

BACKGROUND PAPER
ON
GENDER DISCRIMINATION

PURPOSE

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the WB&T Subcommittee will examine existing Defense Department and Military Services' institutional policies and procedures to identify gaps that enable gender discrimination to occur unconstrained and recommended necessary policy changes.

QUESTION #17

The Committee has addressed the topic of gender bias and discrimination in past reports and commented on the importance of leadership in establishing a culture of respect in all work settings. Although there has been progress, the Committee remains concerned about the continuing matter of gender bias and the corrosive impact it can have on unit cohesion and on service-women's mental health, full integration and retention. The Committee requests a briefing from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and National Guard on the following:

a. Identify all current policies, regulations, training, and other directives or policy sources that address the issue of gender bias/discrimination and summarize the key provisions.

- The DAF MEO program is governed by policies that include the Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1020.02E, "Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity in the DoD;" Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1020.03, "Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces;" DoDI 1020.04, "Harassment Prevention and Responses for DoD Civilian Employees;" DoDI 1350.02, "DoD Military Equal Opportunity Program;" DAF Policy Directive 36-27, Equal Opportunity; and Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 36-2710, Equal Opportunity Program.
- The DAFI 36-2710 establishes DAF (Air Force and Space Force) policy that:
 - All Airmen and Guardians (military and civilian) will be treated with dignity and respect and afforded equal opportunity in an environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment.
 - Defines unlawful discrimination against Service members as any unlawful action that denies equal opportunity to persons or groups based on their race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, or sexual orientation.
 - Provides protections to Service members and describes the MEO informal and formal complaint processes to address allegations of unlawful discrimination and harassment.
 - Describes the roles and responsibilities of commanders, EO personnel, and other key stakeholders in responding to unlawful discrimination and harassment, command climate, and other equal opportunity and human relations related matters.

- Ensures Service members are provided prompt, fair, and impartial processing and resolution of complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment filed through the DAF EO Program.
- The DAF EO Program currently requires training for Service members at their first permanent duty assignment (First Duty Station Training) and refresher training (Newcomers' Orientation) at each of their subsequent permanent change of stations which provide information about the DAF EO Program, definitions of unlawful discrimination and harassment, complaint processes, and roles and responsibilities under the EO purview. Commanders, (installation, group, and squadron) and senior enlisted leaders, including Space Force equivalents, receive a key personnel briefing that addresses specific leadership roles and responsibilities within the EO program, complaint processes, and identified command climate trends at their local level. While these trainings do not specifically address gender discrimination as a standalone topic, Service members receive education on sex as a protected category (among other identified categories) as a basis for unlawful discrimination against Service members.

b. When training began to educate Service members that gender discrimination is prohibited, to include the nature and fora of trainings/education given to commanders, non-commissioned officers, basic training recruits, and their drill instructors, and the Service member population generally about the issue of gender discrimination. Does this training include how to prevent and mitigate negative attitudes and bias toward servicewomen?

- While DAF EO human relations trainings do not specifically include how to prevent and mitigate negative attitudes and bias toward Servicewomen as a standalone topic, these trainings provide information on the impact of unlawful discrimination and harassment and the need and responsibility to confront these inappropriate behaviors.

c. How will the Services monitor, track and enforce policy compliance?

- The DAF EO Program is a mandatory DAF bylaw commander's inspection area per AFI 90-201. As such, the DAF inspector general at the wing level conducts annual inspections on DAF EO offices to assess risk, identify areas for improvement, and provide critical data to leadership about the effectiveness of the program in executing policy and other requirements. The DAF EO Program also uses the DAF's management internal control toolset self-assessment checklist and higher headquarters staff assistance visits to ensure continual oversight and routine monitoring, as appropriate, of the organizational health and statutory and policy compliance of EO offices at the major command and installation levels as described in DAFI 36-2710 and AFI 90-201.

d. Does your Service have any measures in place to track career progression and promotion of servicewomen? If so, what are they and what are the trends?

- The data on promotion is tracked by the Air Force Personnel Center and broken down by sex, race and ethnicity.



e. Has your Service conducted or commissioned any surveys, studies, or taken other measures to solicit feedback from servicewomen about gender discrimination and its impact on their workplace and career experiences? If so, what were the findings?

- There are no DAF surveys to date that directly address this question.