the combat effectiveness (i.e., Lethality) of our forces?

General MILLEY. Yes. We believe the full integration of women in all career fields will maintain, sustain, or improve the overall readiness of the United States Army and the capability of our force, if, and only if, we maintain and enforce rigorous combat readiness standards. We remain a standards- and merit-based, results-oriented organization, and we apply no quotas.

General NELLER. The combat readiness and effectiveness of our force is always our principal area of focus. As with any new policy, it would be premature to make a prediction regarding its outcome. We believe we have an appropriate overarching plan in place to both implement the new integration policy and, equally important, assess the effects of integration, especially regarding future combat effectiveness. We will be prepared going forward to provide more detailed data regarding the effects of this new policy on combat effectiveness, whether positive or negative.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR KIRSTIN GILLIBRAND

RECRUITMENT

8. Senator GILLIBRAND. General Milley and General Neller, now that we have opened up combat positions to women, we must turn our attention toward ensuring that women are successful in these positions. One way to reach this goal is to improve our recruitment strategies for women by targeting those that are most likely to meet the rigorous demands of combat positions, such as the captain of the lacrosse or rugby team. Has your service developed a targeted strategy for identifying and recruiting the best women for combat MOSs?

General MILLEY. Opening up all positions provides opportunity and access for top talent who meet the standards. Now with OSD approval of our implementation plan, we have initiated a deliberate and methodical approach to identify and recruit the very best.

General NELLER. The Marine Corps attracts and recruits the best qualified and eligible individuals in order to meet Total Force manpower requirements. In keeping with our ethos of "every Marine a rifleman," all Marines, both enlisted and officer, male and female, have been trained in basic infantry tactics for many years. Therefore, we believe our current recruiting and advertising methods will yield high quality women who are eligible to serve in combat arms MOS's. The Marine Corps continues to partner with the Women Basketball Coaches Association, the Female Coaches Leadership Workshop, and female leadership forums at our annual Summer Leadership and Character Development Academy. Additionally, we conduct twelve workshops annually at each of our Recruit Depots to provide educators, coaches, and key influencers an opportunity to immerse themselves in Marine culture. Similarly, at the college/university-level, influencers come to Quantico, Virginia to learn about officer opportunities. Finally, we will continue to use current research and assessment data to actively monitor propensity and other market indicators that shape future advertising initiatives to reach female population groups, and to plan and execute advertising initiatives to spread awareness of Marine Corps opportunities to female audiences. Examples of this include: updated digital and web properties to reflect new female opportunities, plans to execute a female web/digital campaign, and to create a female Marine enlisted brochure.

INTEGRATED BASIC TRAINING

9. Senator GILLIBRAND. General Neller, the Marine Corps is the only service to conduct segregated basic training for recruits. What are the plans to integrate basic training in order to better prepare women for full participation in the Corps, along

with their male counterparts and to prepare their male counterparts to serve alongside them?

General NELLER. The Marine Corps is currently executing the Marine Corps Integration Implementation Plan (MCIIP) in response to SECDEF direction to integrate all Military Occupational Specialties (MOS's) without exception as soon as practical after 2 Jan 2016 but no later than 1 Apr 2016. Under the guidance of the DEPSECDEF and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and their Implementation Group, the Marine Corps must ensure that implementation is pursued with the clear objective of improved force effectiveness. Implementation must also delineate transparent standards, consider the effect of a small female population, contemplate the physical demands and physiological differences between men and women, examine the conduct and culture as it exists and how it will change, ensure best practices in talent management, consider the ability to operate abroad, and assess and make in-stride adjustments as necessary.

On 14 Jan 2016, SECNAV was briefed on the current methodology of gender integration at Marine Corps Recruit Depots and Officer Candidates School; specific points of integration in training were identified, as were the areas where training is separate and how that approach contributes to the development of Marines, and how the Marine Corps has and will continue to evaluate the best ways to train Marines in execution of the integration plan. In a Memorandum for the Commandant of the Marine Corps dated 29 Jan 16, SECNAV stated that the Marine Corps has fully met the requirements of his 1 Jan 2016 memo regarding integration of basic training.

