

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND READINESS

21 JUL 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

SUBJECT: Approval and Implementation of the Action Plan Submitted in Response to the DoD Inspector General's Report on the Military Environment With Respect to the Homosexual Conduct Policy

On 24 March, Secretary Cohen established a working group, composed of senior military and civilian representatives from each of the Services, to review the DoD Inspector General's "Report on the Military Environment With Respect to the Homosexual Conduct Policy." The working group was also tasked to propose a draft action plan outlining the measures necessary to address the findings of the report.

Secretary Cohen received and approved the working group's proposed action plan and has directed that it be forwarded to the Services for implementation. As you execute this plan, please ensure that all personnel understand the importance of these measures. They are critical to eliminating all forms of harassment and are essential to maintain the good order and discipline necessary of our forces. My office will oversee those tasks required of the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

I appreciate your leadership and assistance in implementing the attached action plan.

Bernard Rostker

Attachment:
As stated

Anti-Harassment Action Plan

General Recommendations:

1. The Department of Defense should adopt an overarching principle regarding harassment, including that based on sexual orientation:

“Treatment of all individuals with dignity and respect is essential to good order and discipline. Mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures undermine this principle and have no place in our armed forces. Commanders and leaders must develop and maintain a climate that fosters unit cohesion, esprit de corps, and mutual respect for all members of the command or organization.”

2. The Department of Defense should issue a single Department-wide directive on harassment.

- It should make clear that mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures, including that based on sexual orientation, are not acceptable.
- Further, the directive should make clear that commanders and leaders will be held accountable for failure to enforce this directive.

Recommendations Regarding Training:

3. The Services shall ensure feedback or reporting mechanisms are in place to measure homosexual conduct policy training and anti-harassment training effectiveness in the following three areas: knowledge, behavior, and climate.

4. The Services shall review all homosexual conduct policy training and anti-harassment training programs to ensure they address the elements and intent of the DoD overarching principle and implementing directive.

5. The Services shall review homosexual conduct policy training and anti-harassment training programs annually to ensure they contain all information required by law and policy, including the DoD overarching principle and implementing directive, and are tailored to the grade and responsibility levels of their audiences.

Recommendations Regarding Reporting:

6. The Services shall review all avenues for reporting mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures to ensure they facilitate effective leadership response.

- Reporting at the lowest level possible within the chain of command shall be encouraged.
- Personnel shall be informed of other confidential and non-confidential avenues to report mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures.

7. The Services shall ensure homosexual conduct policy training and anti-harassment training programs address all avenues to report mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures and ensure persons receiving reports of mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures know how to handle these reports.

8. The Services shall ensure that directives, guidance, and training clearly explain the application of the “don’t ask, don’t tell,” policy in the context of receiving and reporting complaints of mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures, including:

- Complaints will be taken seriously, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation;
- Those receiving complaints must not ask about sexual orientation -- questions about sexual orientation are not needed to handle complaints; violators will be held accountable; and
- Those reporting harassment ought not tell about or disclose sexual orientation -- information regarding sexual orientation is not needed for complaints to be taken seriously.

Recommendations Regarding Enforcement:

9. The Services shall ensure that commanders and leaders take appropriate action against anyone who engages in mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures.

10. The Services shall ensure that commanders and leaders take appropriate action against anyone who condones or ignores mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures.

11. The Services shall examine homosexual conduct policy training and anti-harassment training programs to ensure they provide tailored training on enforcement mechanisms.

Recommendations Regarding Measurement:

12. The Services shall ensure inspection programs assess adherence to the DoD overarching principle and implementing directive through measurement of knowledge, behavior, and climate.

13. The Services shall determine the extent to which homosexual conduct policy training and anti-harassment training programs, and the implementation of this action plan, are effective in addressing mistreatment, harassment, and inappropriate comments or gestures.

July 21, 2000