Availability and Use of Aircraft in the Air Force and Navy

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A Presentation at the Western Economic Association's Annual Conference

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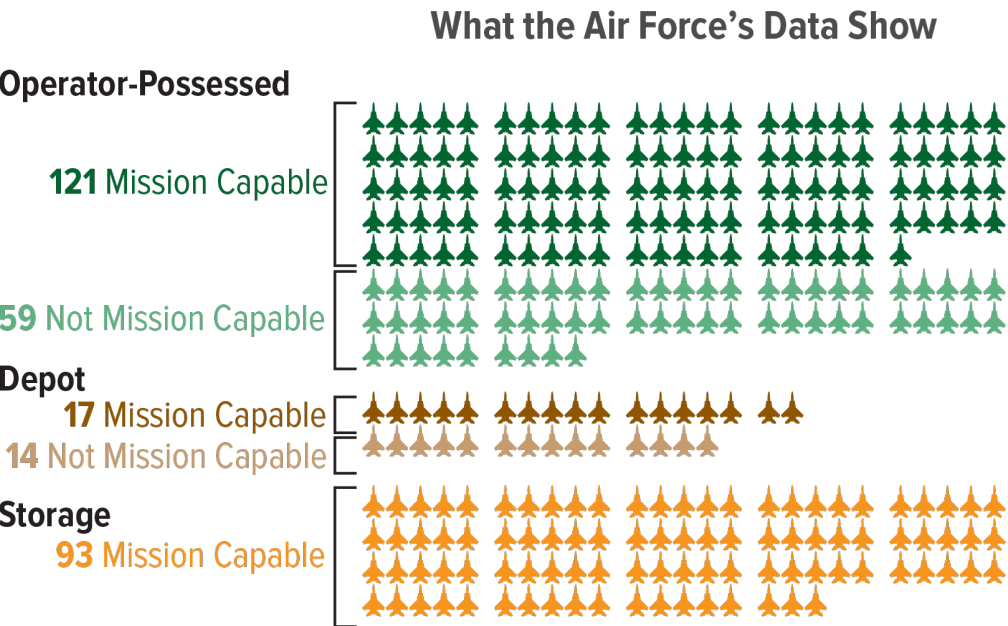# There Are Different Ways to Measure Aircraft Availability

DoD's Method:

$$\frac{Operator-Possessed, Mission-Capable\ Hours}{Operator-Possessed\ Hours}$$

CBO's Method:

$$\frac{Operator-Possessed, Mission-Capable\ Hours}{Entire\ Fleet\ Hours}$$

DoD = Department of Defense.

