



SECRETARY OF WAR
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

SEP 30 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Implementation of Military Equal Opportunity and Equal Employment Opportunity Reform Plan

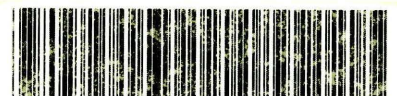
- References:
- (a) Secretary of Defense Memorandum "Restoring Good Order and Discipline Through Balanced Accountability," April 23, 2025
 - (b) Acting Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Memorandum "Restoring and Protecting the Presumption of Innocence in the EEO Complaint Process," May 15, 2025
 - (c) Acting Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Memorandum "Ending Unauthorized Monetary Sanctions Against Federal Agencies," May 15, 2025
 - (d) Acting Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Memorandum "Guidance to Agencies for Applying Deferred Resignation Program Agreements to Pending EEO Complaints," May 15, 2025

The Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs are important for preventing and responding to incidents of discrimination and harassment. On April 23, 2025, I directed a comprehensive review of the Department of War's MEO and EEO programs (reference (a)).

Based on the results of that review, I direct the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness (USW(P&R)) to implement key reforms across the Department's MEO and EEO programs to optimize organizational effectiveness, ensure readiness, and prevent abuse of process. The USW(P&R) will coordinate with the Secretaries of the Military Departments and other DoW Components as necessary to obtain information, ensure alignment, and drive consistent execution of these reforms across the Department. The USW(P&R) is authorized and delegated the authority to provide additional policy and implementation guidance as needed outside the normal DoW issuance process to facilitate implementation efforts and ensure synchronization across all applicable stakeholders. This authority may not be further delegated.

These reforms must ensure that:

- Complaints are promptly (within 30 days) addressed and dismissed if they lack actionable, credible evidence;
- Favorable personnel actions such as awards, promotions, and retirements, involving alleged offenders are only withheld where a preliminary or subsequent investigation indicates that the complaint is likely to be substantiated; and



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- Those who knowingly submit false complaints and repeatedly submit frivolous complaints are held accountable, pursuant to applicable laws and regulations.

MEO Reforms:

- To foster a more effective support and resolution-based program, replace the current anonymous reporting option with a confidential complaint reporting option to MEO professionals and request that the Joint Service Committee on Military Justice consider revising Military Rule of Evidence 514 to include communications to MEO professionals.
- To strengthen efficiency and fairness within the MEO complaint resolution process, standardize the intake processes to provide mediation as a first-line alternative to filing a formal MEO complaint in accordance with Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1350.02, "DoD Military Equal Opportunity Program," September 4, 2020, as amended. This approach fosters early conflict resolution and reduces administrative burden. Unless required by law, MEO complaints that lack sufficient merit to trigger an investigation will be systematically dismissed under new threshold criteria, ensuring that resources are directed toward complaints containing credible evidence. Credible evidence will be defined in updated policy.
- To promote prompt closure and accountability, mandate a strict resolution timeline for commanders to address unsubstantiated MEO complaints, within 7 business days, to ensure timely resolutions.
- I direct the USW(P&R) to amend and update DoDI 1350.02 to include provisions clarifying that false complaints may constitute a violation of Article 107 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. These updates will reinforce the integrity of the MEO complaint process.

EEO Reforms:

- Centralize EEO Program Organization and Operation. Consolidating and centralizing EEO counselor operations will ensure consistent application and timely resolution of EEO complaints, allowing DoD leaders to focus on national security. Within 30 days from the date of this memorandum, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy (DASW(CPP)) will develop and implement a plan to establish a DoW pilot within the Defense Agencies and the DoW Field Activities (DAFAs) to consolidate and centralize EEO personnel, offices, and operations. This pilot will also establish a temporary EEO Task Force that includes OSD manpower, human resources, comptroller, information technology (IT), and legal representatives; representatives from the DAFAs; and other relevant stakeholders as needed. Additionally, the pilot will institute a technology solution and define funding resources required. The DASW(CPP) will conduct an evaluation at the end of the pilot to incorporate the Military Departments.

- Expedite Senior Official EEO Cases. Preventing delays and avoiding the indefinite suspension of careers empowers DoW leaders to get back to doing what they do best, warfighting. The Director, Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA) will define and allocate funding for the Investigations and Resolutions Directorate (IRD) to leverage outsourcing and alternative IT solutions, like artificial intelligence to expedite investigation of cases that directly affect general/flag officers and senior executives.
- Centralize EEO Investigations. Consolidating investigations under the IRD enhances accountability, increases oversight, and standardizes policy implementation. Within 30 days from the date of this memorandum, the Director, DHRA, will provide a plan of action and milestones to the DASW(CPP) detailing the process for eliminating the EEO investigation backlog and manpower and funding resources required to sustain long-term operational capability in accordance with 29 CFR Part 1614 and EEOC Management Directive 110.
- Acceptance and Dismissal of EEO Complaints. In accordance with 29 CFR §§ 1614.106(b) and 1614.107(a), where the Agency has made a written request for the complainant to provide relevant information or documentation, if the complainant fails to respond or adequately address the Agency's request within 15-days of receipt, the complaint be dismissed. The DASW(CPP) will, no later than 60 days, coordinate with EEOC to request an establish exception to modify the timeline for acceptance and dismissal of EEO complaints.
- Adhere to EEOC Reform Initiatives. EEOC's reforms are also DoW's priority to advance timeliness, efficiency, and accountability across the Department's EEO process. Consistent with references (b), (c), and (d), I hereby direct the USW(P&R) to advance an EEO policy memorandum to remove unauthorized monetary sanctions and dismissal of outstanding claims for individuals who exercised the Deferred Resignation Program with general release clauses. Additionally, I direct the USW(P&R) to update current DoW policy to eliminate the practice of withholding or delaying promotion of an employee or Service member based on an EEO complaint without a substantive finding of misconduct or not based on objective and credible evidence. The USW(P&R) will update DoW policy to reflect the definition of credible evidence contained in reference (a) consistent with applicable law.
- DoW Exception to EEOC timelines for Processing Investigations. Timely investigations bolster the credibility of the EEO process by ensuring complaints are addressed timely. The Department's priority must be to preserve the integrity of the EEO process for both the complainant and alleged offender. The DASW(CPP) will, no later than 60 days from the date of this memorandum, coordinate with EEOC to establish an exception to modify DoW's EEO investigation timelines.
- Establish Compliance Measures to Track EEO Reform Actions. Tracking and monitoring the execution and implementation of the EEO process is essential to upholding the efficacy of the Department's commitment to provide timely resolutions

of allegations. The DASW(CPP) will develop a compliance assessment framework to monitor the implementation of the EEO reform actions and submit an annual progress report to the USW(P&R).

Timely adjudication of complaints will minimize the impact of false claims, swiftly provide resolution for all involved, and increase readiness across the total force. I am fully committed to promoting good order and discipline through accountability for all involved in the complaint process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. B. G." with a stylized flourish at the end.