

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**HONORABLE PATRICK J. MURPHY
ACTING SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**

AND

**GENERAL MARK A. MILLEY
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY**

BEFORE THE

**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE**

SECOND SESSION, 114TH CONGRESS

**ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION TO OPEN ALL GROUND
COMBAT UNITS TO WOMEN**

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**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

**JOINT STATEMENT BY
HONORABLE PATRICK J. MURPHY
ACTING SECRETARY OF THE ARMY AND
GENERAL MARK A. MILLEY
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION TO OPEN ALL GROUND COMBAT UNITS
TO WOMEN**

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of America's Army.

Following three years of careful and comprehensive study, the Army recommended all military occupational specialties (MOS) be open to women. In our view, the best-qualified Soldier, regardless of gender, should be allowed to serve in any position.

Every volunteer who swears to support and defend our Constitution should be afforded the opportunity to serve according to their merit in any military career field.

Full integration will result in a stronger Army. Establishing specialty-specific, operationally-relevant gender neutral standards, based on combat experience that are rigorously enforced for both men and women will likely increase overall readiness of the Army to conduct operations anywhere at any time against any foe. Women represent greater than half our population and the Army intends to take full advantage of this talent pool.

The Army has previously and continues to successfully integrate females into units based upon a phased, deliberate approach that maintains Army standards, ensures equitable treatment, and reinforces Army values of dignity and respect. Our guiding principles of implementation are first, to maintain readiness that is standards-based. Second, to have a deliberate and methodical process that is transparent. And third, that leadership and accountability are key to success, with no quotas and equitable

treatment. As we continue to move forward to fully integrate our Army, we intend to build upon these principles.

The Army has deployed gender integrated Brigade Combat Teams over the last decade. Since 2011 the Army opened 9 military occupational specialties and approximately 95,000 positions in Combat Arms units, down to company and platoon level. Since 9/11, over a thousand U.S. military women have been killed or wounded while deployed to combat zones. Today, women serve in every Active Duty Infantry, Armor and Field Artillery battalion. The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment was opened to women in 2014, and the Army's Ranger Course was opened just last year. The Army has had success with its deliberate methodical approach. Additionally, over 9,000 women have received the Army Combat Action Badge for "actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy," and two have received the Silver Star for "gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States."

We have identified several tasks required for full integration. We will implement published, measurable, gender-neutral standards based solely on combat requirements and that will not be compromised for any reason. Next, we will initiate gender-neutral training, and assign leaders first, followed by female enlisted Soldiers. This will allow us the opportunity both to learn from measured implementation as well as to build a cadre of female officers and NCO leadership. Additionally, we will improve our accessions vetting to better screen and manage individual Soldier qualifications.

We estimate that effective integration will require 1-3 years of deliberate, monitored effort with continued rigorous assessment. We have already begun to ensure our facilities meet legal and Army guidelines for accession as well as basic and initial training of female Soldiers. Additionally, we are providing leaders and Soldiers with appropriate education to support these changes. This spring, female cadets and officer candidates who qualify will be given the opportunity to request assignment to Infantry or Armor branches. As those women who volunteer complete necessary training for their new MOSs, they will serve as the basis for our integrated programs.

While real challenges remain, we are confident they are manageable. These challenges include: inconsistent enforcement of existing standards and perceptions of double-standards; cohesion; sexual assault and harassment; ignorance of Army policy; small numbers of volunteers or high attrition; injury rates; career management; and discipline. Through a variety of policies, rigorous training, enforced standards, and leader education—all grounded in the importance of ground combat—full gender integration is possible. The Army will regularly assess our long-term strategies and continue earlier studies to better understand critical areas. Combined, this will inform future policy adjustments and education plans to support full gender integration.

The Army has an established record of success in opening occupations previously closed to women. These experiences and the results of five careful and deliberate studies have informed and enabled the Army to successfully implement this guidance and increase our overall readiness, thereby making us a more combat effective Army. As the Army moves forward, you have our commitment that we will do so in a manner that is fully transparent to the American people and to the Congress.

On behalf of the Army, thank you for your support of our Soldiers, Civilians, Veterans, and their Families.