As always, the Marine Corps will continue to evaluate its entry level training process to ensure we produce the nation's finest Marines.

10. Senator GILLIBRAND. General Neller, what is the timeline for integrating basic training for recruits?

General NELLER. The Marine Corps has not set a timeline for further integrating recruit training, but we always assess our processes to ensure we continue to produce the nation's finest Marines. Currently, 61 percent of our recruit training is integrated, but all training is conducted using a common 70-day program of instruction for all recruits. We believe the areas where we separate men and women in the early days of recruit training provide a significant benefit which allows individuals to better deal with the initial adjustment to military life and provides leaders/mentors of the same gender to assist this transition.

11. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Mabus, what benefits have you seen in the Navy from men and women training side-by-side?

Secretary MABUS. From day one, Sailors serve in environments that have men and women serving together. Immediately, they begin to establish the unit cohesion integral to mission accomplishment. Starting everyone in this environment ensures a diversity of perspectives is established initially and eases the transition from training to an operational environment. The training environment mirrors the operational environment, enhancing teamwork, camaraderie, and combat effectiveness.

INTEGRATION STRATEGY

12. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Mabus, what lessons can we learn from the Navy in integrating women into combat roles?

Secretary MABUS. Navy has successfully integrated women into aviation, surface ships, submarines, and riverine forces, as well as other small, high-risk operations teams, such as Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Navy Divers. We know how to integrate—it starts on day one of training with leadership reinforcement of team building behaviors. Several lessons from years of successful integration have revealed that leadership, transparency, enforcing consistent standards for both men and women, and professionalism are keys to successful integration. Four key lessons:

- Female Sailors want to be held to the same occupational and performance standards.
- Female Sailors perform better when there are female service members in a peer group or present in the training or leadership cadre to provide support and interaction among Sailors and with other leaders (instructors, officers, and chief petty officers).
- As recently seen in the Submarine Force, when female service members are assigned to previously male-only occupations or commands, male service members' initial concerns about integration are dispelled after they have an opportunity to train and work together. Additionally, Navy has found top-down leadership

is key to ensuring junior enlisted Sailors and leadership receive a strong, consistent message of support for female integration from their commanding officers and other senior leaders.

- It is important to keep in mind factors that can affect how quickly females will access into previously male-only occupations, especially at the senior levels. Due to the training requirements, technical nature of the roles, and the timeline for leadership development, it typically takes 15–20 years from the time an officer receives a commission to the time she or he becomes a senior officer.

13. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Mabus, what strategies has the Navy found successful in integrating women into combat roles?

Secretary MABUS. Navy has successfully integrated women into aviation, surface ships, submarines, and riverine forces, as well as other small, high-risk operations teams, such as Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Navy Divers. We know how to integrate—it starts on day one of training with leadership reinforcement of team building behaviors. Navy has found the following strategies to be successful in integrating women into combat roles: Top-down leadership, transparency, enforcing consistent standards for both men and women, developing female peer group(s), professionalism, and ensuring formalized implementation plans address areas of concern, mitigating factors, and milestones with regular assessments and adjustments as necessary.

14. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Mabus, Secretary Murphy, General Milley, and General Neller, women are currently underrepresented among general officers. What kind of message does that send to our service women?

Secretary MABUS. The composition of the current generation of flag and general officers starkly portrays to all service members how opportunity was limited when the occupations and assignments critical for selection to the most senior leadership positions were closed to women. This is one of the reasons I strongly support the Secretary of Defense decision to open all military occupational specialties and positions, regardless of gender. It is important to keep in mind factors that can affect how quickly females will access into previously male-only occupations, especially at the senior levels. Due to the training requirements, technical nature of the roles, and the timeline for leadership development, it typically takes 15–20 years from the time an officer receives a commission to the time she or he becomes a senior officer. The Services will continue to apply validated operationally-relevant and objective standards for all career fields. The Department of the Navy is committed to building a force representative of the nation it defends.

