



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON

October 12, 2007

TO ALL EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: Policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and Unlawful Discrimination

As Acting Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), I want this Department to have the most qualified and diverse workforce in Government. I rely on each of you to embrace this policy, to assist me in expanding opportunities for all employees of the Department, and to ensure that we work in an environment free of unlawful discrimination or harassment. Anything less falls short of the professional conduct required to achieve our mission.

VA employs 250,000 people to serve America's veterans and their families. The equal employment opportunity (EEO) policy of an organization reflects the core values embraced by that organization and its people, and VA is no different. Central to these core values are commitment, excellence, communication and stewardship, all of which are focused on mutual respect among the people in VA's workforce.

Commitment means pledging to provide opportunities that will permit employees to rise to their highest level of achievement based on merit and ability. Excellence is what drives us toward fostering an environment of dignity and mutual respect. Communication demands we make the effort to build bridges for successful relationships in the workplace, and stewardship requires our professional duties to take precedence over our personal perspective.

This Department will not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on gender, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or reprisal for engaging in a prior EEO activity. Commitment to this principle requires managers and supervisors to immediately confront and eliminate any and all unlawful discrimination or harassment when they become aware of it. In addition, if we are able to achieve diversity at all levels, managers and supervisors must ensure equal opportunity regardless of gender, race, color, national origin, religion, age or disability when making decisions in the areas of outreach, recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, benefits and awards.

All incidents of unlawful reprisal, discrimination or harassment should be reported to an EEO counselor at the Office of Resolution Management toll free at 1-888-737-3361 or via TTY/TDD at 1-888-626-9008 within 45 days of the perceived discriminatory incident. We will accomplish our mission only if we ensure that all employees have an opportunity to reach their full potential and to contribute to the success of the Department. I expect your full support and cooperation in making VA a leader in equal employment opportunity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon H. Mansfield".

Gordon H. Mansfield
Acting