



Center for Military Readiness 

Promoting high standards and sound priorities for our military men and women.

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Survey of Marines Fails to Show Support for Women in Direct Ground Combat

On Friday, February 1, the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) released a ["Quick-Look Analysis of Survey Results Assessing the Implications of Possible Changes to Women in Service Restrictions"](#). The 5-page paper, dated September 2012, summarizes results of a survey of active-duty Marines on the subject of women in combat, which was conducted from May 30 to August 31, 2012.

Elaine Donnelly, President of the Center for Military Readiness, obtained a copy of the 16-page CNA survey instrument in June 2012, and prepared an [analysis](#) of the 122 questions asked. Mrs. Donnelly released the following statement on the incomplete survey results:

"The September 2012 CNA 'Quick-Look Analysis of Survey Results,' belatedly released on a Friday, seems intended to manage public perceptions that are not supported by still-undisclosed research data. If the survey of Marines revealed significant support for the assignment of women in "tip of the spear" direct ground combat units, detailed poll results would have been announced in full and proclaimed a 'success' four months ago.

"The survey instrument, unfortunately, missed the opportunity to ask the most important questions. For example, '*How would the assignment of women to **Marine infantry** and **Special Operations Forces** improve mission effectiveness?*' And, '*Do you favor or oppose the elimination of all direct ground combat exemptions for women?*' Conclusions cannot be drawn from questions not asked.

"The polling instrument also failed to provide an accurate definition of the issue at hand: direct ground combat element units, meaning small fighting battalions that close with and attack the enemy on the ground. (infantry, artillery, armor, Special Operations Forces and Navy SEALs)

"Like many civilian polls, this survey often used the undefined word 'combat,' which

generally means dangerous war zone assignments that are 'in harm's way.' The imprecise wording casts doubt on survey results, which could have been more useful if more precise terminology had been used.

"Conclusions also are skewed by the survey's frequent use of the misleading word 'voluntary' – a word suggesting an option that does not exist. Research done by the **Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces**, which studied this issue in depth in 1992, determined that a 'voluntary' option for women but not for men in close combat simply would not work. (See [Selected Findings](#), point #7)

"Finally, the survey relies on the mistaken belief that tough training standards preparing men for direct ground combat missions would remain the same as they are now. This will not be possible due to [well-documented differences](#) in male/female physical capabilities, and because of the administration's intent to impose gender-based 'diversity metrics,' meaning 'quotas,' which will have the effect of driving training standards down.

"According to recommendations of the [Military Leadership Diversity Commission, \(MLDC\)](#) endorsed by the Defense Department on February 9, 2012, promotions of officers at all levels, especially 3- and 4-star generals and admirals, will be contingent on support for gender-based '**diversity metrics.**' (See pp. xvii-xviii)

"The MLDC report admits that this concept is not the same as respect or recognition for individual merit – the key to success for racial integration. The 'new diversity' is about demographic group rights, not individual rights. (See p. 18) Tough training standards that men must meet now may end up 'equal,' but they will not remain the same.

"The CNA survey 'Quick Look' summary barely mentions major concerns among male and female Marines, including sexual assaults, false accusations of harassment, fraternization and preferential treatment, privacy/billeting, limited duty affecting readiness, and additional risks for women targeted for capture. These vaguely-described concerns deserve close closer examination by Congress and the American public, not an incomplete summary that omits details or sweeps them under the rug.

"Even though the survey instrument was flawed, members of Congress should request complete top-line data, cross-tabs, and detailed Marine responses broken down by military occupational specialty, combat community, and experience."

The Center for Military Readiness has prepared a 42-page Special Report analyzing all phases of the Marine Corps "**Assignment of Women to Ground Combat**" Research Project, including the CNA survey instrument used in 2012:

[Defense Department "Diversity" Push for Women in Land Combat](#) (See pages 8-11)

More information on training standards is provided in this article:

Seven Reasons Why Women-in-Combat Diversity Will Degrade Tough Training Standards

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Elaine Donnelly, who served on the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, is President of the Center for Military Readiness. Founded in 1993, CMR is an independent public policy organization that specializes in military personnel issues. More information is available on CMR's website, www.cmrlink.org.

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