

**§ 20502. Retention boards**

(a) CONVENING OF BOARDS TO CONSIDER OFFICERS REQUIRED TO SHOW CAUSE.—The Secretary of the Air Force shall convene retention boards at such times and places as the Secretary may prescribe to receive evidence and make findings and recommendations as to whether an officer who is required under section 20501 of this title to show cause for retention in a space force active status should be retained in a space force active status. Each retention board shall be composed of not less than three officers having the qualifications prescribed by section 20506 of this title.

(b) FAIR AND IMPARTIAL HEARING.—A retention board shall give a fair and impartial hearing to each officer required under section 20501 of this title to show cause for retention in a space force active status.

(c) EFFECT OF BOARD DETERMINATION THAT AN OFFICER HAS FAILED TO ESTABLISH THAT THE OFFICER SHOULD BE RETAINED.—

(1) If a retention board determines that the officer has failed to establish that the officer should be retained in a space force active status, the board shall recommend to the Secretary of the Air Force one of the following:

(A) That the officer be transferred to an inactive status.

(B) That the officer, if qualified under any provision of law, be retired.

(C) That the officer be discharged from the Space Force.

(2) Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Air Force, an officer as to whom a retention board makes a recommendation under paragraph (1) that the officer not be retained in a space force active status may be required to take leave pending the completion of the officer's case under this chapter. The officer may be required to begin such leave at any time following the officer's receipt of the report of the retention board, including the board's recommendation for removal from a space force active status, and the expiration of any period allowed for submission by the officer of a rebuttal to that report. The leave may be continued until the date on which action by the Secretary of the Air Force on the officer's case is completed or may be terminated at any earlier time.

(d) EFFECT OF BOARD DETERMINATION THAT AN OFFICER HAS ESTABLISHED THAT THE OFFICER SHOULD BE RETAINED.—

(1) If a retention board determines that the officer has established that the officer should be retained in a space force active status, the officer's case is closed.

(2) An officer who is required to show cause for retention in a space force active status under subsection (a) of section 20501 of this title and who is determined under paragraph (1) to have established that the officer should be retained in a space force active status may not again be required to show cause for retention in a space force active status under such subsection within the one-year period beginning on the date of that determination.

(3)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), an officer who is required to show cause for retention in

a space force active status under subsection (b) of section 20501 of this title and who is determined under paragraph (1) to have established that the officer should be retained in a space force active status may again be required to show cause for retention at any time.

(B) An officer who has been required to show cause for retention in a space force active status under subsection (b) of section 20501 of this title and who is thereafter retained in an active status may not again be required to show cause for retention in a space force active status under such subsection solely because of conduct which was the subject of the previous proceedings, unless the findings or recommendations of the retention board that considered the officer's previous case are determined to have been obtained by fraud or collusion.

(4) In the case of an officer described in paragraph (2) or paragraph (3)(A), the retention board may recommend that the officer be required to complete additional training, professional education, or such other developmental programs as may be available to correct any identified deficiencies and improve the officer's performance within the Space Force.

(Added Pub. L. 118-31, div. A, title XVII, § 1719, Dec. 22, 2023, 137 Stat. 659; amended Pub. L. 118-159, div. A, title V, § 521(x), Dec. 23, 2024, 138 Stat. 1883.)

**Editorial Notes**

## AMENDMENTS

2024—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 118-159, § 521(x)(1), substituted “That an Officer Has Failed to Establish That the Officer Should Be Retained” for “Than an Officer Has Failed to Establish That the Officer Should Be Retained” in heading and realigned margins.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 118-159, § 521(x)(2), substituted “That” for “Than” in heading.

**§ 20503. Removal of officer: action by Secretary upon recommendation of retention board**

The Secretary of the Air Force may remove an officer from space force active status if the removal of such officer from space force active status is recommended by a retention board convened under section 20502 of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 118-31, div. A, title XVII, § 1719, Dec. 22, 2023, 137 Stat. 661.)

**§ 20504. Rights and procedures**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Air Force, each officer required under section 20501 of this title to show cause for retention in a space force active status—

(1) shall be notified in writing, at least 30 days before the hearing of the officer's case by a retention board, of the reasons for which the officer is being required to show cause for retention in a space force active status;

(2) shall be allowed a reasonable time, as determined by the board, to prepare the officer's showing of cause for retention in a space force active status;

(3) shall be allowed to appear either in person or through electronic means and to be rep-