



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

AUG 11 2014

The Honorable Marcia L. Fudge
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Fudge:

Thank you again for your correspondence and concern regarding the recent changes to Army Regulation 670-1, "Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia." I appreciate the opportunity it created for the Department of Defense to conduct a thorough review of all policies pertaining to Service member hairstyles.

At my direction, over the last three months each Military Service reviewed its definitions of authorized and prohibited hairstyles, and eliminated offensive language, including the terms "matted and unkempt" from both the Army and the Air Force grooming regulations. Additionally, each Service reviewed its hairstyle policies to ensure standards are fair and respectful while also meeting our military requirements. These reviews were informed by a panel of military personnel of mixed demographics reflective of our diverse force.

As a result of these reviews the Army, Navy, and Air Force determined changes were necessary to their Service grooming regulations to include additional authorized hairstyles. The Marine Corps reviewed and updated their policy in November 2013 and will do so again in a special uniform board this summer. Examples of the changes made by each Service are listed in the attached enclosure. Representatives from each of the Services are available to brief you or your staff on the results of the Military Departments' reviews and our continued efforts to ensure fair and respectful policies for our diverse force.

I appreciate your continued support for our men and women in uniform. An identical letter is being sent to the other signees of your letter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chuck Hagel", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and appears to be "CHUCK HAGEL".

Enclosure:
As stated

Enclosure

Changes made by the Services during their Grooming Standards Policy Review

Army

- Determined the terms “matted and unkempt” are offensive and will eliminate them
- Authorized temporary two-strand twists
- Increased size of authorized braids, cornrows and twists; removed spacing requirement
- Authorized a ponytail during physical training

Air Force

- Determined the terms “matted and unkempt” are offensive and will eliminate them
- Changed the name “dreadlocks” to “locs”
- Authorized two-strand twists, French Twists and Dutch braids

Navy

- Determined no offensive language in the current policy governing hairstyles
- Removed some dated terms and descriptions on the Navy’s “Frequently Asked Questions” website, including “‘Twist’ hairstyles are not authorized because they fall within the guidelines of being faddish.”
- Authorized a two-strand twist and multiple braids may hang freely if above the collar and must encompass the whole head

Marine Corps

- Determined no derogatory or discriminatory language in current uniform regulations
- Convening a special uniform board this summer to consider the expansion of authorized hairstyles