

**§ 504. Persons not qualified**

(a) **INSANITY, DESERTION, FELONS, ETC.**—No person who is insane, intoxicated, or a deserter from an armed force, or who has been convicted of a felony, may be enlisted in any armed force. However, the Secretary concerned may authorize exceptions, in meritorious cases, for the enlistment of deserters and persons convicted of felonies.

(b) **CITIZENSHIP OR RESIDENCY.**—(1) A person may be enlisted in any armed force only if the person is one of the following:

(A) A national of the United States, as defined in section 101(a)(22) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22)).

(B) An alien who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence, as defined in section 101(a)(20) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(20)).

(C) A person described in section 341 of one of the following compacts:

(i) The Compact of Free Association between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States (section 201(a) of Public Law 108-188 (117 Stat. 2784; 48 U.S.C. 1921 note)).

(ii) The Compact of Free Association between the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States (section 201(b) of Public Law 108-188 (117 Stat. 2823; 48 U.S.C. 1921 note)).

(iii) The Compact of Free Association between Palau and the United States (section 201 of Public Law 99-658 (100 Stat. 3678; 48 U.S.C. 1931 note)).

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), and subject to paragraph (3), the Secretary concerned may authorize the enlistment of a person not described in paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines that such person possesses a critical skill or expertise—

(A) that is vital to the national interest; and

(B) that the person will use in the primary daily duties of that person as a member of the armed forces.

(3)(A) No person who enlists under paragraph (2) may report to initial training until after the Secretary concerned has completed all required background investigations and security and suitability screening as determined by the Secretary of Defense regarding that person.

(B) A Secretary concerned may not authorize more than 1,000 enlistments under paragraph (2) per military department in a calendar year until after—

(i) the Secretary of Defense submits to Congress written notice of the intent of that Secretary concerned to authorize more than 1,000 such enlistments in a calendar year; and

(ii) a period of 30 days has elapsed after the date on which Congress receives the notice.

(Added Pub. L. 90-235, §2(a)(1)(B), Jan. 2, 1968, 81 Stat. 754; amended Pub. L. 109-163, div. A, title V, §542(a), Jan. 6, 2006, 119 Stat. 3253; Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title V, §521(a), Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1755.)

**Editorial Notes**

## AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 115-232, §521(a)(1), inserted “and subject to paragraph (3),” after “Notwithstanding paragraph (1),” substituted “person possesses a critical skill or expertise—” for “enlistment is vital to the national interest.”, and added subpars. (A) and (B).

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 115-232, §521(a)(2), added par. (3).

2006—Pub. L. 109-163 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), inserted heading, and added subsec. (b).

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

PROHIBITION ON WAIVER FOR COMMISSIONING OR ENLISTMENT IN THE ARMED FORCES FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL CONVICTED OF A FELONY SEXUAL OFFENSE

Pub. L. 112-239, div. A, title V, §523, Jan. 2, 2013, 126 Stat. 1723, which provided that an individual may not be provided a waiver for commissioning or enlistment in the Armed Forces if convicted of rape or other sexual offenses, was repealed by Pub. L. 113-66, div. A, title XVII, §1711(b), Dec. 26, 2013, 127 Stat. 963. See section 657 of this title.

**§ 505. Regular components: qualifications, term, grade**

(a) The Secretary concerned may accept original enlistments in the Regular Army, Regular Navy, Regular Air Force, Regular Marine Corps, Regular Space Force, or Regular Coast Guard, as the case may be, of qualified, effective, and able-bodied persons who are not less than seventeen years of age nor more than forty-two years of age. However, no person under eighteen years of age may be originally enlisted without the written consent of his parent or guardian, if he has a parent or guardian entitled to his custody and control.

(b) A person is enlisted in the Regular Army, Regular Navy, Regular Air Force, Regular Marine Corps, Regular Space Force, or Regular Coast Guard in the grade or rating prescribed by the Secretary concerned.

(c) The Secretary concerned may accept original enlistments of persons for the duration of their minority or for a period of at least two but not more than eight years, in the Regular Army, Regular Navy, Regular Air Force, Regular Marine Corps, Regular Space Force, or Regular Coast Guard, as the case may be.

(d)(1) The Secretary concerned may accept a reenlistment in the Regular Army, Regular Navy, Regular Air Force, Regular Marine Corps, Regular Space Force, or Regular Coast Guard, as the case may be, for a period determined under this subsection.

(2) In the case of a member who has less than 10 years of service in the armed forces as of the day before the first day of the period for which reenlisted, the period for which the member reenlists shall be at least two years but not more than eight years.

(3) In the case of a member who has at least 10 years of service in the armed forces as of the day before the first day of the period for which reenlisted, the Secretary concerned may accept a reenlistment for either—

(A) a specified period of at least two years but not more than eight years; or

(B) an unspecified period.