DoD's Approach Calculates Greater Availability Rates Than CBO's

Number of Aircraft

What the Air Force's Data Show

Operator-Possessed

121 Mission Capable

59 Not Mission Capable

Depot
17 Mission Capable
14 Not Mission Capable

Storage
93 Mission Capable

Different Ways to Calculate the Availability Rate

DoD's Approach

67% Available

33% Unavailable

CBO's Approach

40% Available

60% Unavailable

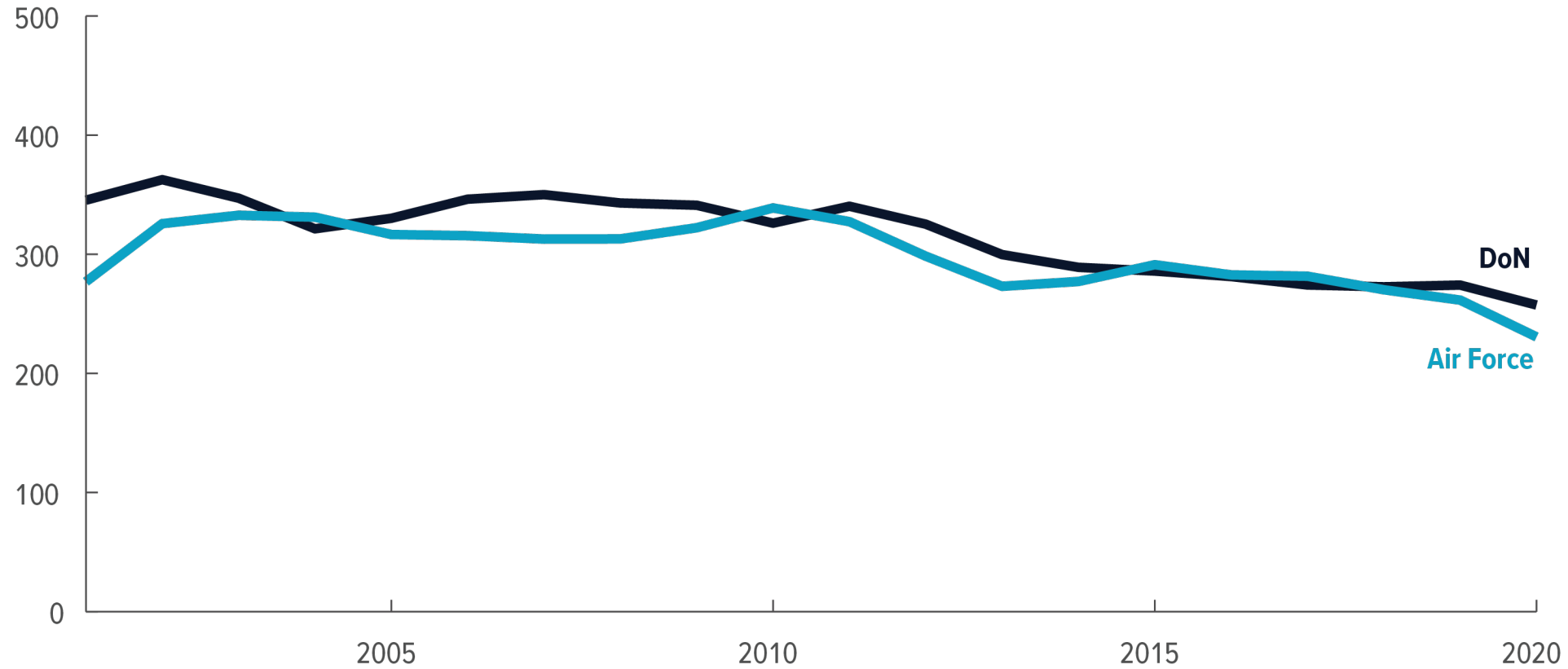# By CBO's Measure, Availability Has Trended Downward in Both Services but More Markedly in the Department of the Navy
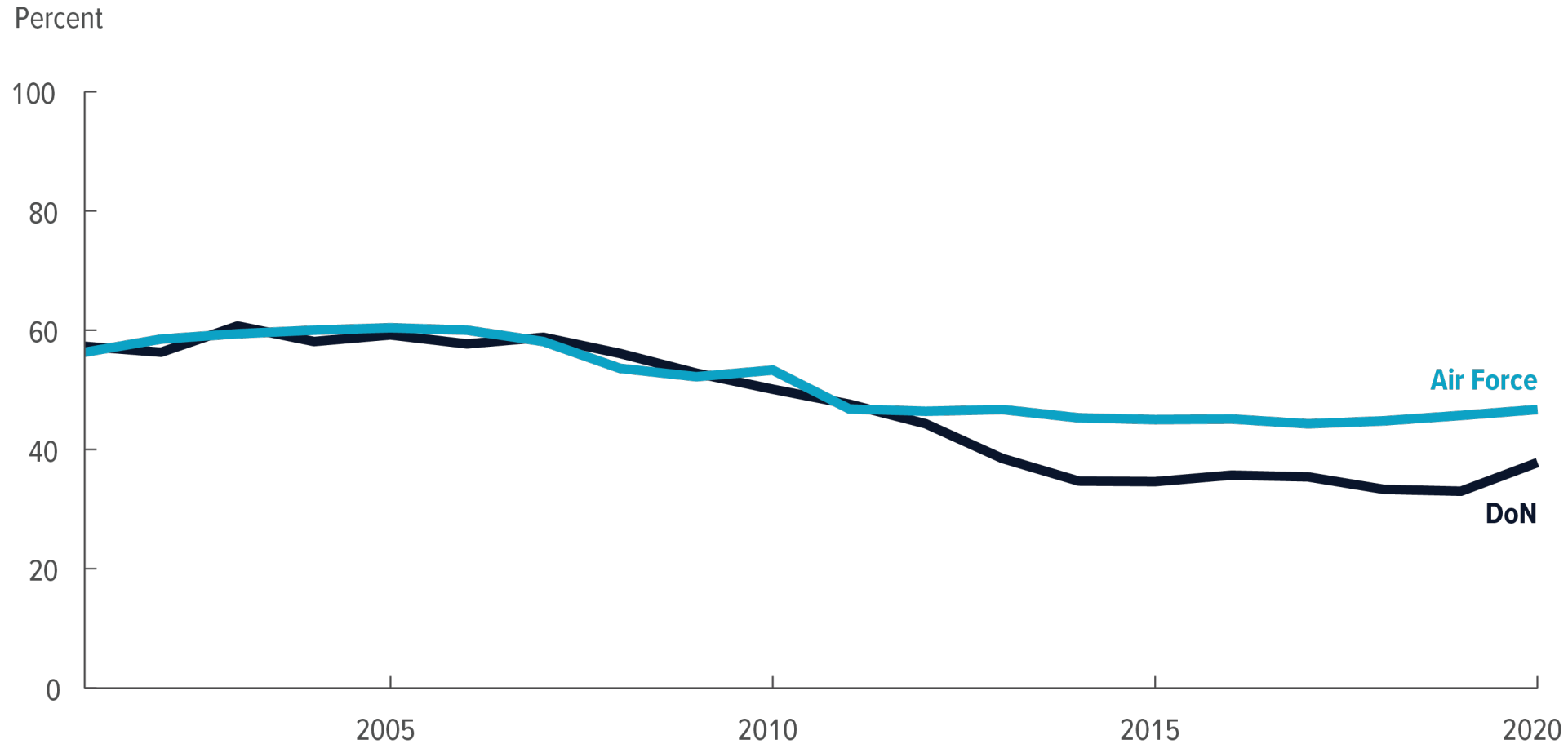

