



CIVIL RIGHTS ON DECK



SECRETARY PETER BUTTIGIEG TO COAST GUARD WORKFORCE: TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR TRUE SELF

By Patrick Ferraris, CRD, USCG HQ

Coast Guard Headquarters (CGHQ) hosted an LGBTQ+ Pride Month event on June 30th. Pride Month is an observance in celebration of the community and its history, timed to coincide with the anniversary of the June 1969 Stonewall Uprising in New York, a catalyst for the LGBTQ+ rights movement. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Peter Buttigieg, the first openly gay individual to serve as a Cabinet Secretary, and a Navy veteran during the Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT) era, was the keynote speaker. DADT was a policy that prohibited openly gay individuals from military service. Secretary Buttigieg spoke about the importance of taking pride in being one's true self and the vast progress being made in the LGBTQ+ community. "I know the very word pride holds a unique significance for anyone who served in uniform because it speaks to pride in our service as well as pride in who we are... Many of you are serving in roles where not that long ago you had to choose between being your full self and your career." Secretary Buttigieg also added: "This

work already requires so much by way of discipline, readiness, ingenuity, and bravery in order to live up to that motto of 'Always Ready,' to do the work that is required of you, and to be able to bring your whole self to the job. During Pride month, and even beyond, I hope that you are able to take pride not just in what you do for this country, but in who you are." Dr. Mischell Navarro, Acting Assistant Commandant of Human Resources and Executive Champion of the event, also has a close connection with Pride Month: She was part of the Joint Service research team that analyzed DADT data the year before its repeal. Navarro credits her time on the team for teaching her the importance of individuality while striving for collective unity, and for reiterating the need of equal opportunity within and beyond the Armed Forces, principles she carries with her in supporting the Coast Guard workforce. "It's always important to celebrate people as individuals and for their contributions to the mission," Navarro said. "The CG's core values of honor, respect, and devotion to duty are embedded into our Service pledge to provide opportunity to all qualified individuals who wish to serve, regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, disability, religious preference, or sexual orientation."



Secretary of Transportation Peter Buttigieg provides remarks before answering questions at USCG HQ's Pride Month Observance event, June 30th, 2021 (USCG Photo by Travis Magee).

WORKPLACE DISPUTES? CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

By Amy Stiles, CRD, Region 4



ADR is encouraged to resolve complaints at the lowest level and can improve workplace communication, raise morale, and return focus to the mission (USCG Photo by Patrick Ferraris).

The Coast Guard's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program provides individuals an avenue for resolving conflicts quickly, efficiently, and at the lowest level. Several methods exist, with the most popular being Mediation, Facilitated Conversations, and Shuttle Diplomacy. Mediation provides parties a forum in which to meet, usually in-person, during which parties may work toward a resolution. During Mediation, a fair and neutral third party facilitates solution discussions between the members of the dispute. If they reach an agreement to resolve the matter, the facilitator prepares a written settlement agreement that is signed by each party. Settlement agreements are legally binding contracts. Facilitated Conversations are designed to help improve working relationships. During a facilitated conversation, those involved are guided through conversations by a neutral third party in an effort to work out differences. This method relies on dialogue and if the individuals reach an agreement, does not require documents in writing. Shuttle Diplomacy allows parties to

attempt resolution without meeting or talking to each other. A neutral third party will meet with the individuals separately and relay proposals for resolution from one party to another. This method produces a written settlement agreement. To learn more about ADR, please contact your servicing [Civil Rights Service Provider \(CRSP\)](#) or send your questions confidentially to hqs-smb-cg00h-adr@uscg.mil.

COAST GUARD RECOGNIZES TRAILBLAZER FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVIL RIGHTS

By Patrick Ferraris, CRD, USCG HQ

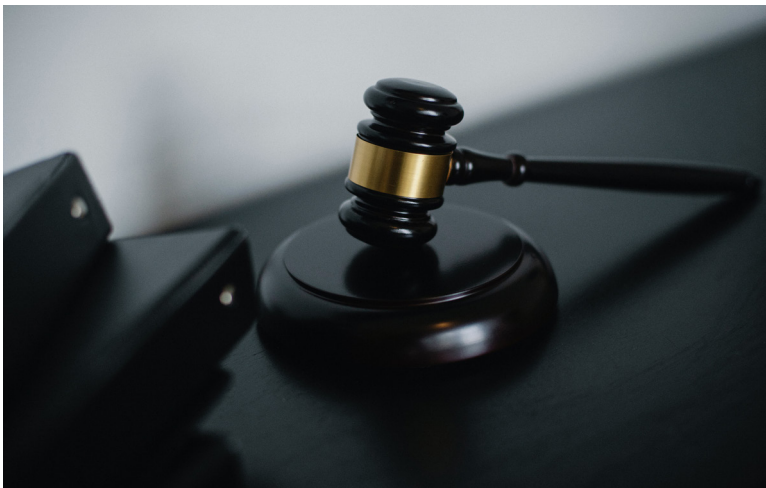
Mr. Paul Ziegengest, Equal Employment Manager (EEM), has been named the 2021 Civil Rights Service Provider (CRSP) Superior Service Award recipient. This honor is given to a CRSP biennially whose outstanding contributions further the Coast Guard's Civil Rights mission. "I'm very honored to receive this recognition," Mr. Ziegengest said. "I know there are so many hard working and dedicated Civil Rights Service Providers in the Coast Guard, so it's humbling to be honored like this." Mr. Ziegengest's civil rights journey started in 2008 when, as a Coast Guard Reservist, he applied for and was assigned to be the Equal Opportunity Advisor for Region 2, Zone 5 in Norfolk, VA. After serving in this role, he returned to the Coast Guard Reserve in 2012, but his expertise and passion in the field led him to transition to the role of Equal Opportunity Specialist with the Civil Rights Directorate as a civilian. He currently serves as the EEM where his area of responsibility covers New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey. For over ten years, Mr. Ziegengest has found the most fulfillment in the field of civil rights through those he interacts with on a daily basis. "Helping people is my favorite part about my job. Whether it's assisting someone who has come to me and is experiencing an issue, or having a Coast Guard Command reach out to me to help with their Civil Rights mission. It's special to me when I can earn the trust of these commands and employees and have the opportunity to be the 'go to' person when their workforce needs help." One such command that recognized Mr. Ziegengest was Sector New York. During the 2019-2021 award period, they acknowledged him for assisting them to transform multiple organizations and units and their efforts towards equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion; leading and advising the command with resolving allegations of harassment, race issues, social climate matters; and other EEO/EO instances. He also helped to qualify six Anti-Harassment and Hate Incident (AHHI) investigators who can now look into claims of harassment. During this time, Mr. Ziegengest also took on additional functions by serving as the Manager for Zone 1 during a vacancy. Zone 1 provides EEO/EO services to Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. The work that CRSPs do every day and their commitment to advancing civil rights and promoting its value is an essential foundation of the Coast Guard and is critical to the Service's success.



