



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

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

JAN 30 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: 2023 Department of Defense Black History Month Observance

The Department recognizes February 1, 2023 to February 28, 2023, as Black History Month. This year's theme, "Inspiring Change," celebrates the contributions of African Americans to overcoming racial inequities and promoting opportunities for equal advancement within the Black community.

World-renowned African American author Dr. Maya Angelou stated, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again." During Black History Month, we remember the Department's painful history of segregation and we celebrate those who worked to overcome such obstacles and advance change. Their courage to stand up or sit down, when necessary, and to come together against racial injustices changed this Department and our nation. Cognizant of this past, we recommit to providing an environment where people with different backgrounds and experiences are united by a common mission, an inclusive culture, and equal opportunities to succeed.

Diverse and inclusive workplaces improve our ability to attract, recruit, and retain the best qualified DoD workforce. The Department has made some progress with increasing African American military and civilian leaders at the senior ranks and initiatives are underway to address the gaps. The Department remains committed to strategically broadening and diversifying our talent pipelines through outreach and leveraging other talent management programs and policies to advance opportunities for all. In order to sustain and advance our capabilities, DoD must attract and retain diverse talent by incorporating equity and inclusion into daily operations.

As leaders in the Department, we must remain vigilant and courageous in our actions to remove all racial and cultural barriers, wherever they reside, and cultivate environments that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive for all DoD personnel. For resources and help with leading and organizing observances, visit: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Human-Relations-Toolkit/Special-Observances/#black-history-month>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.", is located below the text.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.