Percent

Air Force

DoN

DoN = Department of the Navy.
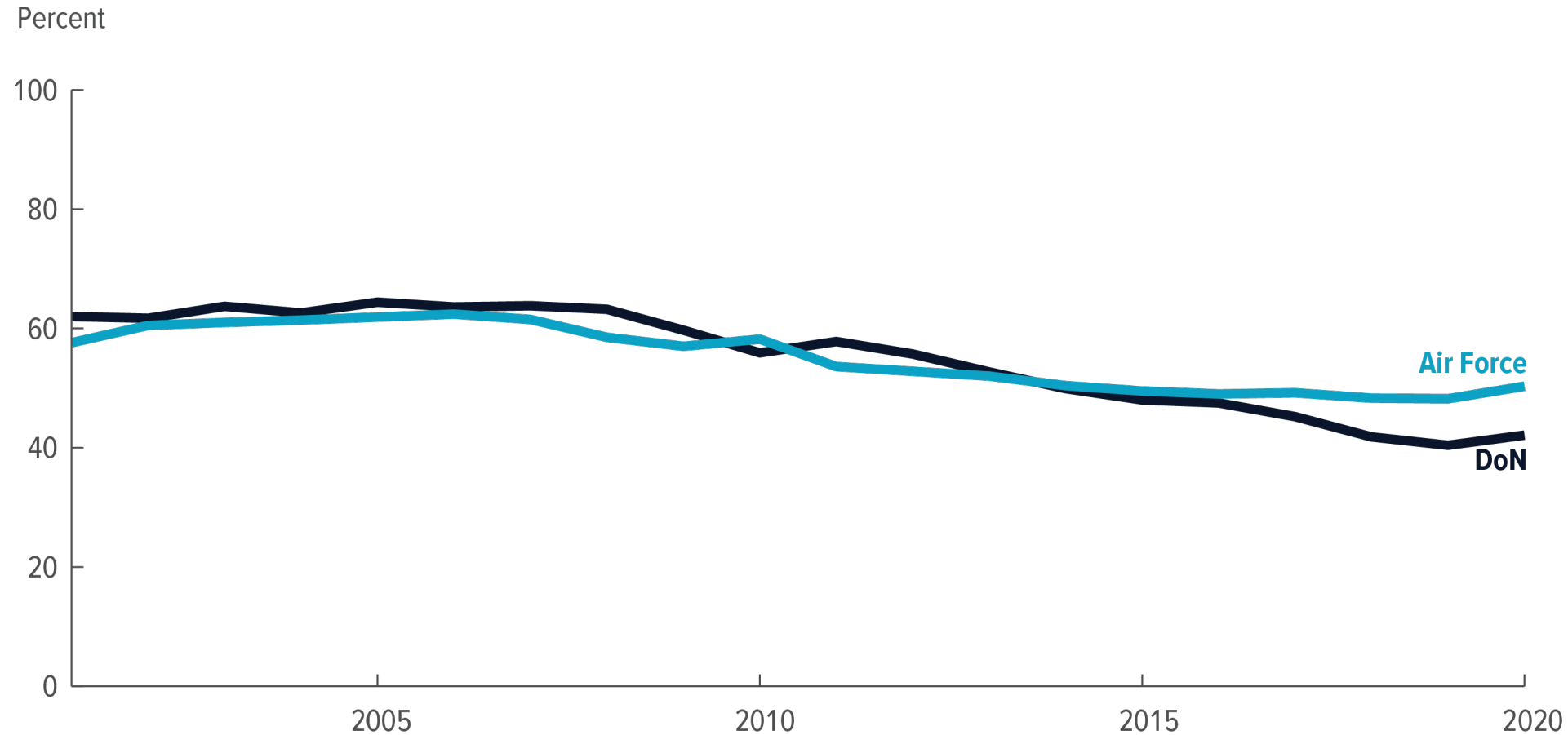
