

# CIVIL RIGHTS ON DECK

*Women's History Month*  
1 March - 31 March 2023



## COMMANDANT PARTICIPATES ON HISTORIC PANEL



Adm. Linda Fagan, Coast Guard Commandant, participated in a historic panel alongside the military's most prominent female leaders in honor of Women's History Month. Adm. Fagan joined Air Force Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, Commander of U.S. Transportation Command; Army Gen. Laura J. Richardson, Commander of U.S. Southern Command; and Navy Adm. Lisa Franchetti, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, to discuss their experiences as women in the armed services, the importance of recruiting, and keeping the best and most competent personnel in the military. **You can watch a recording of the panel here.**

(Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. John White)

## ANTI-RETALIATION CAMPAIGN OUTCOMES

The Coast Guard recently concluded its first-ever Anti-Retaliation campaign to educate the total workforce about retaliation and the importance of preventing and opposing it in the workplace. Throughout the 45-day campaign, the Civil Rights Directorate (CRD) conducted activities to meet this objective, including a series of anti-retaliation articles, development and distribution of graphics for use by leaders and employees to ensure wide awareness, fact sheets, and frequently asked questions. [The tools and resources remain available on the Civil Rights Directorate's website.](#)

Below is an infographic that summarizes some of the outcomes of the campaign. Retaliation degrades performance, mission execution, and is incompatible with our Core Values. The workforce is encouraged to speak up about workplace issues like retaliation, discrimination, and harassment, knowing these reports are protected by law and policy. To report an alleged discriminatory event based on retaliation, [contact your local Civil Rights Service Provider \(CRSP\)](#) within 45 days of the incident.

## WOMEN HELP SHAPE THE COAST GUARD STORY

By Patrick Ferraris, Communications Specialist, CRD, USCG HQ

"In the Coast Guard, our story cannot be written without the stories of the women who have served throughout our history," remarked Adm. Steven Poulin, Vice Commandant, as he addressed members of the workforce at Coast Guard Headquarters' (CGHQ) Women's History Month celebration on March 15th. "Today, thanks to the dedication and professionalism of those who served before us, the opportunities for women in the Coast Guard are limitless and every member of our workforce can serve the nation to their greatest potential. That is the Coast Guard story of today," he continued. The emphasis on the stories of women intersects with the theme for Women's History Month 2023: "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories." While the national theme recognizes women who have been active storytellers across all forms of media, it also encourages women to share their own stories. For the women of the Coast Guard, these stories are vital and have helped build the Service into the organization that stands today. After his remarks, Poulin welcomed the 48th Solicitor General of the United States, and the second woman to hold *Continued on Page 3*



**9,728** Total Number of Campaign Engagements (Training attendees, QR Code Scans, and Article Page Views on MyCG between 17 Jan 23 and 1 Mar 23.)



**6** Training Sessions Delivered



**94%** Instructor Satisfaction Rating

**91%** Training Satisfaction Rate



**87%** of training participants noted they were more knowledgeable about workplace retaliation.



## MODIFIED ACCOMMODATIONS MUST STAY EFFECTIVE

By Elizabeth Mercado-Pringle, Equal Opportunity Specialist, CRD, USCG HQ

In a recent case, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) found that the Department of Agriculture discriminated against an employee based on disability when it denied the Complainant's reasonable accommodation request to telework two days per week. The Complainant, who has severe and persistent allergic asthma, had a previously approved and effective reasonable accommodation to telework. However, he needed to renew the request when he was moved to a new building. After submitting the request and medical documentation, the Acting Associate Director (AAD) instead granted him an alternative accommodation; to take outside breaks for fresh air and to use leave for medical needs as necessary. The Complainant reported that his symptoms had worsened since moving into the new location due to the lack of open windows and airflow, which impeded his ability to work. The Complainant filed an EEO complaint for discrimination based on disability after management denied his reasonable accommodation request. During its review, the EEOC noted that the Agency's decision to deny the request was because the Complainant's medical documentation did not indicate he needed telework as an accommodation. However, the EEOC found that the Agency did not tell the Complainant this and stated the Agency failed to engage with the Complainant in the interactive process. On numerous occasions, the Complainant reached out to the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (RAC), but it was documented that neither the RAC, nor



anyone else at the Agency, kept him well-informed about his request. The EEOC concluded that the Agency could have accommodated the Complainant by granting him two telework days per week, that it stopped engaging in the interactive process, and the alternative accommodations it granted the Complainant were ineffective. Learn more about the interactive process, by reading the article at the bottom of this page. For more information on the Equal Employment Opportunity process, please contact your local Civil Rights Service Provided (CRSP). *Waltraud R. v. Dep't of Agric., EEOC Appeal No. 2020001535 (July 13, 2021)*

Have you ever wondered if an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEOC) complaint can still be pursued after the federally required 45-calendar day reporting period has passed? The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) states that extensions can be made in cases where the aggrieved individual can show that they did not know of the time limit; the individual did not or reasonably should not have known they were subjected to a discriminatory action; or, despite earnest attempts, the individual was prevented by circumstances beyond their control from contacting the counselor within the necessary time frame. If you have any questions about the complaint process or wish to file a complaint, [contact your local Civil Rights Service Provider](#).

