



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

September 10, 2020

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY STATEMENT

Sexual harassment and sexual assault have no place in our Navy – Marine Corps and simply put – will not be tolerated. Therefore I will do all that I can to ensure each of you serve in a place where this is not accepted – period!

When I assumed the responsibilities as the Secretary of the Navy, I committed to doing everything in my power to eliminate sexual harassment and sexual assault throughout our ranks. I remain steadfast in this commitment – both personally and professionally. The people who make up Our Great Navy and Marine Corps – both military and civilian – are our most valuable resource. There have been many conversations within the Department and across social media platforms on how best to address and move forward on these important topics. Bottom line: We must never waiver in our ultimate goal to eradicate these destructive behaviors and to set the conditions for every Sailor, Marine, and civilian to be treated with the dignity and respect that each of us deserves.

As we continue to engage in critical conversations about how we address sexual assault and sexual harassment, I remind you to meet with the many available service providers and to seek support as needed. Across the Department, we benefit from the professional support of Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Victim Advocates, Behavioral Health Counselors, Victim Legal Counsels, Chaplains, and representatives within our Employee Assistance Programs. The DoD Safe Helpline (www.safehelpline.org) offers anonymous, 24/7 care and also connects individuals with community and military resources. Finally, the Naval Inspector General's Office, Equal Opportunity Advisors, the Naval Criminal Investigative Services, Judge Advocates, and your chain of command, all offer options for individuals to disclose misconduct or seek support.

Reducing sexual assaults and cases of harassment is not primarily a resource issue. This is about us. We can and must do more. Each of us must foster a climate that values every member of our ranks. All of us, at every level of the chain of command, have a duty to protect those to our left and right.

Ending sexual assault and sexual harassment requires a holistic approach to include introspection; we all must assess our climate, our workplace, our own behaviors and those of our teammates. We must stay true to our core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment and take an active stance to disrupt those destructive behaviors that hurt our readiness. We need to meaningfully and genuinely support those who come forward – providing information on available resources, making connections to helping agencies, and ensuring that retaliation is never an option on our watch.

While there is not a single solution we can use to eradicate these crimes and behaviors, we must be relentless in our efforts to hold leaders at all levels accountable for their responsibility to uphold our Core Values and policies; to identify the gaps in our processes; to be unwavering in finding solutions to fill those gaps; and to hold true to the trust and confidence bestowed on them. Together we must set the conditions that allow each and every Marine, Sailor, and civilian to thrive in service to our Nation.

A blue ink signature of Kenneth J. Braithwaite is written over the name. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Kenneth J. Braithwaite