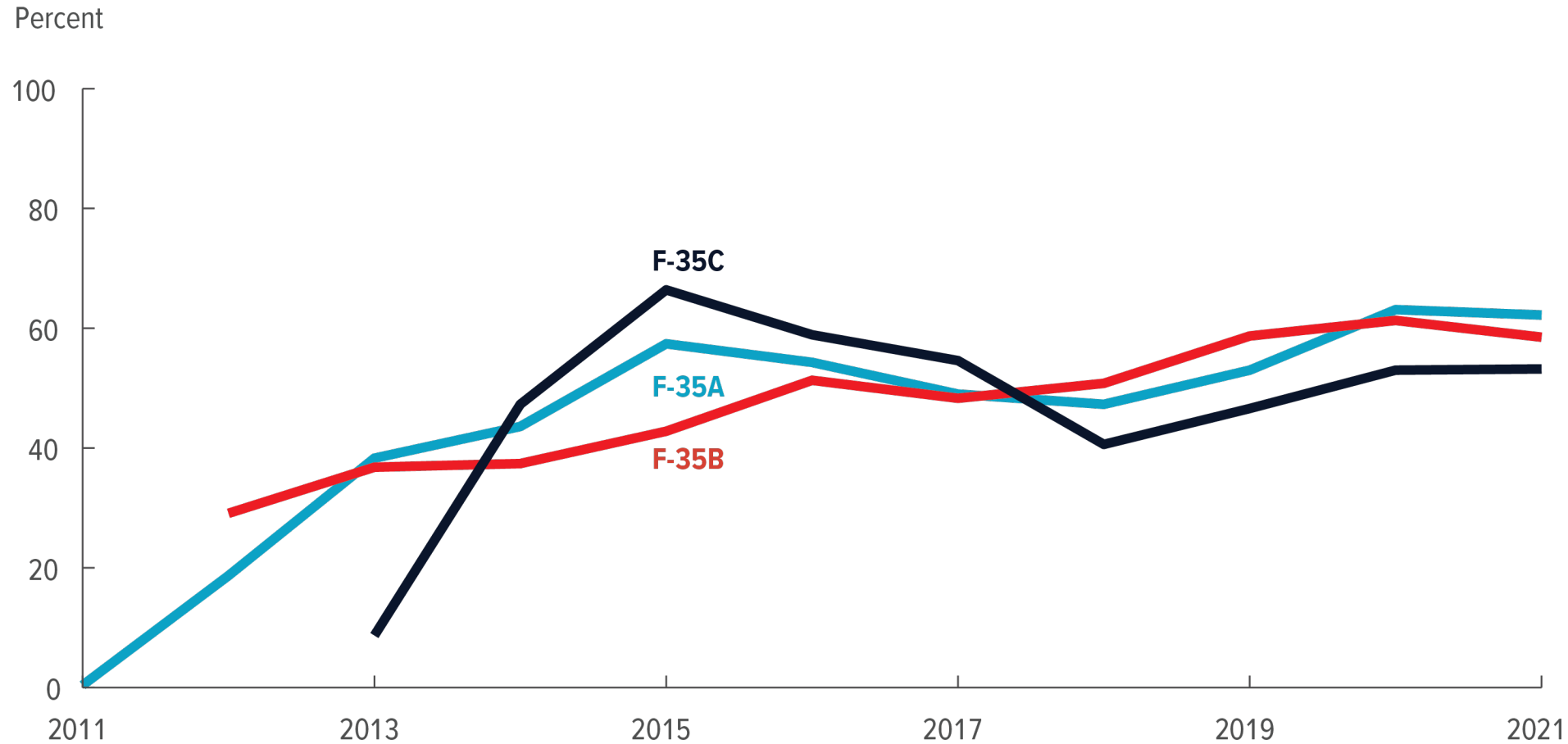Average Flying Hours per Aircraft Have Also Trended Downward