## BUILDING TRUST AND COOPERATION THROUGH THE INTERACTIVE PROCESS

By Leon Patterson, EEO Specialist, CRD, Region 1

Reasonable accommodations (RA) in the workplace enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of their job and to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. To get to an approved and effective RA, it is necessary for a Coast Guard civilian member or applicant for employment to engage in the interactive process with their supervisor. During this stage of an RA request, the employee and supervisor must communicate, cooperate, and collaborate in a good-faith effort to help find a suitable change to the way their job was traditionally done, but still allows them to perform it successfully. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recommends that employers use four steps during the interactive process: (1) analyze the particular job involved and determine its essential functions; (2) speak with the employee to determine the job-related limitations imposed by their disability and how those limitations could be overcome with the RA; (3) identify potential accommodations and assess the effectiveness each would have in enabling the employee to perform the essential functions of the position; and (4) consider the employee's preference and implement the most effective accommodation. An employee may request an RA, either verbally or in writing, to their supervisor. If you have questions regarding the interactive process or reasonable accommodations, please [contact your local Civil Rights Service Provider](#) for assistance or advice.



*The interactive process allows for a supervisor and employee with disabilities to identify and implement ways that the worker can accomplish their job successfully and that work best for both parties. (Photo by Kimberly Koonce)*





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that title, Elizabeth B. Prelogar, to share her story with the audience. In this role, Prelogar is responsible for conducting and supervising all Supreme Court legal action on behalf of the United States. Prelogar structured her storytelling moment as a “fireside chat,” engaging the audience through conversation and opening the floor to questions right away.

Members asked her about her background, duties, role models, and the importance of the representation of women in traditionally male-dominated fields, to which Prelogar noted that it’s important for women not to let traditional gender biases stand in their way. Drawing from her own experiences, she advocated for women to push outside their comfort zone and insert themselves into uncomfortable and unfamiliar situations. Prelogar’s willingness to push the boundaries of expectation, she noted, allowed her to find her own voice. Not stepping up in these situations, Prelogar claims, due

to fear, discomfort, or a perceived lack of belonging, will only continue to contribute to a historical lack of representation for women. Rear Adm. Melissa Bert, Judge Advocate General and Executive Champion for CGHQ’s Women’s History Month observance, added her thoughts on the progress of women’s representation, specifically in the Coast Guard: “As we reflect upon the successes of women across the world and throughout the Coast Guard, we have a lot of leaders to look to. I am inspired by the great strides that we have made to increase diversity and inclusivity in our workforce.” Pictured on page 1: Elizabeth B. Prelogar and Rear Adm. Melissa Bert at CGHQ’s Women’s History Month observance event. Above: Adm. Steven Poulin and Rear Adm. Melissa Bert present Elizabeth B. Prelogar with a token of appreciation for sharing her story at the event. (Photos by Patrick Ferraris)

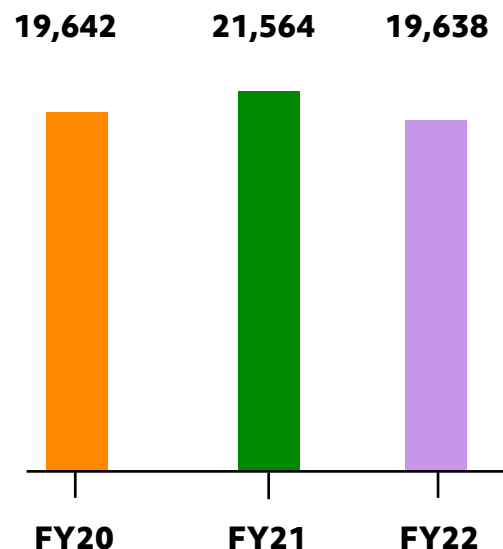


The Coast Guard has permanently transitioned Anti-Harassment and Hate Incident (AAHI) policies and procedures from the Civil Rights Directorate to the newly formed Anti-Harassment Program Management Office (AHPO). Harassing behaviors must now be reported to your Command or directly to the AHPO. Read more on [MyCG](#) and in [ALCOAST 083/23](#). AAHI complaints and questions can be directed to the AHPO office at: [SMB-COMDT-AHPO@uscg.mil](mailto:SMB-COMDT-AHPO@uscg.mil).

## CIVIL RIGHTS AWARENESS TRAINING: KEEPING THE WORKFORCE INFORMED

Every year, the Coast Guard’s Civil Rights Service Providers (CRSPs) train over a third of the total workforce through triennial Civil Rights Awareness (CRA) training. The goal of the Civil

Total workforce participating in Civil Rights Awareness Training between FY20-FY22



Rights Directorate (CRD) is to train around 20,000 total members annually. This means, every three years, CRSPs will have trained up to 60,000 total members! Between Fiscal Years (FY) 20 and FY22, the average number trained was 20,281. During this time frame, CRSPs proficiently trained 60,844 members of the workforce, mostly by facilitated online formats, to inform them of the latest Coast Guard Equal Employment Opportunity/Equal Opportunity (EEO/EO) policies and procedures and provided them with valuable information about topics like Alternative Dispute Resolution, Reasonable Accommodation, workplace retaliation, and many more civil rights programs and policies. FY22 saw the return of facilitated in-person training which offers participants and instructors more fluid engagement and promotes active discussion and scenario sharing that helps form a better understanding of civil rights policies and procedures. CRA training is vital to support the Service’s efforts toward achieving a workplace free of discrimination. You can access the latest [CRA training schedule](#) (CAC enabled) on the CRD’s website or [contact your local CRSP](#) for the schedule.