

Q & A: Status of Equal Opportunity (EO) in the Military

Question: Is there evidence of discrimination against women with regard to promotions?

Answer #1: Quoting the July 2013 Report to Congress on Women in the Service Restriction Review (WISRR), Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, p. 2:

*"The [DoD February 2012 Report to Congress] highlighted that there is **no indication of women having less than equitable opportunities to compete and excel under current assignment policy...**" (emphasis added)*

Answer #2: From the DoD Report to Congress on the Review of Laws, Policies and Regulations Restricting the Service of Female Members in the U.S. Armed Forces, February 2012, pp. 3-4:

*"Women constitute approximately 14.5% of the 1.4 million Active Component military personnel and comprise 7.25% of general/flag officers and 10.86% of the senior enlisted force. **These figures are strong given that retention of women is significantly less than that of men beyond 20 years of service, where the majority of these promotions to the senior grades occur.** In its recent study on Minority and Gender Differences in Officer Career Progression, the RAND Corporation found no statistical differences in the career progression of female officers in open occupations with closed positions as compared to women in fully open occupations; both groups of women shared the same likelihood of reaching pay grade O-6 (Colonel or Captain). **The Department reviewed all available information from the Military Services and did not find any indication of females having less than equitable opportunities to complete and excel under current assignment policy.**" (emphasis added)*

Answer #3: Ms. Vee Penrod, Deputy Asst. Secretary for Personnel & Readiness, Transcript of Defense Department Briefing, February 9, 2012:

*"What we did is we asked RAND to help us review the data, and we found that that if you look at promotions in fields where women currently serve or are partially open, that there was **no disadvantage in the promotion rate of women.**" (emphasis added)*

Answer #4: Quoting from the Report of the 1992 **Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces**, Finding No. 4.24, p. C-131:

*"**Women's rates for promotion are similar to men's.**" Several briefings presented to the DACOWITS since the 1990s also have shown that women are promoted at rates equal to or faster than men." (emphasis added)*

Answer #5: As in private industry, where there are fewer female CEOs, personal and family choices result in fewer women in higher flag and general ranks. There is no reason to force the majority of women serving in the enlisted ranks into the combat arms, based on the theory that a few female officers who remain in the military might be promoted to flag or general rank.

Prepared by the Center for Military Readiness, an independent public policy organization that specializes in military/social issues. More information is available at www.cmrlink.org.