

Continuum of Service: Adjust the Mandatory Retirement Date

ROA urges Congress to provide for the mandatory retirement date to be adjusted when a servicemember has accrued non-participation time.

Ultimately, ROA would like DOD to change their human capital strategy to eliminate restricting people to a 20-year career. However, in the current legacy manpower management system we recognize the need for personnel policy limits that ensure a certain level of “up and out” of the force.

However, adjusting mandatory retirement dates would not be contrary to the services ability to manage the force because of other limits in place. The services have an Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) category where service members can be assigned that does not include a requirement to participate. This can be the situation for several reasons, such as, when a person is completing a degree or when they need time to find a participating position.

Being able to adjust mandatory retirement dates for approved periods of non-participation provides several advantages to the services.

In an Air Force Times article the Chief of Air Force Reserve said, “No matter who brings you in, the Air Force, we spend half a million bucks on you by about a six-year point,” he said. “If you’re a pilot, well over \$1.2 million. Every one of those we’d like to have stay in the Air Force, as airmen for life ... we’ve been pretty successful the last two years.” The ability to access individuals in the IRR allows the services to continue reaping returns on their investment and leverage their military experience.

Better use of individuals in the IRR is also a recommendation by the Reserve Forces Policy Board. In October 2016, the board recommended implementing IRR management reforms to increase the force by tapping into more than 250,000 trained military members parked in this non-participating category. This recommendation recognizes that service members in the IRR can be valuable contributors. ROA believes time spent in the IRR should not negatively affect an individual’s ability to participate by cutting short how long they can stay in the service.

INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE/INACTIVE NATIONAL GUARD

(Congressional Research Service RL30802, June 13, 2014, as of September 2013)

Reserve Component	ARNG	USAR	USNR	USMCR	ANG	USAFR	USCGR	TOTAL
Total	2,436	106,012	47,294	68,715	0	33,964	1,488	259,909