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Most Say Policy Will Not Harm Military Effectiveness

Broad Support for Combat Roles for Women

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Most Say Policy Will Not Harm Military Effectiveness

Broad Support for Combat Roles for Women

The public broadly supports the military's decision to lift restrictions on women in combat. Two-thirds (66%) support allowing women in the military to serve in ground units that engage in close combat, while just 26% are opposed. Opinion on this question is little changed from a Washington Post/ABC News survey two years ago.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and The Washington Post, conducted Jan. 24-27 among 1,005 adults, finds that the public is evenly divided over whether allowing women to take on combat roles represents a major change for the U.S. military: 47% say it is, while an equal percentage says this is just a minor change.

The survey, conducted after Defense Secretary Leon Panetta ended the ban on women serving in ground combat units, finds that most Americans (58%) think that the policy shift will improve opportunities for women in the military.

By contrast, fewer think the decision will have an impact on military effectiveness. Nearly half (49%) say allowing women to serve in combat roles will not make much difference to military effectiveness; among those who say it will have an impact, nearly twice as many say this will make military effectiveness better (29%) rather than worse (15%).

Positive Views of Combat Roles for Women

	Jan 24-27
<i>Allow women to serve in ground units that engage in close combat ...</i>	%
Support	66
Oppose	26
Don't know	<u>8</u>
	100
<i>Combat role for women is ...</i>	
Major change	47
Minor change	47
No change/Don't know	<u>6</u>
	100
<i>Will make opportunities for women in military ...</i>	
Better	58
Worse	7
Not make much difference	30
Don't know	<u>6</u>
	100
<i>Will make military effectiveness ...</i>	
Better	29
Worse	15
Not make much difference	49
Don't know	<u>6</u>
	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/WASHINGTON POST Jan. 24-27, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Men, Women Equally Supportive of Lifting Combat Ban

Majorities of nearly all demographic groups offer support for allowing women to serve in ground units that engage in close combat. Notably, almost identical percentages of men (65%) and women (66%) support the change.

About three-quarters of Democrats (76%) support allowing women in combat roles, as do 65% of independents. Republicans also favor the change in military policy, but by a much narrower 55%-37% margin.

Older Americans are less supportive of the change in military policy than younger Americans. Among those 65 and older, 52% support the decision while 36% are opposed. By contrast, more than seven-in-ten of those younger than 50 (72%) support allowing women to serve in combat roles.

There is little difference in views among those who live in a household with someone who has served in the military and those who do not. Overall, 63% of those in veteran households favor the decision compared with 67% of those in non-veteran households.

However, those who view the introduction of women into combat roles as a major change are less likely than those who see it as a minor change to support the policy (60% vs. 73%).

Broad Consensus Favors Women Taking on Combat Roles

	Support %	Oppose %	DK %
Total	66	26	8=100
Men	65	27	8=100
Women	66	25	9=100
White	65	27	9=100
Black	68	27	5=100
18-29	74	18	8=100
30-49	70	23	8=100
50-64	63	29	7=100
65+	52	36	12=100
College grad+	71	21	8=100
Some college	70	23	7=100
HS or less	59	31	9=100
Republican	55	37	8=100
Democrat	76	19	5=100
Independent	65	26	9=100
<i>Veteran in household ...</i>			
Yes	63	29	8=100
No	67	24	9=100
<i>Change will be...</i>			
Major	60	32	8=100
Minor	73	20	7=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/WASHINGTON POST Jan. 24-27, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Whites and black include only those who are not Hispanic.

Views of Policy Impact on Effectiveness, Women's Opportunities

A 49% plurality says allowing women to serve in combat roles will not make much difference in terms of military effectiveness. Of those who do think there will be an impact, more say women in combat roles will make military effectiveness better (29%) than worse (15%).

Far more Democrats say the change will improve military effectiveness (38%) than worsen it (7%); 52% say it will not make much difference. By contrast, more Republicans say women in combat roles will have a negative effect on military effectiveness (29%) than make it better (20%); 41% say things will not be much different.

Those in military households have a more skeptical view of the impact on military effectiveness than do those in non-military households.

Among those who say they or someone in their household has served in the military, 26% say allowing women in combat roles will improve effectiveness while about as many (22%) say it will make it worse; 44% say it will not make much difference. Among those in non-military households, more than

Few See Women in Combat Roles Harming Military Effectiveness

<i>Women in combat roles will make ...</i>	Better	Worse	Not much difference	DK
Military effectiveness	%	%	%	%
Total	29	15	49	6=100
Men	29	18	46	7=100
Women	29	13	52	6=100
18-29	34	9	53	3=100
30-49	32	14	47	7=100
50-64	27	18	49	6=100
65+	21	21	49	9=100
Republican	20	29	41	10=100
Democrat	38	7	52	3=100
Independent	28	16	51	5=100
<i>Veteran in household</i>				
Yes	26	22	44	7=100
No	31	12	52	6=100
Opportunities for women in military				
Total	58	7	30	6=100
Men	61	8	26	5=100
Women	55	6	32	6=100
18-29	68	6	23	3=100
30-49	57	6	30	7=100
50-64	57	8	30	5=100
65+	50	8	35	7=100
Republican	46	12	36	7=100
Democrat	67	5	24	4=100
Independent	59	6	31	4=100
<i>Veteran in household</i>				
Yes	56	8	31	5=100
No	59	7	29	6=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/WASHINGTON POST Jan. 24-27, 2013.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

twice as many say the policy shift will have a positive effect (31%) than negative effect (12%); 52% say it will not make much difference.

The change in military policy is widely seen as having a positive impact on opportunities for women in the military. A broad 58% majority says allowing women to serve in combat roles will lead to better opportunities for women in the military, 30% say it will not make much difference and only 7% say it will make opportunities worse.

Those in both military (56%) and non-military (59%) households say the change in military policy will make opportunities for women better. However, Republicans (46%) are less likely than independents (59%) or Democrats (67%) to say the change will improve opportunities for women in the military.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted January 24-27, 2013 among a national sample of 1,005 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (503 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 502 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 258 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,005	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	232	7.7 percentage points
Democrats	334	6.4 percentage points
Independents	364	6.2 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
January 24-27, 2013, OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,005

PEW.1-PEW.3 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

On a different subject,

PEWWP.1¹ Do you support or oppose allowing women in the military to serve in ground units that engage in close combat? **[IF RESPONDENT SUPPORTS OR OPPOSES: Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?]**

	<i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	
<u>2013</u>		<u>2011</u>
66	NET support	73
37	Strongly support	
28	Somewhat support	
26	NET oppose	25
9	Somewhat oppose	
17	Strongly oppose	
8	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	2

ASK ALL:

PEWWP.2 Do you think that allowing women to serve in combat roles will be a major change for the U.S. military, or only a minor change?

<u>2013</u>		
47	Major change	
47	Minor change	
1	No change (VOL.)	
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	

ASK ALL:

PEWWP.3 Do you think allowing women to serve in combat roles will make **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**, better, worse, or not make much difference?

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Not make much difference</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a. Opportunities for women in the military January 24-27, 2013	58	7	30	6
b. Military effectiveness January 24-27, 2013	29	15	49	6

ASK ALL:

PEWWP.4 Have you or has anyone currently living in your household ever served in the U.S. military or the military reserves? **[IF YES: Is that you or someone else?]**

<u>2013</u>		
35	NET service member in household	
11	Yes, self	
22	Yes, someone else in household	
2	Yes, both	
65	No, nobody in household has served	
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	

¹ Questions PEWWP.1-PEWWP.4 asked in conjunction with *The Washington Post*.