from Phyllis Schlafly

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The Feminist Plan to Assign Women to Combat

The radical feminists pulled a fast one and the Congressmen were caught off guard. Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-CO) presented what the Washington Post called "a surprise measure" to a closed meeting of the House Armed Services Committee and, on a voice vote, it was approved without any hearing.

Her amendment, if passed by the full House and agreed to by the Senate, would repeal the law that excludes women from military combat duty in the Air Force, Navy and Marines. It would not apply to the Army.

Calling it a "landmark action," the Congressional news release described it like this. "The House Armed Services Committee voted to allow women to fly combat missions as Air Force and Navy pilots." The amendment was passed without a roll call during a markup session on the 1992 defense authorization budget.

The news release explained further: "The committee action would not require the services to place women on combat missions, but would give them the option by lifting the statutory prohibition that exists today for the Air Force and Navy."

The key words in this maneuver are "allow" and "option." They are certainly very different from the words "assign" and "require."

Current 1aw forbids the assignment of women to military combat roles in the Air Force, Navy and Marines. Women, of course, can volunteer for those services, but they are excluded -- or protected (whichever language you prefer) from the most dangerous of the military assignments.

We pride ourselves on having civilian control of the military, and. the decision of whether or not to assign women to military combat is fundamental to our culture. If Congress lifts the statutory prohibition and gives the services the "option," it will be passing the buck.

Congressmen may think they can have it both ways. At the same time that they appease the feminists, they can tell their constituents, "Oh, I didn't put women in military combat, I just voted to give the services the choice."

So how will the Air Force, the Navy and the Marines deal with this unrequested responsibility? Will each service exercise this option by making a service-wide rule for all women -- to be in combat or not to be in combat? Will each service make a rule that every woman who receives flight training will be assigned to combat missions?

Or, will the services exercise this option by giving each company commander the option of assigning aI1 women -- or no women -- under his Command to combat roles? Or, will each service exercise this option by giving each company commander the option, at his discretion, of assigning some women -- but not other women -- under his command to combat missions?

Every company commander would then become the target of personal lobbying and pressure by his female pilots -- both those who want combat missions and those who don't, especially in wartime. Will every assignment, or non-assignment, provoke a demonstration by the National organization for Women?

Or, will each service exercise its option by giving individual women the option of serving -- or not serving -- in combat roles?

We have an all-volunteer military, but once you are in the military, you go where you are assigned. The notion that members of the armed services can accept or reject their assignments would be big news to the millions of men who have served in the U.S. Armed Services and never enjoyed that right.

Combat assignment means more pay and more promotions. That results in rapid career advancement in peacetime; but in wartime, high risk and a lot of casualties go along with the rewards. It would be ridiculous to train service personnel for combat assignment in peacetime and then, when war comes, give them the option of whether or not to fulfill their combat assignments.

Is the feminist plan to give women this option but not men? That would be manifestly unfair and discriminatory. Such a rule would result in trouble, disarray, and lowered morale. No wonder the Washington Post called the Schroeder amendment a “legislative watershed.”
The same House Armed Services Committee that voted to send our daughters out to dogfight and bomb the bad guys also voted to halt production of the radar-evading B-2 Stealth bomber and to delete all funds from SDI. The vote to slash our

plans for a space-based missile defense was, as SDI director Henry cooper said, “a knife in the back” of the plan to defend America against nuclear attack.

The House Armed Services Committee vote reflects the views of Les Aspin (D-WI) and Ronald V. Dellums (D-CA). It is unlikely that it reflects the views of main street Americans.