



# CIVIL RIGHTS ON DECK



## COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS TOUTED AS VICE COMMANDANT UNVEILS EDUCATION DISPLAY



Adm. Steven Poulin, Vice Commandant, USCG, left, and Eric Christopher, Vice Principal, Turner Elementary School cut the ribbon to officially unveil CGHQ's Partnership in Education Display. (Photo by Patrick Ferraris)

By Patrick Ferraris, Communications Specialist, CRD, USCG HQ  
Coast Guard Headquarters officially unveiled the Partnership in Education (PIE) display with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 17th. The Civil Rights Directorate constructed the collection of pictures, awards, and other interactive elements to recognize all of the PIE coordinators and volunteers throughout the Coast Guard who serve their local schools. Adm. Steven Poulin, Vice Commandant, USCG, presided over the ceremony and spoke about the relationships between the Coast Guard and the communities they serve. He noted that a key motivator behind why many join the Service is to make a difference in the lives of others, and volunteering through the PIE program makes that difference. Service members and civilian employees act as role models and mentors to students. Their work informs the students of the many rewarding careers offered by the Coast Guard, which Poulin remarked: "I hope those scholars find their way to the Coast Guard one day." Mr. Eric Christopher, Vice Principal of Anita J. Turner Elementary School, attended

as a distinguished guest and helped cut the ribbon with Poulin. "It's so special to be a part of this ceremony," said Christopher. "Our relationship with Coast Guard Headquarters is strong and I can't thank Chaplain Hoyle [CGHQ PIE Coordinator] enough for all of the support he and his volunteers have provided to enhance the educational opportunities at Turner." The relationship between CGHQ and Turner Elementary School, located in Washington D.C.'s Ward 8, began in 2021. Since 1990, the PIE program has promoted excellence in education through collaboration with local school systems, community groups, and businesses, especially in communities with large, underserved populations.

## NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH PANEL MEMBERS REFLECT ON RESPECT, CULTURE, AND EDUCATION

By Patrick Ferraris, Communications Specialist, CRD, USCG HQ

During Native American Heritage Month, the Coast Guard celebrates the cultures of America's indigenous communities and their contributions to the United States and the Service. To honor this observance, Coast Guard Headquarters hosted several distinguished guests on November 21st in a panel session that featured lively discussion about Native American and Alaska Native topics and issues. Ms. Holly Haverstick, USCG Director of International Affairs and Foreign Policy Advisor for the Commandant, moderated the panel and started the afternoon by reading a land acknowledgement which recognized and paid respect to Indigenous people as stewards of the local land where CGHQ is located. The Algonquian tribes lived in the area between today's Bolling Air Force Base and Anacostia Park.

Adm. Linda Fagan, Commandant, USCG, provided opening remarks: "These remembrances are a really important part of how we celebrate culture and education for a number of different communities... We have around 1,000 military and civilian personnel in the Coast Guard who have Native American heritage and history and I'm really excited to celebrate and honor that rich culture today." The panel members included Robert Edwardson, USCG District 17 Tribal Liaison (Haida Nation); Fredericka Joseph, Chair, Society of American Indian Government Employees (Kaw Tribe of Oklahoma); Adam Crepelle, Professor of Law, George Mason University (United Houma Nation); Alice Myers-Hall, President, American Indian Society of Washington D.C.



Adm. Linda Fagan, center, Holly Haverstick, left, and panel members gather after CGHQ's Native American Heritage Month Observance (Photo by Patrick Ferraris)

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## ABILITY INDEPENDENT OF AGE; LARGE NUMBERS OF OLDER WORKFORCE FACE AGE DISCRIMINATION

By Amy Icenogle, Deputy Regional Director, CRD, Region 4

Treating an employee or applicant less favorably because of their age is known as age discrimination. [According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\), 60% of people over 50 have seen or experienced this type of discrimination on the job.](#) Employment actions based on age are illegal unless bona fide occupational qualification requirements exist that may provide lawful exceptions for the position. Such unlawful acts may include bias in hiring, promotion, raises, discipline, or layoffs. In the civilian workforce, individuals 40 and older are protected from employment age discrimination by the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967. In 1990, Congress passed an amendment to ADEA, called the Older Workers Benefit Protection Act (OWBPA). The OWBPA makes it unlawful to use an employee's age to discriminate against them regarding their benefits. The amendments require employers to offer employees 40 and over the same fringe benefits as younger workers. These fringe benefits include life insurance, health insurance, disability benefits, pensions, and retirement benefits. The OWBPA also makes it unlawful for an agency or employer to target older workers during a layoff or reduction in force. The bias that older workers perform less than their younger counterparts can lead the aging workforce to receive poor performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, and more. It can also adversely affect mission readiness, professional advancement, and job satisfaction. Supervisors and managers must embrace a multi-generational workforce where all employees, regardless of age, can contribute to the Service's mission. [Watch the vignette at this link](#) to learn more about age discrimination. For additional information on the ADEA and its requirements, contact your local [Civil Rights Service Provider](#).



