



February 26, 2018

Message from Secretary Kirstjen M. Nielsen on Preventing Workplace Harassment

Recent news stories have reminded us all of the unfortunate fact that workplace harassment continues to exist. Our motto is, “*With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.*” To me, ‘With honor and integrity,’ includes the imperative that each of us be responsible for creating a culture of trust, respect, and integrity towards each other and all whom we serve. As part of our culture, we have a zero tolerance policy towards any and all forms of harassment. We must all work together to instill a positive, healthy, and supportive workplace environment to help empower each of you to carry out your critically important missions on behalf of the American people.

Harassment includes unwelcome conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment because of the individual’s race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, or any other basis protected by law. Although a single unwelcome statement or act may not rise to the level of unlawful harassment, it still has no place at DHS.

Recently, we have seen one particularly pernicious form of harassment - sexual harassment -headlining the news. Courageous women and men have come forward to report their experiences with unwanted sexual advances, comments, or conduct in the workplace. Preventing this type of behavior is a subject I feel strongly about, as I’m sure many of you do as well.

Upon being sworn in as your Secretary, I asked about related awareness and training at the Department and one of my first acts as Secretary was to review the Department’s current anti-harassment policy. As a result, I have directed that the policy and directive be updated and refreshed to reflect today’s environment. As they are updated, I ask you to review the existing DHS policy [here](#).

The Department takes seriously its responsibility to respond swiftly and appropriately to any act of workplace harassment. To that end, DHS employees are asked to report harassing conduct, whether they witness it or are subject to the conduct themselves. Reports of harassment are kept confidential to the fullest extent possible. DHS does not tolerate retaliation against an employee for reporting harassment or assisting another employee in reporting harassment, participating in an inquiry into a report of harassment, or opposing discrimination or harassment. Each of us has a role in creating a culture that reflects our motto and the trust the American people have placed in us.

DHS leadership is committed to ensuring anti-harassment training is available for all employees. Upon updating our training modules, you will be contacted to ensure you complete the appropriate training within a reasonable time frame. In the meantime, I encourage you to use the avenues and resources available to all DHS managers and employees to keep our workplace free from any form of harassment as we focus on carrying out our important mission.

Thank you for your service and for your individual efforts to prevent all types of harassment and abuse in the workplace.

Best regards,

Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security

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