



From the very beginning of the Department of Homeland Security, we have emphasized that we will secure the country while also preserving freedom and the

American way of life. Our core mission includes not only protecting America's assets—buildings and airports and power plants—but also protecting our civil liberties and all that has made America great. It is an enormous challenge, the great calling placed upon our generation.

The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties is committed to helping our colleagues at the Department and our country meet the challenge. We accomplish our mission by providing the Department with legal and policy advice, complaint resolution and investigation, equal opportunity program leadership, and by serving as an information and communication channel with the public. We work to listen to the views of a wide range of groups, enlist feedback from various ethnic communities and train our law enforcement officials to carry out their duties while being mindful of civil rights and civil liberties.

The Department of Homeland Security was borne out of the ashes of 9/11. From that experience, we gained a renewed appreciation for, and understanding of what it means to live in America. In carrying out our mission, we also honor the lives lost that horrible day in 2001 by recognizing that which binds us as people—our respect for civil rights and civil liberties.

Daniel W. Sutherland
Officer for Civil Rights & Civil Liberties

Protecting America, Preserving Freedom



U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

W E N E E D Y O U R H E L P

If you have a comment or complaint, please contact us.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
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**Homeland
Security**



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security was created. We provide the unifying core of the national network of organizations and institutions involved in efforts to secure our homeland. We work to prevent further terrorist attacks within the United States. We also gather intelligence, analyze threats, guard our nation’s borders and airports, protect our critical infrastructure, and coordinate responses during times of disaster.

DHS Vision Statement

Preserving our freedoms, protecting America...we secure our homeland.

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

The Department of Homeland Security is strongly committed to the protection of civil rights and civil liberties in all of our work. We recognize that searching for ways to enhance security and our civil liberties at the same time will be a difficult challenge—but we can meet that challenge by being innovative and listening to a wide range of views. One of those innovations is the creation of the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. In April 2003, in the very first days of the new Department of Homeland Security, President Bush

appointed an Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties to serve in the senior leadership of the agency. The Officer reports directly to the Secretary for Homeland Security,

“Our task now is to...meet and manage the threats of today, and to prepare to confront the risks of the future. Our mission is no less than this: protect America, while fostering the values of liberty, privacy, and opportunity we all hold dear.”

Secretary Michael Chertoff—
Department of Homeland Security

and leads the work of the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. This Office has made substantial achievements as it has worked closely with the senior leadership to provide timely advice on critical issues facing our nation.

OUR ROLE

The mission of the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties is to assist the dedicated men and women of this Department in securing our country while preserving our freedoms and our way of life. We help our colleagues in four ways:

- We provide proactive legal and policy advice on a wide range of issues, helping the Department to shape policy in ways that are mindful of our civil rights and civil liberties.
- We investigate and resolve complaints filed by the public regarding Departmental policies or actions taken by Departmental personnel.

- We provide leadership to the Department’s equal employment opportunity programs, seeking to make this Department the model federal agency.
- We serve as an information and communication channel with the public regarding these issues.

The statutory authority for the Office is described in 6 U.S.C. 345.

OUR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Office has helped advance civil rights and civil liberties by:

- Leading an energetic, government-wide effort to integrate people with disabilities into all aspects of emergency preparedness, response and recovery.
- Engaging with Arab-American, Muslim-American, Sikh-American and other ethnic and religious communities. These communities are critical to America’s future, and we are convinced that we cannot do an effective job in homeland security without actively, fully connecting with these communities.
- Ensuring that DHS implements innovative strategies to recruit the best talent in America, including our nation’s veterans and our citizens with disabilities.
- Leading DHS’s efforts to implement President Bush’s directive to prohibit unlawful racial profiling.
- Serving as an entry point for individuals and advocacy groups to raise issues of concern with the Department.
- Developing innovative solutions in the areas of information sharing, intelligence reform, immigration reform, and training.