The Navy Has Had an Especially Marked Decline in the Availability of Its Fighter Aircraft
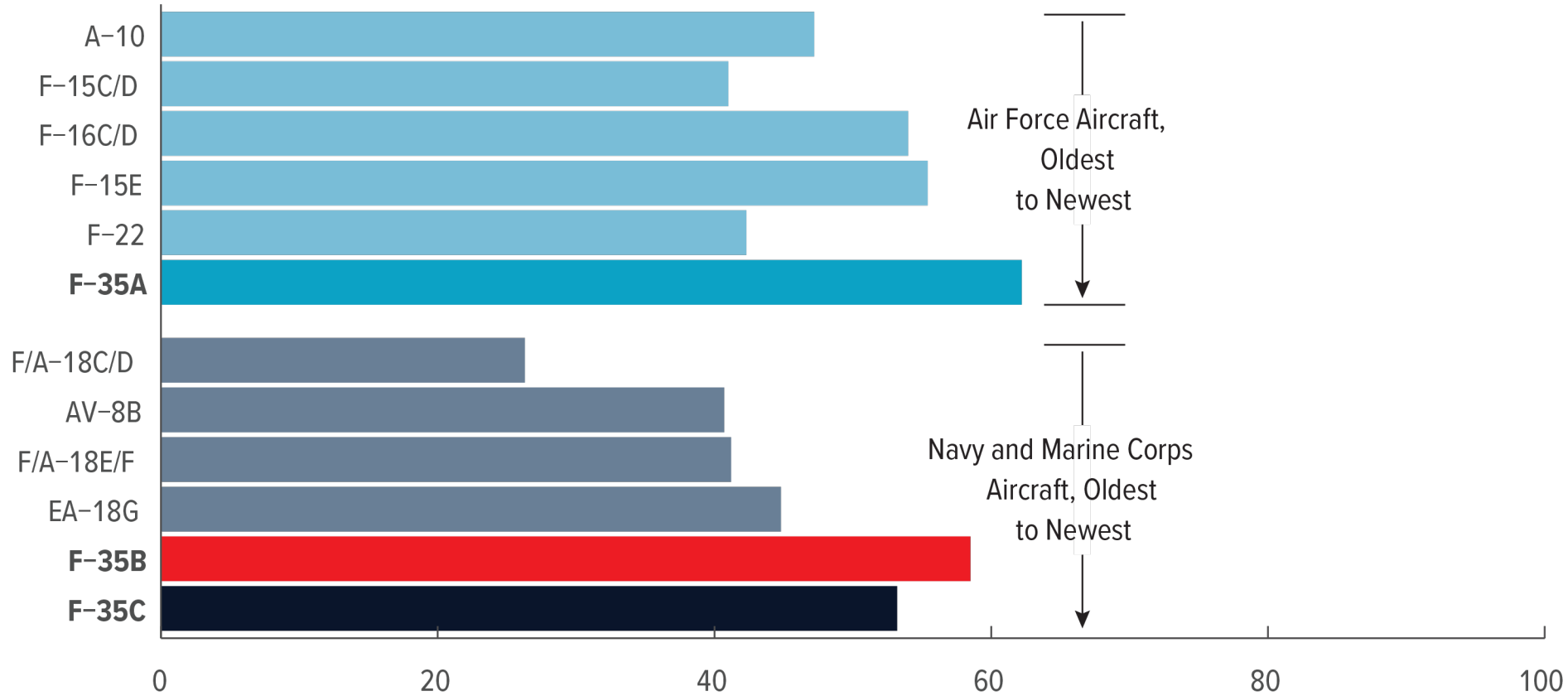