Secretary MURPHY and General MILLEY. The Army has 57 female general officers in the Total Force to include five three-star generals on active duty. The opening of infantry and armor will provide a greater opportunity for women to become general officers, since 83 percent of our currently serving four-star generals came from infantry or armor branches.

General NELLER. In 2015, two of 92 active and reserve Marine Corps general officers are female. Female officers tend to retire or otherwise voluntarily exit the Marine Corps sooner than their male counterparts, well before encountering opportunities that would put them on the path to general officer. Those female officers who decide to remain in the Marine Corps are as competitive as their male peers for promotions and command opportunities. The Marine Corps is dedicated to better understanding retention challenges for female officers in an effort to increase senior female officer representation.

15. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Mabus, Secretary Murphy, General Milley, and General Neller, what are you going to do to ensure that women can achieve leadership roles?

Secretary MABUS. The Department of the Navy ensures that all Sailors and Marines, regardless of gender, receive the finest training and preparation for challenging and rewarding opportunities and assignments that make them competitive for senior leadership roles. Secretary Carter's recent decision creates even more opportunities to compete for command and leadership billets within newly-opened occupations and units. The Department of the Navy is committed to building a force representative of the nation it defends.

Secretary MURPHY and General MILLEY. With the opening of combat arms, the Army remains committed to all those who can meet the standard being given the opportunity to achieve their full potential, regardless of gender. We remain a merit-based, results-oriented organization.

General NELLER. Female Marines are, and have been, leaders throughout the Marine Corps. We currently have three Colonel and 13 Lieutenant Colonel females in

command of units across our Corps. Secretary Carter's recent decision creates future opportunities for female Marines to compete for additional command and leadership billets within newly-opened ground combat MOSs and units. Furthermore, we are improving our talent management practices to ensure the best career paths for all Marines. We are also taking this opportunity to address unconscious bias, dispel misconceptions and ensure full understanding of my expectations for inclusion and respect of all Marines via an Integration Education Plan that will be executed across the entire Corps. In combination, I expect all these factors to further facilitate female Marines in leadership roles.

16. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Mabus, Secretary Murphy, General Milley, and General Neller, what plan do you have to incorporate women into officer positions?

Secretary MABUS. The Department of the Navy is committed to implementing progressive reform proposals to keep the military competitive and enhance force readiness while removing barriers to maintaining and strengthening our nation's Navy-Marine Corps warfighting team. The plan to incorporate women into officer positions includes evaluation of the training and education that we provide at every level, from recruits and officer candidates to the highest levels of leadership. Recruiting, retaining, and advancing talented women is paramount while maintaining adherence to operationally-relevant and objective standards.

Secretary MURPHY and General MILLEY. Our plan is based on a "leaders first" strategy. To ensure success, we will follow a deliberate and methodical approach that begins with the assessment, selection, training, and assignment of female infantry and armor leaders, both officers and NCOs. Once that leadership is in place, we will begin the assignment of junior enlisted Soldiers.

General NELLER. Currently 7.1 percent of our Active Component officer population is female. Since 2009, the accession of female officers has increased, reaching 11.6 percent in 2014. It is projected to be 10 percent this year. It is critical to understand that the propensity for women to choose the Marine Corps is low compared to the other Services. Fear of serious injury or death is the most often stated reason for not wanting to join the military for women ages 16–21. Beyond a low propensity to join the Marine Corps, we understand that retention of our female officers is a challenge. Addressing the fact that female officers exit the Marine Corps sooner than their male counterparts due to injury, other career opportunities, or family reasons is a component of my talent management strategy.

17. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Mabus, Secretary Murphy, General Milley, and General Neller, are you considering mentorship programs to help with women's career progression and retention?

Secretary MABUS. Department of the Navy encourages participation in professional networking groups such as Lean-In Circles and leadership symposiums for women. Additionally, current unit mentoring programs enhance career development and improve retention. We continuously seek ways to improve mentorship, job satisfaction, career development, and retention of Sailors and Marines, regardless of gender.

