



Center for Military Readiness



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

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Obama Administration Disregarding Harmful Consequences of Ordering Women Into Direct Ground Combat (Infantry) Battalions

*The following comments may be attributed to **Elaine Donnelly**, President of the **Center for Military Readiness**:*

"Following orders from **President Barack Obama**, lame-duck Defense Secretary **Leon Panetta** has recklessly announced unilateral nullification of direct ground combat exemptions that are important to the majority of military women who serve in the enlisted ranks.

"Secretary Panetta has excluded Congress and the American people from the decision-making process, and imposed a radical "diversity" agenda on our military without disclosing the data and results of extensive research on the subject of women in land combat that the **Marine Corps** conducted last year.

"Congress should insist on seeing data gathered during the Marines' research, and conduct immediate oversight hearings before harmful policies imposed by the outgoing Secretary of Defense become *de facto* law.

"We are hearing assurances that training standards will remain the same, but no matter what is promised now, incremental pressures to assign women to **Marine** and **Army infantry** and **Special Operations Forces** battalions will drive qualification standards down. The same advocates who demand 'career opportunities' in combat are the first to demand *unequal*, gender-normed standards to make it 'fair.'

"High, uncompromised standards are not compatible with recommendations of the **Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC)**, a largely-civilian Pentagon commission that has called for elimination of women's land combat exemptions in order to promote gender-based 'diversity metrics,' also known as 'quotas'. The Defense Department endorsed the egalitarian concept at a Pentagon news conference on February 9, 2012.

Such goals can only be achieved by creating a 'critical mass' of women in infantry battalions — the 'sufficient cadre' of female personnel mentioned in the [January 9 memo](#) issued by Joint Chiefs Chairman **Gen. Martin Dempsey**.

"We are not talking about units operating 'in harm's way,' where women have served with courage. 'Tip of the spear' infantry battalions attack the enemy with deliberate offensive

action. [Thirty years of studies and reports](#) have shown that in this environment, women do not have an equal opportunity to survive, or to help fellow soldiers survive.

"Congress has the constitutional responsibility to make policy for the military, and they should do so by insisting on a full and public review of data resulting from the multi-phased research project that the Marines conducted in 2012. If data gathered in that research showed that gender 'diversity' would strengthen infantry battalions, surely we would have heard that news by now.

"Despite current denials, training standards will have to be lowered to achieve the desired 'critical mass.' And as we have seen many times before, officials will deny gender-normed standards or disguise them with sophistries pretending that 'equal effort' is the same as 'equal results.'

Gender-norming will not work in infantry battalions, but it will increase resentment and harm team cohesion and morale. These negative dynamics surely will increase problems of sexual misconduct, across both sides of the spectrum ranging from sexual abuse to inappropriate relationships.

"Career pressures to make this 'work' will vitiate core values, because the military's honorable tradition of recognizing individual merit will have to yield to pressures for 'diversity metrics.' Marine and Army field commanders who desire promotion will be compelled to pursue gender-based quotas by ordering women into direct ground combat (infantry) battalions.

"Before long, commanders will have to implement various types of double standards involving women, known as **DSIW**. And to avoid soaring injury rates in tough training, challenges for men will be dropped and forgotten, weakening the finest fighting force in the world.

"Rates of sexual misconduct have been getting steadily worse in other military communities. Imposing these problems on infantry battalions will weaken morale and combat readiness even more. None of this is necessary, since Pentagon records have shown that military women are promoted at rates equal to or faster than men.

"President Obama is misusing his power as Commander in Chief to impose irresponsible, politically motivated social agendas on military leaders who must follow orders. This move, planting the feminist flag on the Pentagon next to the **LGBT** (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) flag, is not a 'gift' to military women. Most have shown little desire to be ordered into the infantry on the same basis as men.

"This ill-advised decision will impose heavy burdens on fighting units, making military life more difficult and more dangerous for men and women alike. It will also affect unsuspecting civilian women, who will face equal obligations to register for **Selective Service** when a future federal court rules in favor of litigation brought by the **ACLU** on behalf of men.

"The **Center for Military Readiness** has released a new [CMR Special Report, titled *Defense Department "Diversity" for Women in Land Combat*](#). The 42-page document provides independent analysis of the Marine Corps research program that was initiated in April 2012, in order to gather information on the prospects for women in direct ground combat (infantry) battalions.

This is an [Executive Summary](#) of the CMR Special Report, which CMR President Elaine described in [an op-ed](#) published on Monday in the *Washington Times*.

For more information or an interview with Elaine Donnelly, contact CMR Executive Director Tommy Sears, 202/347-5333, or call 734/464-9430.

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*The Center for Military Readiness is **an independent public policy organization that specializes in military/social issues.** CMR Founder Elaine Donnelly served on the 1992 **Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces**, and was a member of the Pentagon's **Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS).***

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