Percent

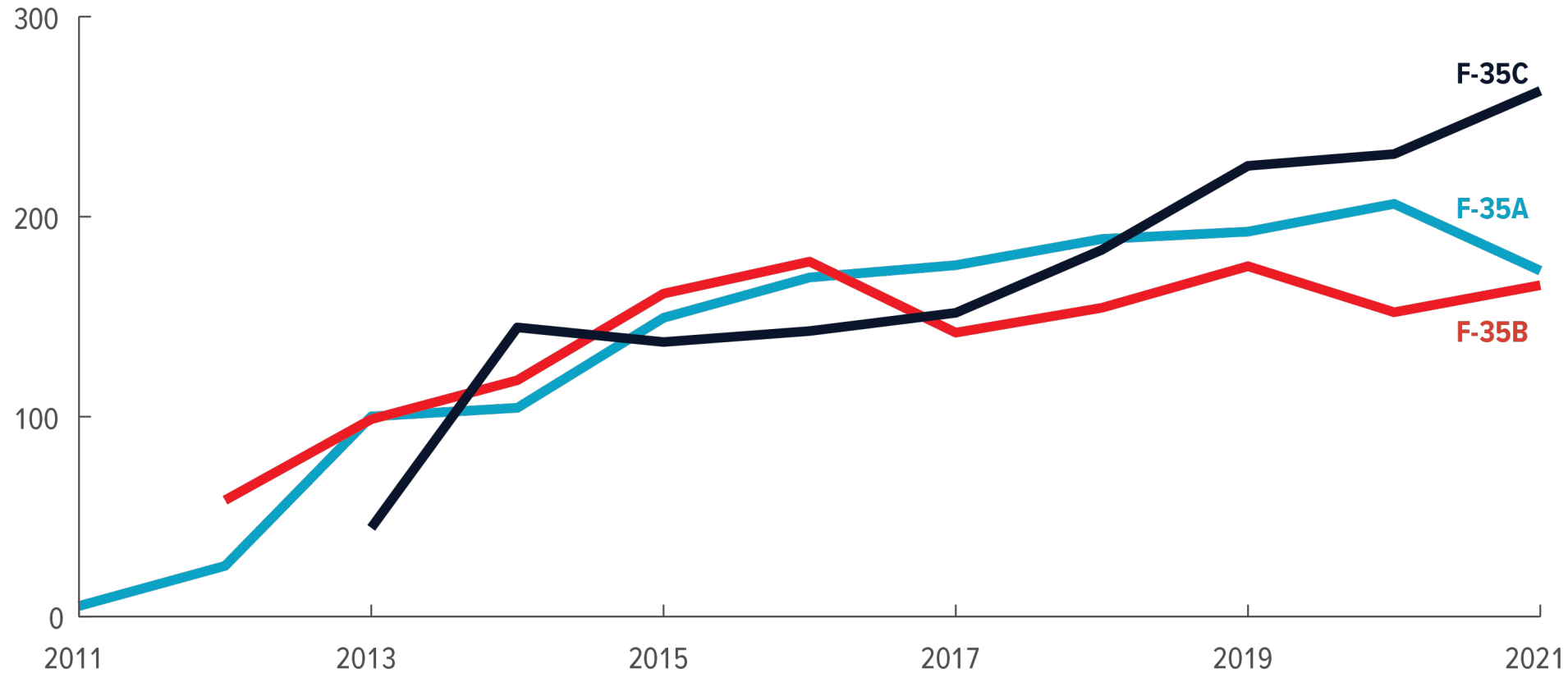# Availability of the F-35 Has Improved in Recent Years

