

Statement by U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet

I never thought I'd consider leaving the United States Air Force Academy after working so hard for my appointment, but here I am contemplating whether this is the Air Force to which I'm willing to commit myself. The first day of Basic Cadet Training was full of chaos, but I remember with intense clarity taking the oath where I promised to support and defend the Constitution — not any person or political agenda — against all enemies, foreign and domestic. The military is supposed to be an impartial actor for the commander in chief. Our occupation and work environment are supposed to be devoid of political agendas and the influence of radicals. And yet, anywhere one looks, the radical liberal and, dare I say, communist propaganda has infiltrated our ranks, classrooms, and even the minds of future officers.

Coming from a military family, including Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Silver Star recipients, I have always valued meritocracy. I worked extremely hard to ensure I was qualified, based on merit, for acceptance into the academy. It would be both demeaning and a disservice to my nation to only be at the Academy because I am a minority female. Anything but a system based on merit is less than optimal and weakens our defense. We all want to serve with airmen who are the best at what they do, not just airmen that met the quota for skin color, sexual preference, or other characteristics.

As Cadets, and especially as impressionable young freshmen, we are forced to sit through hours of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) briefs. We all understand that respect is of vital importance, but categorizing people as oppressors and victims based on skin color is just plain wrong. Beyond this is the observed scope of the alleged problem. It would seem a problem of this magnitude would be obvious to nearly all Cadets ... but it isn't. And frankly, in terms of cost-benefit analysis, the effort is doing more harm than good as it directly undermines unit cohesion and morale.

I see many bright young cadets who know that what is going on is wrong but are too afraid to speak up. Many times, during our DEI briefs, even if 90% agree that what we're being taught is wrong, cadets will hold back and politely nod their heads for fear that what they have to say might offend even one person. Perhaps this reluctance to speak up stems from being in an environment where the leadership seems grossly out of touch with the American public. Being politically correct has somehow become the most crucial part of our training. I pray our adversaries are wasting as much time on this as we are.

Leadership erroneously believes these meetings unite us as a team, but in fact, cadets walk out whispering and shaking their heads, feeling more divided than ever. We are continually told that we are in the business of "killing people and breaking things," but when it comes to talking about issues within our own ranks, we are all about "safe spaces and time outs."

This apprehensive atmosphere has led to record low morale. The heart-wrenching fact that three USAFA cadets died this last semester alone should be a sobering enough statistic to force leadership to adjust their heading. Low morale can also be seen in the significant drop in both recruitment and retention rates. How can we be a force ready to take on our adversaries if we can't effectively recruit and retain service members?

If the mission of DEI is to “attract, recruit, develop and retain,” it is failing miserably. Our nation must wake up and realize that the more our politically selected leadership espouses such divisive ideologies, the deeper the divisions, and the greater the damage to our nation’s defense. It’s not about skin color, ethnic background, or sexual preference — it’s about the mission, service to our nation, and defense of the republic. I now have a decision to make. Do I decline to serve because of the ongoing push of this radical ideological agenda, or do I stay and fight for what is right? The fundamental freedoms our forefathers fought and died for are priceless. I will fight.

As Abraham Lincoln said, “America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.”

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