



## **All Military Jobs Should Be Open to Women, Including Those in the Marine Corps. No Exceptions.**

- January 2013 directives by DoD Secretary Panetta/JCS Chairman Dempsey rescinded the 1994 ban on women serving in direct ground combat. Under the directives, gender-neutral occupational standards must be validated and in place by September 2015. Integration of women is to occur as expeditiously as possible but not later than January 1, 2016. If any Service wishes to request that any MOS or unit remain closed, that request must be personally approved by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and then by the Secretary of Defense, and be “narrowly tailored and based on a rigorous analysis of factual data regarding the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the position.” Under DoD guidance, any exceptions are to be requested by the end of September 2015.
- According to press reports, Navy and Air Force will not seek any exceptions and Army and Special Operations Command (SOCOM) are unlikely to request exceptions, based on their own integration studies.
- In contrast, the press reports that Marine Corps Commandant Gen Joseph Dunford, just before he was sworn in as Chairman of the JCS, requested that "some frontline positions" remain closed. This sets up a conflict with Secretary of Navy Ray Mabus who has publicly stated that Navy will not ask for any exceptions, including for Marine Corps combat arms. Mabus said he considered fully the results of the integration studies done by the Marine Corps.
- The Marine Corps studies have not been publicly released. However, a 4-page summary of results of the Corps' Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCE-ITF), involving 400 volunteers—300 men, 100 women—who engaged in a series of tactical tests, is in circulation. According to this summary, all-male teams performed better on most evaluated tasks than mixed-gender teams, and female participants had higher injury rates than male participants. The status of this summary as an official USMC document is unclear; it is not on letterhead or dated and appears to be truncated. It has not been posted on any official website. However, its contents were briefed to some members of the press by the Marine Corps Force Integration Office.
- Another summary of the results of the GCE-ITF on official USMC letterhead and signed by the Director of the Marine Corps Force Integration Office, with attachments, presents a more detailed and nuanced picture of the results than the 4-page summary. For example, it includes positive as well as negative implications of integration, suggests ways to address negative implications and, in fact, describes the steps to ensure successful integration.
- Secretary Mabus recognized that a laudable purpose of the Marine Corps studies was to set standards for physically demanding combat jobs that had never had standards before. We agree. But the studies have no use as a basis for requesting an exception because to do so would improperly evaluate all women based on the performance of a few women.
- Instead, as the Panetta/Dempsey directives instruct and Secretary Mabus emphasized, the proper approach is to establish validated gender-neutral standards for all military jobs and permit all members

of the military—both women and men—to compete for them. Congress too, in the NDAA for FY2015, required the Secretary of Defense to ensure that gender-neutral occupational standards: “(1) accurately predict performance of actual, regular and recurring duties of a military occupation; and (2) are applied equitably to measure individual capabilities.”

- Bottom line: Set valid gender-neutral standards and open all military jobs to women, including those in the Marine Corps, without exception.

September 28, 2015