Mr. Paul Ziegengest, Equal Employment Manager under Zone 2, Region 1, is the winner of the 2021 CRSP Superior Service Award.

Reprisal: Treating individuals adversely for their participation in EEO activity is the most frequently alleged basis of discrimination and the most common finding of discrimination according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Visit the EEOC website to learn more: <https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation>.

FLEXIBILITY IS IMPORTANT WHEN ACCOMMODATING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE WORKPLACE



By Elizabeth Mercado-Prioleau, CRD, USCG HQ

In a recent case, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) found that the Department of State discriminated against an employee when it failed to provide a reasonable accommodation for her disability. An existing agreement allowed the employee to telework three days a week: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The employee requested situational telework due to symptoms of her medical condition that affected her ability to drive. The symptoms, she explained, could occur at any time and were not limited to three specific days. The Agency took approximately six months to make a decision which was similar to the previous telework agreement. In the new agreement, the Agency offered her the ability to telework on the same three days with a one-hour grace period to report to her duty location on those days. The employee

notified the Agency that the new agreement was not effective to accommodate her disability. The employee filed an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint and the EEOC found that the Agency's set schedule failed to provide the Complainant with an effective, reasonable accommodation for her disability. The EEOC explained that the Complainant could experience symptoms that impact her ability to commute or work in the office on Tuesdays or Thursdays. The EEOC has consistently held that while an employer may choose between effective accommodations, forcing an employee to take leave when another arrangement would permit them to continue working is not effective. The EEOC ordered the Agency to provide the Complainant a flexible telework schedule, and to restore lost leave or pay. For more information on the reasonable accommodation process, please contact your servicing [Civil Rights Service Provider](#). *Jona R. v. Dep't of State, EEOC Appeal No. 0120182063 (Jan. 23, 2020).*



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CIVIL RIGHTS WELCOMES NEW EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVISOR TO ITS TEAM

By Kirsten Little, CRD, Region 4

The Civil Rights Directorate welcomes Chief Petty Officer Lazaro Lopez as the Equal Opportunity Advisor at Region 4, Zone 10. Chief Lopez has 16 years of service with the Coast Guard and comes to civil rights from CGC Pelican, where he led as Executive Petty Officer. Chief Lopez has a Bachelor's Degree in Emergency Management and Homeland Security from Excelsior University. Chief Lopez originally hails from Corpus Christi, TX and is married with two children. In his spare time, Chief Lopez enjoys basketball, kite-boarding, one-wheeling with his son, and impromptu push-up challenges with his shipmates.



Are you current with your mandatory Civil Rights Awareness (CRA) Training? For a CRA training schedule or information, please contact your servicing Civil Rights Service Provider at: <https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/Service-Providers/>.

COMMAND CHECKLIST DEADLINE APPROACHES; PREPARATION IS KEY

October 31st is the deadline for Commanding Officers (COs) and Officers in Charge (OICs) to complete their annual Civil Rights Command Checklist. This checklist is a self-assessment tool that allows them to effectively adhere to policies, conduct programs, and apply procedures. All units are encouraged to participate, but only those with 50 or more members are required to complete the checklist. Measures



Completing the civil rights checklist can help units achieve a workplace that promotes civil rights and equal opportunity, while also strengthening command climate (USCG Photo By PO3 Katelyn Shearer).

gauge compliance and monitor progress of the integration of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and EO principles within a unit. The Command Checklist also communicates policy updates and helps the Coast Guard complete legally required reports. An important element in completing the checklist is proper preparation. [Coast Guard Civil Rights Service Providers \(CRSPs\)](#) are available to help COs and OICs during the command checklist submission process from initial questions, to understanding program requirements, to creating action plans to address any deficiencies.

LOOKING FORWARD: WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

By Juan Torres, CRD, USCG HQ

Commemorating the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted women the right to vote, Women's Equality Day is observed each year on August 26th. On this day, the achievements and contributions of women in history are recognized, and the women who are currently making history are celebrated as they help to build a society where everyone has an equal voice. Women in the military, government, and all sectors, have broken countless barriers, created new ways of thinking, and helped shape perspectives about equality through their dedication to change. Women's Equality Day reminds us of the opportunity and responsibility to further equity, equal opportunity, and inclusion. All Coast Guard units are encouraged to plan activities in-person or virtually to highlight the achievements of women and their significant contributions to our Service and our Nation.