Secretary MURPHY and General MILLEY. Yes. Our "leaders first" strategy relies on mentorship from both male and female leaders. All Army leaders are expected to mentor their junior officers and enlisted Soldiers. Leadership is critical to integration. We will enable our leaders with a comprehensive and deliberate education plan to enhance our integration efforts and ensure our future combat arms women will have the opportunity to successfully compete and progress in their career fields.

General NELLER. Marine Corps Order 1500.58 MARINE CORPS MENTORING PROGRAM (MCMP) establishes the policy, format, and guidelines to formalize previously informal relationships to help Marine leaders improve their ability to interact with their Marines on a personal and professional level. The MCMP provides the tools to help Marines to set goals to improve individual and team performance, and closely replicate at home station the relationships forged between Marines and leaders in combat. This construct remains in place and is an integral part of our "Integration Education Plan."

RETENTION

18. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Murphy and Secretary Mabus, I'm also very interested in ensuring that, once we recruit these high-quality women, we retain them. Policies that support families, such as paid family leave, are key to showing women that the military can be a viable career for them. I believe our service members should be afforded the same leave policies that civilians have, and I was thrilled when, last week, Secretary Carter announced that all women could receive

12 weeks of maternity leave. However, there is still more to be done, such as providing leave for service members caring for a sick family member and extending leave for fathers and adoptive parents. Are you committed to policies such as paid family leave that support not just our women, but also our men in service and what are your services plans to implement these policies?

Secretary MURPHY. Yes, I am committed to supporting all Army families. All Soldiers currently earn 30 days of paid leave annually. In addition to the recently announced 12 weeks maternity leave, Secretary Carter announced that he would seek Congressional authorities to expand paternity leave to 14 days.

Secretary MABUS. As our nation continues to draw upon the great talents of our Sailors and Marines, we are bound to create an environment that provides the flexibility needed to retain our highly trained and skilled workforce. Important characteristics of this environment are policies that support our service members and their families. The Department of the Navy (DON) introduced several initiatives to support work-life balance, including extended maternity leave for new mothers, expansion of child care development center operating hours, and strengthening dual-military co-location. The Department of Defense also intends to seek to expand paternity leave to 14 days and to expand adoption leave. The DON has advocated for department wide authorities in these efforts.

SOCOM

19. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Murphy and Secretary Mabus, the plan submitted by Special Operations Command to Secretary Carter asserts that recruiting, assessing, and training special operators is the responsibility of the components and the Services. Does your plan describe how you will recruit, assess, and train service women into special operations career fields?

Secretary MURPHY. Yes. The plan includes how the Army will recruit, assess, and train service women into special operations career fields. The Army and USSOCOM have closely coordinated over the past 3 years and all required actions have been or are being implemented. Active recruitment has begun upon our release of the Army execute order, following Secretary of Defense's approval of our implementation plan.

Secretary MABUS. Yes; recruiting, accession and training will ensure that each candidate meets validated, operationally-relevant, gender neutral standards for selection and assessment in training pipeline courses to qualify in Naval Special Warfare/Operations and United States Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) career fields.

20. Senator GILLIBRAND. Secretary Murphy and Secretary Mabus, can you describe the timing of your efforts to recruit, assess, and train female special operators?

Secretary MURPHY. The Army is prepared to recruit, assess, and train female special operators. Active recruitment has begun upon our release of the Army execute order, which has followed Secretary of Defense's approval of our implementation plan.

Secretary MABUS. We are actively engaging with potential candidates who are interested in the program. Candidates undergo some of the most mentally challenging and physically demanding training in the world. Training routinely exceeds 43 weeks from entry into Naval Special Warfare Preparatory School until entry into Sea Air Land (SEAL) Qualification Training, which is designed to provide candidates with the core tactical knowledge needed to join a SEAL platoon.

Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) is actively screening female Marines who volunteer for Assessment and Selection (A&S). The next A&S is scheduled to begin in August 2016 and is rapidly filling with qualified candidates. Upon selection at A&S, the female selectees will be slated for attendance at the Individual Training Course which is scheduled to commence in January 2017.

