



Center for Military Readiness



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

For Immediate Release

June 18, 2013

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Pentagon Plans Will Increase Combat and Sexual Violence Against Women

Unresolved Problems To Be Extended Into Combat Arms

*In response to expected Defense Department announcements regarding plans to order female personnel into direct ground combat battalions, **Elaine Donnelly**, President of the **Center for Military Readiness**, issued the following statement:*

"Department of Defense and military leaders are letting down the troops by moving ahead with ill-advised plans to order (not 'allow') women into physically-demanding direct ground combat (DGC) positions. These include **Army** and **Marine infantry**, **artillery**, **armor**, and **Special Operations Forces**, including **Ranger** and **Navy SEAL** battalions.

"Missions of these fighting teams, which attack the enemy with deliberate offensive action, are very different from the experiences of courageous military women who have served in harm's way while exposed to incident-related or contingent combat in war zones since 9/11.

"The phrase 'gender-neutral standards' has yet to be defined and no one has made the argument that such requirements would *strengthen* training or *improve* readiness in the combat arms. Due to physical differences that have been affirmed by more than [thirty years](#) of studies and reports on the subject, all possible options for implementing 'gender-neutral standards' would have the effect of lowering requirements. For example, the services could:

"a) Omit or phase out without notice the toughest physical tests in infantry and Special Operations Forces training. Joint Chiefs Chairman **Gen. Martin Dempsey** has already signaled this would happen [when he said in January](#) that all standards will be '*questioned*' if they are '*too high*' for women to '*make it.*' Regardless of what is said today, successors to current military leaders will implement the rest of **President Obama's** "gender diversity" agenda.

"b) Use gender-specific requirements or scoring systems that treat men and women differently by recognizing 'equal effort' rather than equal performance. Gender-normed standards can be justified in entry-level military training, but not in 'tip of the spear' combat arms battalions that attack the enemy with deliberate offensive action.

"c) Accept into Navy SEAL and Army Ranger teams hundreds of men who would otherwise wash out. Over time this process would degrade tough, male-oriented standards – just to accept a few women under 'same' standards that would be reduced to ['minimum'](#) levels.

"None of these options for achieving gender-based 'diversity' in the combat arms would sustain or *improve* combat training standards, which are necessarily high for survival and mission accomplishment in elite fighting teams and Special Operations Forces.

"The courage of our military women is not in question, but empirical evidence that is based on actual experience, not what amounts to Amazon Warrior Myths, indicates that women are not interchangeable with men in direct ground combat. In that environment, women do not have an equal opportunity to survive, or help fellow soldiers survive.

"It defies common sense for Secretary of Defense **Chuck Hagel** and Gen. Dempsey to extend unresolved issues of sexual misconduct into the combat arms. The unsupported idea that women will experience less violence if they serve in the combat arms is a throwback to discredited theories first advanced after the 1991 Las Vegas [Tailhook](#) convention scandal. More than twenty years later, respect for military women is higher than ever, but rates of sexual assault and other forms of misconduct are soaring with no end in sight.

"It is regrettable that members of Congress are so distracted that they are failing to recognize a fundamental flaw in the argument for women in the infantry: *Violence against women is wrong*, say the proponents, *unless it happens at the hands of the enemy*. None of this is necessary, since the Pentagon's own data shows that for decades, military women have been promoted at rates equal to or faster than men.

"Furthermore, Congress is allowing the Obama Administration to lay the legal groundwork for concomitant Selective Service obligations for unsuspecting civilian women, including a possible future draft.

"Detailed information on issues to be discussed today is available in these articles and CMR Policy Analyses:

- [Seven Reasons Why Women in Combat Diversity Will Degrade Tough Training Standards](#)

- [Sexual Assaults and Cultural Confusion in the Military's New Gender Order](#)
- [Registration of Women for Selective Service and a Possible Draft](#)
- [Defense Department Drive to Force Women Into Direct Ground Combat: Why Congress Must Intervene](#)

To schedule an interview on this and related topics, call CMR President Elaine Donnelly at **734/464-9430** or CMR Executive Director Tommy Sears at **202/347-5333**.

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*The Center for Military Readiness is an independent public policy organization that specializes in military/social issues. Elaine Donnelly is a former member of the 1992 **Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces**, which studied the issue of women in combat for a full year. If you would like to be removed from future CMR mailings, please let us know by clicking [here](#)*