

# Discrimination within the navy essay sample

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Maintaining a positive, ethical behavior is something that is difficult no matter someone's profession. If desired, the Navy is a career choice that faces many ethical dilemmas. One current ethical issue that exists within the Navy is discrimination. Issue

Within the Navy, being ethical is a huge part of your job. Because of its importance and severity, many billets, or job positions, have been created within the Navy to address and deal with the current ethical issues. As stated by the Secretary of the Navy, Donald C. Winter, "It is essential that all Department of the Navy personnel adhere to the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. The American people put their trust in us and none of us can betray that trust." (Winter) Discrimination is one of the ethical dilemmas that plague the Navy. As defined by Trevino and Nelson, "Discrimination occurs whenever something other than qualifications affects how an employee is treated." (Trevino & Nelson, 2011, p. 116)

Discrimination comes in multiple categories. In the United States, age, disability, gender, natural origin, religion, and race are forms that are prohibited by federal law. (Trevino & Nelson, 2011, p. 115) Diversity is a key factor during your career in the Navy.

The age difference amongst Sailors is drastic, and at any time someone who is 45 years old may be taking orders from someone who is 25 years old. This causes a potential resentment from sailors because in the Navy, age means nothing. Authority and leadership is granted dependent upon one's rank, or pay grade. The oldest age to join the Navy is 39. This poses a high likelihood of working under someone who is younger. Being able to follow and give orders to and from everyone is an essential quality that is required to be a

Sailor. When thinking of employing people with disabilities, the Navy is not an employer that comes to mind. There are many people in the Navy that are disabled. Dyslexia, depression, sickle-cell anemia, and ADD, amongst others, are all disabilities that are considered admissible for entry into the Navy. Because the Navy is so diverse, being able to accept, work with, and get past one's disability is imperative. A large portion of the Navy has to travel, or deploy, from the United States and venture into other countries. The chance of interacting with a person who has a disability is vast. Figure 1

Gender discrimination is one that is not too common in the Navy. The Navy became co-ed in March of 1917 when Loretta Walsh enlisted as a Yeoman. (CAPT (Ret.) Wilson, 1996) Since then, women have been allowed to hold almost every rate and rank. Figure 2 shows the percentage of men vs. women in the Navy in FY 2004. (Dr. Maxfield, 2004) Women are held to the same standard as men and are expected to be able to perform their duties as well as the men. Even though discriminating sailors because of their gender is a shrinking problem, I feel it will become a thing of the past in the next ten years. During my short time in the Navy, I have come across many sailors, usually ones that are caught in the older Navy traditions, which are partial to working with women. I have also found that depending on how and where someone was raised; there are still some that demonstrate chivalry. When the people who currently hold leadership positions throughout the Navy are cycled out, I believe discriminating someone because of their gender will also cycle through. Natural origin diversity is something that has been rapidly growing and is represented throughout the year, and highlighted each October during National Diversity Awareness Month.

Within the Navy, each command has a Diversity Committee that contains men, women and Sailors from every race, background, and culture. Their purpose is to help educate their command and make diversity something fun and eventful. ““ Diversity is part of our nation’s heritage and helps provide strength within the Navy, says Capt. David Pimpo, FISC San Diego commanding officer.” We have an obligation to recognize our differences and celebrate them.”” (FISC San Diego Public Affairs Office, 2010) Freedom of religion has fallen under the First Amendment and been a part of the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights since 1778. (Robinson, 2010) The Navy offers spiritual services for almost every religion available. I do not come across religious discrimination too often, but there are occasions where I have seen Muslims, who are practice Islam, to be the most discriminated against religion. The Huffington Post reports since the September 11 attacks, “ there has been a 150 percent jump in workplace discrimination against Muslims”. (Reuters, 2011) From my experiences, whenever any discussions about religious beliefs are brought up during work hours, the senior Sailor present typically stops any religion based conversation from going any further. Figure 2

Racial discrimination is one of the oldest forms of discrimination. The Navy has been officially desegregated since July 26, 1948. (Truman, 1998) From the 2004 fiscal year data of Active Duty and Reserve Sailors, including Officers, Warrant Officers, and Enlisted, Figure 2 shows the Race/Ethnicity diversity within the Navy. (Dr. Maxfield, 2004) Stakeholder Analysis

When discrimination occurs within the Navy, everyone is affected. The military is funded by the government, which receives money from all the tax payers. If the Navy does not implement such strict rules against discrimination, Sailors will be disciplined by the UCMJ under Article 92. Once penalized, the military is still responsible for housing, feeding, and caring for the punished individual until their sentence is completed or they are discharged from the military. In order to fund this, the countries tax payers are still responsible for the Sailor until his/her discharge. The Navy as a whole is also penalized for the actions of individual sailors. Once someone becomes a sailor, they are no longer known by just their name. For example, if a sailor gets a DUI, the paper will not read, " John Doe receives DUI after crashing into phone pole". Instead, the paper will read " Local US Navy Sailor crashes into phone pole".

The Navy is scrutinized because of the actions of those within it. Once a sailor makes a mistake that is serious enough for him/her to be disciplined, their life will never be the same. If dishonorably discharged from the military, your chances of getting a civilian job are equivalent to those of a felon. Their life and anyone that is or was dependent upon them will change drastically. There is a slim opportunity to obtain a federal job, many state jobs or a firearm permit. The Dishonorably Discharged person may squander their voting rights and the chance of a college education. " The U. S. Constitution does not recognize the category of " felons" or " dishonorably discharged" individuals as a protected class. This means that a bank or company may legally discriminate against someone on the basis of the individual's dishonorable discharge." (Kinsley, 2013)

## Analysis and Recommendations

I believe there to be many underlying causes to discrimination within the Navy. The fear of the unknown and of someone different from themselves may be too farfetched for someone to handle. Some individuals may have been raised in such a way to not accept individuals who are different than them. Where a person is raised is also a factor in the forming of their belief system. The misrepresentation of facts and rumors may lead someone to believe that discriminatory beliefs are okay and acceptable. I believe that media also plays a huge role in what information is put out and the validity of that information may never be released.

In the Navy, there are many outlets that someone could use if they believe they are being discriminated against. Within each command there is at least one Senior Sailor who runs the Command CMEO program, Command Managed Equal Opportunity. The CMEO is someone who sailors can talk to at any time, and without fear of retaliation from their chain of command. "The objective of Command Managed Equal Opportunity is to promote positive command morale and quality of life by providing an environment in which all personnel can perform to their maximum ability, unimpeded by institutional or individual biases based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender or religious stereotypes. Command leaders must create, shape, and maintain a positive EO environment through policy, communication, training, education, enforcement and assessment." (US Navy, 2013) Conclusion

Having strong, ethical beliefs are an indispensable tool that will get you far in the Navy. Discrimination is not only unethical, but illegal and goes against

the oath that every service member recited before entry into the Navy.

There are excellent resources that the Navy provides to learn and interact with people from every age, disability, gender, natural origin, religion, and race. The CMEO program that the Navy has implemented is one that I have personally seen to be effective. With all of the information available today, there should be no reason for discrimination to occur in the Navy.

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