(4) No enlisted member is entitled to be reenlisted for a period that would expire before the end of the member's current enlistment.

(Added Pub. L. 90-235, §2(a)(1)(B), Jan. 2, 1968, 81 Stat. 754; amended Pub. L. 93-290, May 24, 1974, 88 Stat. 173; Pub. L. 95-485, title VIII, §820(a), Oct. 20, 1978, 92 Stat. 1627; Pub. L. 98-94, title X, §1023, Sept. 24, 1983, 97 Stat. 671; Pub. L. 104-201, div. A, title V, §511, Sept. 23, 1996, 110 Stat. 2514; Pub. L. 109-163, div. A, title V, §§543, 544, Jan. 6, 2006, 119 Stat. 3253; Pub. L. 110-417, [div. A], title V, §531(a), Oct. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 4449; Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title IX, §924(b)(5)(A), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3822.)

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

2021—Pub. L. 116-283 substituted “Regular Marine Corps, Regular Space Force,” for “Regular Marine Corps,” wherever appearing.

2008—Subsec. (d)(2), (3)(A). Pub. L. 110-417 substituted “eight years” for “six years”.

2006—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109-163, §543, in first sentence, substituted “forty-two years of age” for “thirty-five years of age”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 109-163, §544, substituted “eight years” for “six years”.

1996—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 104-201 amended subsec. (d) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (d) read as follows: “The Secretary concerned may accept reenlistments in the Regular Army, Regular Navy, Regular Air Force, Regular Marine Corps, or Regular Coast Guard, as the case may be, for period of at least two but not more than six years. No enlisted member is entitled to be reenlisted for a period that would expire before the end of his current enlistment.”

1983—Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 98-94 substituted “at least two but not more than six years” for “two, three, four, five, or six years”.

1978—Subsecs. (d), (e). Pub. L. 95-485 redesignated subsec. (e) as (d). Former subsec. (d), which provided that in the Regular Army female persons may be enlisted only in the Women's Army Corps, was struck out.

1974—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 93-290, §1, struck out provisions which prohibited the Secretary from accepting original enlistments from female persons less than 18 years of age, and which required consent of the parent or guardian for an original enlistment of a female person under 21 years of age.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 93-290, §2, substituted provisions permitting the Secretary to accept original enlistments of persons for the duration of their minority or for a period of two, three, four, five, or six years, for provisions which limited the Secretary to accept original enlistments from male persons for the duration of their minority or for a period of two, three, four, five, or six years, and from female persons for a period of two, three, four, five, or six years.

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

For transfer of authorities, functions, personnel, and assets of the Coast Guard, including the authorities and functions of the Secretary of Transportation relating thereto, to the Department of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 468(b), 551(d), 552(d), and 557 of Title 6, Domestic Security, and the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, as modified, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6.

#### § 506. Regular components: extension of enlistments during war

An enlistment in the Regular Army, Regular Navy, Regular Air Force, Regular Marine Corps,

Regular Space Force, or Regular Coast Guard in effect at the beginning of a war, or entered into during a war, unless sooner terminated by the President, continues in effect until six months after the termination of that war.

(Added Pub. L. 90-235, §2(a)(1)(B), Jan. 2, 1968, 81 Stat. 754; amended Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title IX, §924(b)(5)(B), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3822.)

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

2021—Pub. L. 116-283 substituted “Regular Marine Corps, Regular Space Force,” for “Regular Marine Corps,”.

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#### § 507. Extension of enlistment for members needing medical care or hospitalization

(a) An enlisted member of an armed force on active duty whose term of enlistment expires while he is suffering from disease or injury incident to service and not due to his misconduct, and who needs medical care or hospitalization, may be retained on active duty, with his consent, until he recovers to the extent that he is able to meet the physical requirements for reenlistment, or it is determined that recovery to that extent is impossible.

(b) This section does not prevent the retention in service, without his consent, of an enlisted member of an armed force under section 972 of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 90-235, §2(a)(1)(B), Jan. 2, 1968, 81 Stat. 754.)

#### § 508. Reenlistment: qualifications

(a) No person whose service during his last term of enlistment was not honest and faithful may be reenlisted in an armed force. However, the Secretary concerned may authorize the reenlistment in the armed force under his jurisdiction of such a person if his conduct after that service has been good.

(b) A person discharged from a Regular component may be reenlisted in the Regular Army, Regular Navy, Regular Air Force, Regular Marine Corps, Regular Space Force, or Regular Coast Guard, as the case may be, under such regulations as the Secretary concerned may prescribe.

(c) This section does not deprive a person of any right to be reenlisted in the Regular Army, Regular Navy, Regular Air Force, Regular Marine Corps, Regular Space Force, or Regular Coast Guard under any other provision of law.

(Added Pub. L. 90-235, §2(a)(1)(B), Jan. 2, 1968, 81 Stat. 755; amended Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title IX, §924(b)(5)(C), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3822.)