

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS
5TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

REPUBLICAN LEADER,
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

January 26, 2022

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The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin,

I am writing to you today about Department of Defense Instruction 6130.03, Medical Standards for Military Service: Appointment, Enlistment or Induction. It is my hope that this code can be changed to allow more leeway in granting exceptions for exceptional candidates joining in certain support roles, particularly in the health care field.

I first became aware of flaws in this code when I was contacted by one of my constituents, Hannah Cvancara, who shared with me her endeavor to join the United States Navy. Hannah suffered a childhood amputation, and due to the Navy's policy on non-service-connected amputations, she has been unable to join the Navy and live out her dream of serving her country as a Navy nurse.

Hannah has never let the circumstances of her childhood amputation hold her back from anything she's chosen to do in life. In high school and college, she participated in activities like volleyball, swim team, ballet, high jump, and more. At Eastern Washington University, she successfully completed the Navy SEAL Fitness Challenge. In her spare time, Hannah climbs cliffs, snowboards regularly, and surfs in the Pacific Ocean.

In 2019, Hannah graduated with her degree in nursing, following in her father's footsteps, who was a Navy flight surgeon. Since graduation, she has worked continuously as an orthopedic nurse serving patients in need of trauma, post-anesthesia, and critical care. With nurses in high demand in both the civilian sector and the military, and the demand only expected to grow in the coming decades, the Navy would be doing a great disservice to itself by not considering candidates like Ms. Cvancara for health care and other non-frontline occupations as is deemed appropriate.

In sum, because of exceptional candidates like Ms. Cvancara and the rapidly growing demand for health care specialists, I ask that Department of Defense Instruction 6130.03 be modified so

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that exemplary candidates can obtain a medical exemption to join recruit training and show they can complete the standards. I know Hannah and others like her will show yet again that they can conquer any challenge put in front of them. If you have any questions, please contact my Legislative Aide, Matthew Cardenas (matthew.cardenas@mail.house.gov, 202-225-2006).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathy McMorris Rodgers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cathy" being the most prominent.

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress