



# CIVIL RIGHTS ON DECK



## CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATION ANSWERS TWO NEW EXECUTIVE ORDERS ON WORKPLACE EQUITY

The Coast Guard and its partners in DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and its Components are working together to meet obligations of two Executive Orders, EO 13985 *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government* and EO 13988 *Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation*, issued January 20, 2021. Two working groups were stood-up to construct a collaborative approach to complete action requirements within the EOs. The Equity Working Group for EO 13985 is conducting several assessments into programs at the Department and Component levels. They are determining whether underserved communities and their members face systemic barriers in accessing benefits and opportunities from government programs, identifying barriers, if any, and determining whether new or revised policies, regulations, or guidance is necessary to advance equity at government agencies. They are also evaluating whether the available resources are adequate. The working group recently accomplished a milestone by compiling all assessment data and drafting their report for review and guidance prior to sending to the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy. An upcoming milestone is set for January 20, 2022, wherein the Equity Working Group will produce a plan focused on promoting the government programs impacted by EO 13985 aimed towards the underserved communities.

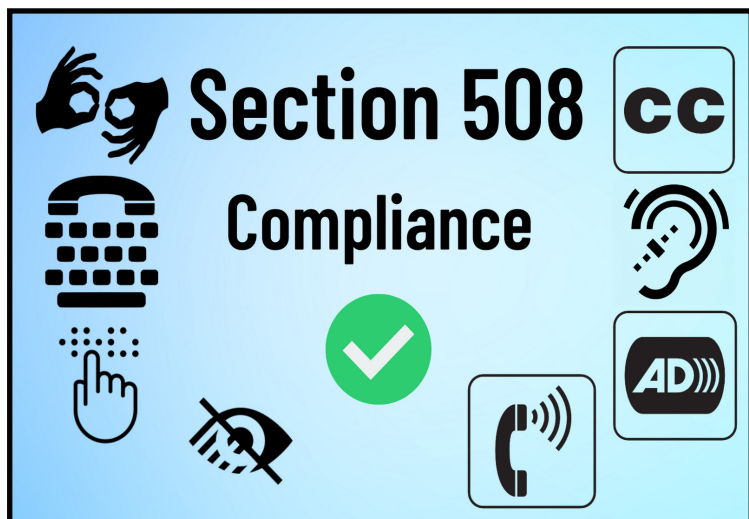
The Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Working Group implements EO 13988 requirements and is reviewing programs and policies at the Department and Component levels that are in place to prevent and combat discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. In May, the SOGI Working Group finalized the DHS Plan on how the Agency will move forward to enhance and establish initiatives that further prevent and address sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. Among the highlights of these efforts are conducting employee experience-based evaluations and using the results to develop strategies. Initiatives such as these strengthen the Service's commitment to building a workforce and community that mirrors the nation's diversity and ensures that all of its members and applicants are welcome and treated with dignity and respect.



*Netosha Washington, Equity Program Manager, represents the Coast Guard as a member of the Equity Working Group and SOGI Working group who meet virtually. Both engage in activities that support the DHS and Coast Guard in complying with the requirements of their respective EOs.*

## ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACES ALLOWS ALL TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MISSION WITHOUT BARRIERS

By Carolyn Hunter, EEO Zone Manager, USCG HQ



Did you know that Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act seeks to ensure individuals with disabilities have equal access to information and communications technology (ICT) used by government agencies? Technology covered under Section 508 includes: computer hardware and software, office equipment such as copiers and faxes, telecommunications, websites, online training, multimedia, and more. If you are a person with a disability who has encountered inaccessible ICT on the job, you can request a reasonable accommodation from your first level supervisor. Be prepared to provide medical documentation to support your need for accommodation, if requested. Guidelines for Coast Guard employees and applicants for employment requesting accommodations are highlighted in Chapter 6 of the Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual. For additional information about reasonable accommodations, you can contact your [Civil Rights Service Provider](#). Ensuring that Coast Guard spaces and equipment are accessible to

all, including those with disabilities, supports all members contributing to the mission without barriers.

# WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2021 STUDENT ART CONTEST; YOUNG ARTISTS SPOTLIGHT SEAFARERS

By Shawntell Williams, PIE/SEP Program Manager, USCG HQ

The Coast Guard is excited to announce Ahdia M. and Jolie Z. as the grand prize winners of the annual Student Art Contest sponsored by the North American Marine Environment Protection Association (NAMEPA), the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Inter-American Committee on Ports of the Organization of American States (CIP-OAS). Nearly 200 K-12 students created posters that depict the important role seafarers play in the maritime industry under the theme: "Seafarers: At the Core of Shipping's Future." Along with the two grand prize winners, ten finalists were selected for work that represented the best entries of the year. All finalists will receive a certificate and a calendar featuring their artwork, while the two grand prize winners will receive an additional cash prize of \$100 and a USCG prize package. We would like to congratulate all of the young artists who participated and we look forward to next year's contest! For more information about the annual Student Art Contest, please email [Shawntell Williams](mailto:Shawntell.Williams@uscg.mil) or call 202-372-4519. You can find all of the finalists' artwork by visiting <https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/studentartcontest/>.



