

## **Soldiers inspire new Army directive on parenthood, pregnancy, postpartum policies**

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WASHINGTON – What began as a grassroots effort by Soldiers to identify issues facing pregnant and postpartum Soldiers became formal policy today, when Army Secretary Christine Wormuth signed a directive aimed at improving opportunities for Soldiers to advance their careers while providing the time and flexibility needed to care for growing families.

The Army's Parenthood, Pregnancy and Postpartum directive makes a number of significant policy changes and program improvements, including expanding postpartum operational and training deferments, extending exemptions for physical fitness testing and the Army Body Composition Program, standardizing convalescent leave in cases of pregnancy loss, allowing select professional military education attendance while pregnant, creating stabilization while undergoing fertility treatments, and increasing family care plan flexibility.

"We recruit Soldiers, but we retain Families," said Gen. James McConville,

Chief of Staff of the Army. "Winning the war for talent means making sure our best and brightest people don't have to choose between service and Family."

The directive contains 12 components. Six of them are entirely new – five of which were suggested from Soldier feedback – and the other six are updates to existing policies. Although four components were required by Congress, the Army expanded on the initial requirements to improve the health and quality of life for all parents.

These changes affect over 400,000 parents within the total force, including 29,000 single father Soldiers, who outnumber single mother Soldiers by a 3-to-1 ratio. Under this directive, all of the components – which previously existed in over 20 Army regulations – are consolidated in one document to provide a resource for leaders to assist military families. Brigade-level leaders will be required to establish their own policies to reinforce the directive.

Army Directive 2022-06 (Parenthood, Pregnancy and Postpartum) can be found at Army Publishing Directorate at:

<https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/ArmyDir.aspx>