Availability of the F-35 Has Been Higher Than That of Other Fighter Aircraft, but F-35s Are Much Newer
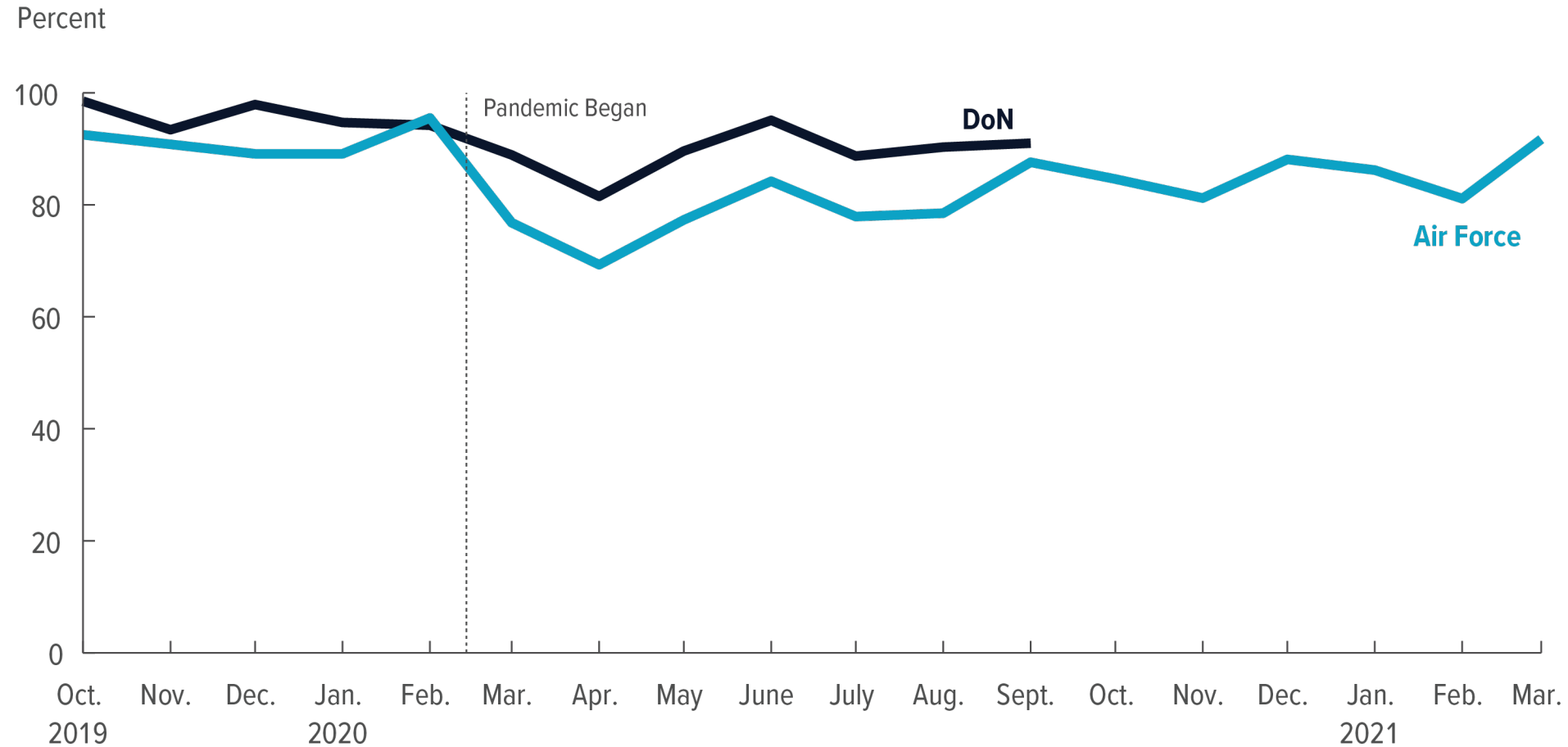
Percent

The F-35's Flying Hours per Aircraft Have Generally Increased

The Pandemic Markedly Reduced the Air Force's Flying in April 2020

Percent

Pandemic Began

DoN

Air Force

Oct. 2019, Nov., Dec., Jan. 2020, Feb., Mar., Apr., May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan. 2021, Feb., Mar.

But Fleet Availability Rates Increased in April and May 2020

Percent

Pandemic Began

Air Force

DoN

Oct. 2019 — Nov. — Dec. — Jan. 2020 — Feb. — Mar. — Apr. — May — June — July — Aug. — Sept. — Oct. — Nov. — Dec. — Jan. 2021 — Feb. — Mar.