**Student Art Contest Grand Prize Winners:** Left- Jolie Z., 7th grade, Wang Qi Art Institute, San Francisco, California. Right- Ahdia M., 3rd grade, Valley View Elementary School, Rocklin, California, USA

## SERVICE MEMBER ON A MISSION TO INSPIRE AND EMPOWER

By Patrick Ferraris, Communications Specialist, USCG HQ

Congratulations to LCDR Katherine Pelkey, recipient of the 2021 Federally Employed Women (FEW) Meritorious Service Award for the Coast Guard. This honor recognizes military members from all Service branches who make notable contributions to the advancement of women within the armed forces and who create inclusive environments that benefit military and civilian communities. LCDR Pelkey was recognized for this honor due to her achievements as the Command Administrative Officer and MH-65 Instructor pilot during her service at Aviation Training Center (ATC), Mobile, Alabama from January 2020 to December 2020. "I feel honored to receive this recognition," she said. "Everything we do in the Coast Guard is a team effort, so winning this award shines a light on the positive impact that ATC has not only on its community, but also on the Service as a whole."

**"I WANT TO HELP CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE WHERE OUR WORKFORCE BELONGS AND FEELS VALUED"**

LCDR Pelkey's primary motivator has always been to empower others. "Our service members and employees are the center of our organization and my

goal is to help enable them to be the best they can be," she added. "I want to help create an inclusive culture where our workforce belongs and feels valued." As the rotary wing instructor at ATC, LCDR Pelkey leveraged her leadership, personal experiences, and commitment to assist women in aviation when she mentored new and seasoned

female pilots in both developing technical skills and working through personal experiences, such as balancing a family as a dual-military spouse. She also provided experiences for and made policy recommendations to senior leadership, leaving a lasting impact. LCDR Pelkey's determination to empower others didn't stop at her normal duty roles, either. During the award period, she was elected Chairperson of the Women's Leadership Council within the Leadership Diversity and Advisory Committee, partnered with the Officer Women Leadership Symposium, and oversaw her unit's Partnership in Education (PIE) program. The ability to support fellow Coast Guard members internally, as well as to reach and support local communities, is what makes serving so special and important for LCDR Pelkey. "I feel lucky to wear the Coast Guard uniform and I'm proud to work for an organization that strives to make the workplace more inclusive and recognizes that each individual brings something unique to the table."



LCDR Pelkey's efforts and dedication have impacted over 2,000 Coast Guard members and have reached countless individuals in the community.





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## FORMER CIVIL RIGHTS ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST TRANSFERS TO NEW ROLE

*By Carolyn Hunter, EEO Zone Manager, CRD, Region 1*

We are delighted to announce the recent move of Eriz Gonzales to the position of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Specialist. Mr. Gonzalez joined the Civil Rights Directorate (CRD) in 2020 as an Administrative Specialist. Prior to joining the CRD, Eriz served for eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps and also worked as an Administrative Specialist in the City Hall of Cooper City, FL. This transfer recognizes the contributions Eriz made to the CRD during his 10 month tenure with the organization. His can-do attitude and customer service made him an excellent addition to the Region1, Zone 4 Civil Rights Staff located in Washington, DC. Please join us in congratulating Eriz as he begins his new role.



## ADDRESSING POTENTIAL GENDER ISSUES IN THE WORKPLACE

*By Philip Wawrosch, Interim Regional Deputy, CRD, Region 4*



*Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits sex discrimination in employment which includes sexual harassment, gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy (USCG Photo).*

Sex-based, or gender discrimination, occurs when an individual is treated unfavorably because of their sex, which includes sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy. If an employee is being treated in a more favorable or less favorable manner because of these factors, then these behaviors may be perceived as unlawful discrimination. The Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination like the hiring, firing, or refusing to promote an employee because of their sex or gender. It is advisable for personnel (non-manager and manager) to periodically review Coast Guard Anti-Harassment and Equal Opportunity policy statements as well as examine their own gender assumptions to ensure their behaviors and actions comply with applicable policies and federal laws. The Coast Guard's policies remind all employees to foster an environment which embraces diversity, promotes inclusion, affords everyone the opportunity to excel, and treats all members with dignity and respect. Leaders are responsible for maintaining a work environment which is free from unlawful discrimination and all employees should take prompt action to address workplace issues if they think a violation has occurred. For additional information regarding sex-based or gender discrimination, contact a [Civil Rights Service Provider](#).

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## LOOKING FORWARD: NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

*By Juan Torres, CRD, USCG HQ*

From September 15 to October 15, the Nation celebrates and honors the cultures and contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans. National Hispanic Heritage Month's observance period is significant because it holds the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Also, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively. This year's theme is "Esperanza: A Celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope." The theme invites us to not only celebrate Hispanic and Latino Heritage, but to also reflect on how great tomorrow can be if we keep our hope. All Coast Guard Commands and units are encouraged to commemorate this observance by highlighting the accomplishments of the Hispanic and Latino community through events or using various platforms (virtual, website, newsletters, and/or social media).