*Age discrimination can take many forms in the workplace and older workers often deal with bias and negative perceptions from managers, supervisors, and coworkers.*

The Coast Guard participates in annual national award programs to recognize military service members and civilian employees for their accomplishments and contributions to civil rights and Equal Opportunity in underrepresented communities. Anyone within the Service can nominate a deserving individual and ALCOASTs for each award are published accordingly with detailed information and instructions. [Learn more about Civil Rights Awards.](#)



*In a constructive discharge, an employee ends their employment with an organization involuntarily. The hostile circumstances of the workplace environment coerced the employee into resigning. (Photo by Jennifer Scales)*

## DECONSTRUCTING CONSTRUCTIVE DISCHARGE: WHAT IS IT?

By Arcady Darter, Deputy Regional Director, CRD, Region 3

A constructive discharge occurs when an employee feels forced to resign from their job due to an employer's hostile work environment. For a workplace to be considered hostile, the harassment, discrimination, or mistreatment is so severe or pervasive that it affects one's ability to do their job. So how would an employee know if their situation is a "constructive discharge?" According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), constructive discharge occurs when: 1) any reasonable person in the employee's position would find the working situation to be unbearable, 2) a discriminatory action directly created the intolerable working conditions, and 3) the unbearable work environment caused the employee to involuntarily resign or retire. It may initially seem that an employee voluntarily quit their job. However, when it is determined that constructive discharge occurred, the employer effectively forced an employee to leave due to the employer's unlawful employment practices. The EEOC has often held that it takes more than the common annoyances, hardships, or stress that employees can experience to be considered a hostile working environment. For example, in an EEOC case,

a complainant alleged discrimination when her Agency changed her schedule to an earlier start time. The employee resigned because the new start time meant she could not arrange care for her children before school. During its investigation, the EEOC found that although the circumstances created a hardship for the complainant, the inconvenience she experienced was not unlawful harassment and did not create intolerable working conditions. For additional information on constructive discharge, contact your local [Civil Rights Service Provider](#).



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important that we learn about each other and be sensitive to each other in our backgrounds and to be respectful of them. Out of the 574 federally recognized tribes and the 66 state recognized tribes, we are not all the same. We all have our different languages, and our different traditions and different cultures and we can't just be clumped together...I'm glad that we can have avenues like this to have those conversations and encourage us all to talk about education, culture and traditions and the need for diversity and listening to each other.” *Pictured: Robert Edwardson answers a question during CGHQ's Native American Heritage Month panel. (Photo by Patrick Ferraris)*

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(Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania); and Sandra Richardson-Hope, Treasurer, American Indian Society of Washington (Haliwa-Saponi Tribe of North Carolina). Panelists spoke to this year's theme of “Celebrating Respect, Culture, and Education” by covering topics including tribal sovereignty, the different cultures of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and education opportunities to enhance the understanding of native issues. Joseph, who served as a federal employee for over 30 years, advocated for more understanding of native cultures. “It's

## FEDERAL AGENCIES REQUIRED TO POST COMPLAINT DATA TO PUBLIC WEBSITES

In 2020, Congress amended the [The Notification and Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and Retaliation \(NoFEAR\)](#) Act to include the Elijah J. Cummings Federal Employee Anti-discrimination Act. President George W. Bush originally signed the NoFEAR Act in 2002. NoFEAR seeks to discourage managers and supervisors from engaging in unlawful discrimination and retaliation and is intended to make federal agencies and departments more accountable for incidents of workplace discrimination. The 2020 amendment strengthened Federal anti-discrimination laws and expanded agency and department accountability for anti-discrimination and whistleblower laws. The Cummings Act requires federal agencies to post final agency actions that result in a finding of discrimination on the organization's public website for one year from the date of a final decision. The Coast Guard's public website contains a link to this information at the bottom of each page in accordance with the NoFEAR and Cummings Acts. For questions concerning this data, please contact your local [Civil Rights Service Provider](#).



*Providing equal opportunity for all members of the workforce is imperative for mission readiness and the NoFEAR Act is an important law that holds federal agencies accountable for incidents of workplace discrimination. (Photo by Roland Schedel)*

## EQUAL ACCESS TIPS WHEN USING TEAMS APPLICATIONS

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act seeks to ensure individuals with disabilities have equal access to information and communication technology (ICT) used by government agencies. Typical ICT includes computers and laptop workstations, websites, software applications, and electronic documents. With the prevalence of online collaboration through Teams, the Coast Guard's Office of the Chief Information Officer provided a few helpful tips on how we can create an accessible environment on the platform which includes 1) To use live captions during meetings, 2) Ensure that meetings are recorded, 3) Provide specific information on alternative access to meetings, 4) Introduce each speaker before they begin presenting, and 5) Ensure the accessibility of any electronic media. [For details about each tip, read more on MyCG.](#) *(Photo by CWO2 Timothy Tamargo)*

